

UHW welcomes health educators

Recently, 150 health educators made the important decision to join SEIU UHW West, utilizing the card-check recognition provision in the National Collective Bargaining Agreement. They are located in Kaiser facilities throughout Northern California.

The primary responsibility of the health educator is to assess, design, implement, present and evaluate health-education programs. The primary responsibility of the clinical health educator is to serve as a member of a multidisciplinary primary care team in a clinical setting, providing group and one-to-one counseling and education, in conjunction with the facility's health education department.

Currently they are bargaining for their first contract.

Kaiser social workers join rally

Members of UHW's Kaiser Psych-Social Services Chapter joined hundreds of other UHW members, community leaders, and healthcare workers from St. Joseph Health System (SJHS) at a rally in front of the system's headquarters in Orange County on Oct. 27. "It's exciting to be a part of this historic, statewide organizing campaign," said Carlos Martinez, a psychiatric social worker from Lomita.

The Kaiser Psych-Social Services Chapter used to be a part of SEIU Local 535, which transitioned into UHW, along with five other chapters, in February 2007. "The rally was one of the first steps our chapter has taken toward broader participation in UHW's external organizing efforts," noted Chapter Vice President Jim Clifford.



Kaiser health educators Andre Shaw, left, Erica Bennett and Tim Regan.

Kaiser unveils new program designed to improve purchasing power

Rank-and-file UHW members are joining with Kaiser managers in a new Labor/Management Partnership program to streamline the purchasing process for Kaiser facilities.

Called One Link, this pilot program to consolidate the buying power of Kaiser will be rolled out in the Southern California region, focusing first on the drug distribution department in the Downey Service Center.

Ray Martinez, a shop steward in the drug distribution department, will serve on the One Link committee. "We provide Kaiser pharmacies, from Bakersfield to San Diego, with the majority of their pharmaceuticals. The majority, but not 100 percent," Martinez says. Pharmacy chiefs can, and sometimes do, buy direct from suppliers. The One Link committee will look at vendors and pricing and decide when it makes sense to consolidate orders to save money and/or time.

One Link will also involve the information technology, accounts payable, procurement and warehouse departments.



Three stewards from accounts payable in Pasadena will also be working on the project – Charles Shaw, Jorge Medrano and Gloria Sherman.

UHW staffers Eric Johnson, Will Clayton and Monico Zamora are also involved in the project. "Kaiser is looking for ideas about best business practices from frontline people," Zamora says. He says the project theoretically could eventually include everything Kaiser buys – medical equipment, medical supplies, furniture,

food, office supplies. The committee will also be looking at how supplies are delivered to Kaiser's medical centers and clinics. The goal is eventually to make One Link a national project.

Other unions in the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions are participating if their members are affected by proposed changes. Martinez is optimistic about the project: "We're doing something groundbreaking here, with the Labor/Management Partnership. It's very interesting work."