

A PROFESSIONALS UNION

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My first experience as a union member was as a special education teacher represented by the California Teachers Association. Individual members don't have much significance in an organization that big and there wasn't much encouragement for members to participate.

When I joined Kaiser as an Audiologist, I was struck by how easy it is to become involved with NUHW and to have a say in how things are going. That's critically important for Audiologists and every profession in our unit. Since there are relatively few of us, getting our concerns heard by Kaiser would be much more difficult without a union like NUHW that is responsive to our needs and encourages us to participate and share our concerns.

In our Regional Professional Practice Committee this year, we reached an agreement with Kaiser on guidelines for when patients need more time so we're not rushing them through appointments. There aren't many Audiologists in our bargaining unit, let alone in Kaiser, but our NUHW organizer attended every meeting and supported us every step of the way so that we now have a clear framework

for extending the length of appointments for certain patients, such as people with dementia.

In NUHW, we've made progress working with Kaiser, but we've also won important battles when the time came to stand up to Kaiser. When the pandemic hit and our clinic was closed, Kaiser assigned one of my day-shift colleagues to a night shift labor pool. This was not a workable situation for my colleague, and when no one at Kaiser took responsibility for fixing it, I worked with our organizer to immediately file a grievance, and my coworker was quickly taken off the night shift labor pool.

My concern with UNAC is that we're going to be one of the smallest groups in a union that is overwhelmingly nurses. I'm concerned that when issues arise, it would be more difficult for us to get UNAC's attention and that when it comes to negotiations, our concerns won't be taken into consideration.



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