

Kaiser, Union in Last Ditch Effort to Avoid Strike

The two organizations plan to meet one last time, late next week, as roughly three-fourths of the union's 85,000 members have voted to walk off their jobs.

By [Monica Link](#) | September 15, 2023

Members of the **Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions**, which represents more than 85,000 staff at the payer provider, and the company plan to make a last stab at avoiding a strike.

The coalition has one more round of negotiations with Kaiser from September 21-23 in San Francisco before the contract expires on September 30, a spokesperson from one of the coalition members, the **Service Employees International Union/United Healthcare Workers West**, told *Health Payer Specialist*.

Members of the unions could walk off the job as early as Oct. 1 in protest of wages and working conditions.

Nearly 64,000 union members have voted to strike as of Thursday, according to a [USA Today](#) report.

Should all 85,000 union members strike the coalition says it will mark the largest ever industrial action by health care workers in U.S.

The strike authorization votes are set to be complete by September 20, the day before the final round of negotiations begins.

Oakland, Calif.-based Kaiser previously told *Health Payer Specialist* that it is committed to “work collaboratively with our union partners.”

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Kaiser's potential woes come as the movement dubbed the "Hot Labor Summer" moves into the fall season. Organized labor and America Inc. are ratcheting up a conflict that saw the **United Auto Workers** union launch a massive strike at the stroke of midnight Friday.

Selected units of the nearly 150,000-member UAW, who work at the 'Big 3' American auto manufacturers including **General Motors**, **Ford Motor** and **Stellantis**, which owns Chrysler and Dodge, officially started striking at midnight Friday in protest of pay and working

conditions.

That comes as more than 1,000 **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan** workers represented by the UAW walked off their jobs on Tuesday protesting the payer's wage and outsourcing policies.

In a statement released to *Health Payer Specialist* and media outlets, BCBS of Michigan said that it desired to resolve the situation “quickly” and asked for patience from its members who might have longer wait times for in-person and telephone services as a result of the strike.

The UAW strike with the Big 3 automakers is the first time in the union’s history that members will walk off the job at all three companies at once. The union has dubbed the walkout as the “Stand up Strike” as a nod to its early sit-down strikes of 1937. The UAW was founded in 1935 in Detroit.

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