

1 [Supporting Full Parity at Kaiser Permanente]

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3 **Resolution supporting full parity for mental health patients and clinicians at Kaiser**
4 **Permanente.**

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6 WHEREAS, Mental illness is among the most common health problems faced by
7 Californians, with nearly 1 in 6 California adults experiencing a mental illness of some kind, 1
8 in 24 adults having a serious mental illness that makes it difficult to carry out major life
9 activities, and 1 in 13 children having an emotional disturbance that limits their participation in
10 daily activities; and

11 WHEREAS, More than half of Californians believe that most people suffering with
12 mental health conditions do not get the help they need, and believe that their communities do
13 not have enough mental health providers, including a shortage of bilingual providers in San
14 Francisco, with Black, Latino, and low-income residents most likely to say so; and

15 WHEREAS, The Kennedy Forum, a leading mental health watchdog, has given
16 California’s mental health parity statutes an “F” grade, and Milliman, a leading actuarial firm,
17 has found that California patients seeking mental health and addiction services are more than
18 seven times as likely to get treatment out-of-network than patients seeking medical or surgical
19 care; and

20 WHEREAS, According to a recent California Health Care Foundation / Kaiser Family
21 Foundation Poll, Californians’ top health policy priority is to make sure people with mental
22 health problems can get treatment, with 88 percent of respondents saying it is extremely or
23 very important; and

24 WHEREAS, Kaiser Permanente (Kaiser) is California’s largest health insurer and
25 provider of health care services, with more than 8.8 million covered lives statewide, and as

1 such plays a leading role in driving standards of mental health care for California patients and
2 caregivers; and

3 WHEREAS, Kaiser’s \$14.4 billion in net income since 2014 and \$41.5 billion in cash
4 and reserves as of December 2018 give it more than enough financial resources to accept
5 and afford the implementation of these reasonable proposals necessary for the benefit of its
6 patients; and

7 WHEREAS, Kaiser was fined \$4 million by the California Department of Health Care in
8 2013 for violations of California's Mental Health Parity Act and standards for timely access to
9 care; and

10 WHEREAS, Two other state mental health surveys in 2015 and 2017 found
11 deficiencies with Kaiser; and

12 WHEREAS, Over this period, there also have been multiple class action lawsuits filed
13 over Kaiser’s mental health care deficiencies and hundreds of press stories reporting on
14 Kaiser’s poor delivery of mental health care and its damaging results – including a number of
15 suicides associated with patients allegedly experiencing delays in timely access to appropriate
16 mental health services; and

17 WHEREAS, Despite these failures of care and its repeated claims to the contrary,
18 Kaiser has barely increased its ratio of 1 full-time mental health clinician to every 3,000 Kaiser
19 Plan members; and

20 WHEREAS, Understaffing remains so severe that more than 60,000 California Kaiser
21 patients are being referred to outside therapists, who do not have sufficient appointments
22 available, who cannot access their Kaiser charts, and who cannot coordinate their care with
23 other Kaiser health professionals, denying them the integration of health care services that
24 Kaiser promises; and

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1 WHEREAS, Just as Kaiser’s mental health patients have been denied parity with other
2 Kaiser patients, Kaiser’s mental health clinicians have been denied parity with other Kaiser
3 caregivers, losing their pension for new hires in Southern California and enduring past wage
4 freezes; and

5 WHEREAS, These clinicians are currently voting to authorize an open-ended strike in
6 defense of their patients, their families, and themselves if they cannot settle the fair contract
7 they deserve; now, therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors strongly supports the
9 establishment of full parity for mental health patients and clinicians at Kaiser Permanente
10 guided by the following principles:

11 1. Boosting in-house clinician staffing to levels sufficient to ensure timely access to
12 appropriate care, with caseloads of no more than one new intake visit for every five return
13 appointments; establish patient wait times of no more than ten business days for return
14 appointments unless directed by the treating clinician; and institute third-party resolution of
15 disputes regarding staffing standards; and

16 2. Strictly limiting and ultimately phase out the outsourcing of mental health
17 services so as to ensure that Kaiser’s mental health patients receive the full benefits of
18 reliable, accountable, integrated mental and physical health care across the full spectrum of
19 their treatment; and

20 3. Providing Kaiser’s mental health clinicians with the same raises and benefits
21 enjoyed by all other members of Kaiser’s unionized workforce throughout the State of
22 California, as required to address staff shortages and recruit and retain a stable and
23 experienced workforce; and, be it

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1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors directs the Clerk
2 of the Board to send a copy of this resolution to Kaiser Permanente, for distribution among the
3 Board of Directors of Kaiser Permanente, CA.

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