

UNION DELEGATES MAP STRATEGY FOR FUTURE

Some 400 union delegates met for a special Union Delegates Conference in San Jose on Saturday, January 21 to agree on our strategy for the next decade and beyond. They laid plans for bargaining and other actions coming up this spring—but unanimously agreed on a strategy for the long-term growth and success of our unions and of Kaiser Permanente.

“We have a responsibility that is as significant as that faced by any group of workers in the last hundred years,” said Dave Regan, president of SEIU-UHW. “We are one of the largest groups of union workers in the U.S. There is more suffering now in America than at any time since the 1930s, and we need to do something about it. We are showing the world how an engaged, empowered, union workforce can deliver world-class affordability, quality, and health for our community. That is our obligation as health care workers—and it is part of our strategy to preserve KP as the best place to work. It is our sacred responsibility to get our union members to retirement with their benefits intact.”

“This is how a 21st century union leads,” said Coalition executive director John August.

Delegates agreed that the world has changed dramatically in a short time, and our analysis and strategies have changed, too.

“The issue is affordability. The people we serve can barely afford our product. We have an obligation to ourselves, our unions, and the communities we serve to deliver high quality, affordable care,” said August. “This is the work our union members do every day in UBTs at the frontline, and it is working. We must lead on all four points of the Value Compass—including best place to work—and we must deal with the forces outside of KP that are threatening health care like never before,” including soaring cost, the epidemic of chronic disease, and cutthroat competition from for-profit insurers. “These are union issues!”

THE UNION DELEGATES ENDORSED FOUR LONG-TERM STRATEGIES:

- 1. Improve quality, service, safety and efficiency while preserving best place to work.**
- 2. Grow KP and our unions to protect and enhance union jobs.**
- 3. Improve the health of our workforce.**
- 4. Improve the health of our communities.**

OUR STRATEGY FOR OUR FUTURE

1. **Improve quality, service, safety and efficiency while preserving the best place to work.**

More than 3,400 UBTs are attacking these issues at the unit level every day. We will continue and sustain our improvement work, moving our teams to higher levels of performance. Our union members are leading on affordable, quality care and reducing costly waste by reducing errors and hospital-acquired infections, improving processes, shortening wait times, and improving patient satisfaction and health care outcomes.

2. Grow KP and our unions to protect and enhance union jobs. Coalition unions have embarked on a powerful long-term strategy to identify and systematically reach out to large groups of unionized workers (such as teachers, and municipal workers) who can and should be KP members. Union ambassadors—trained rank-and-file health care workers—are talking directly to these union workers about the benefits of KP membership.

3. Improve the health of our workforce. Through our unions over many decades, we have won industry-leading benefits. But the cost of our health care is skyrocketing, too—and we have the power to do something about that. If we get healthier, our costs will go down, our health care benefits will be more affordable for KP—and we will live longer, happier lives! A union member with one or more health risks

costs an extra \$5,000 a year. (Top risks are lack of physical activity, being overweight, stress, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking.) Over time, by reducing these risks, we can cut our health care cost by one-third, or \$437 million a year! This is a long-term strategy to transform the culture of our workplaces, our teams, and our communities—as well as our own behaviors. “We are going to be leaders on showing America how to be the best users of health care,” said Regan.

4. Improve the health of our communities. Poor health and the epidemic of related chronic conditions will stress the U.S. health care system to the breaking point. At current rates, diabetes alone will affect 15.5% of American adults by 2021. Another 100 million will be pre-diabetic. “People will be losing fingers and toes and their eyesight—think of the suffering!” said Regan. And the cost is unsustainable. Taken together, just diabetes and obesity, at current rates, will add \$750 billion to American health care system. We must act.

WHAT ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS?

We are launching a comprehensive campaign on all four of our strategies. Our approach to national negotiations will be consistent with our strategic plan. Our campaign and our message will be positive and focused on a collaborative approach to solving the economic, policy, competitive, and other outside pressures we face.



BARGAINING SURVEY

Union members collected more than 31,600 bargaining surveys. More than 65% of union members rated these issues, in order of importance, as extremely important or very important:

- No cuts in benefits
- Workforce development and job security
- Across-the-board wage increase, equalize wages
- Keep union jobs union; convert non-union jobs to union jobs; resolve grievances faster
- Grow KP and our unions
- Best service: minimize competing initiatives, empower workers to solve problems, build a learning organization
- Union campaign to improve employee health and community health
- Best quality by strengthening UBTs, addressing staffing

WHAT'S NEXT?

Union members will be hearing in February from their local union and stewards about our next steps in our campaign to improve care and performance, grow KP and our union, improve our health, and improve the health of our communities.

UNION INTERESTS

The interest-based bargaining process begins with each party clarifying their interests. Interests are broad areas of concern, rather than specific solutions. (The management bargaining team is expected to agree on their interests in February.)

- Across-the-board wage increases
- Protect all benefits – remain the Best Place to Work
- Enable/Create the workforce of the future and continue to create union jobs
- Total Health – Get Healthy campaign for ourselves, our communities
- Improve the LMP, support for UBTs and Performance Improvement
- Grow KP and our Unions
- Resolve matter of Local Bargaining (in relation to National Bargaining)



NATIONAL BARGAINING AT A GLANCE

Timeline: March 6 – May 10

How we negotiate: Interest-based negotiations

Information: from your local union, issues of InsideOut, and available beginning in February www.bargaining2012.org.

Union bargaining team (CIC): every union in the coalition has representation on the Common Issues Committee (CIC), the joint labor-management group that will conduct the interest-based negotiations process.