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Ken Deitz, RN  
President

Pam Brodersen, NP  
Interim Secretary/Treasurer



## President's Message

Last month, we were all stunned by the events at Sandy Hook Elementary School and Clackamas Town Center Mall in Oregon. That something like this could happen at what was supposed to be a safe place shocked the nation. In the wake of these tragedies, there were calls to reform both our gun laws and the way we deal with mental health issues. As a nurse I think we need to do both.

Mental health care in this nation is in need of repair. Too often, when parents are faced with a child who is a threat to his/herself or others, the only solution is to call the police. There simply is nothing that the health care system can do. Beyond that, there is not even a system in place to deal with mental health crises, and little to no coordination between the educational system, law enforcement, and health care providers. This puts families with children who are suicidal or dangerously aggressive, or both, in an untenable situation – no system to assist with their children, and no help in controlling it at home. In short, they have nowhere to turn.

This isn't just a remote problem. According to *Time*, about five million American children have some form of mental illness that is so severe that they suffer significant life impairment such as the inability to safely live at home or attend regular school. Funding for mental illness has dropped dramatically, and children not given "the right diagnosis" often aren't eligible for meaningful help in the health care or legal system.

While mental health coverage will be included in 2014 when the Affordable Care Act goes into effect, it likely won't be enough to fix the other problems in the system. And this is why I strongly believe we also need to fix our gun safety laws. There is too much at stake to believe shoring up our mental health care is enough. It's not. Loopholes in background checks for gun purchases should be closed immediately. If you are trying to buy a gun and have a child with mental health issues, you should be required to take appropriate precautions like trigger locks, proper securing of guns, and potentially even keeping the majority of your guns in a safe place outside of the home. This is just commonsense. How many more Sandy Hooks will we have until we add one word to the second amendment? It should be the right to bear arms—SAFELY!

In unity, 



*United Nurses Associations of California*  
*Union of Health Care Professionals*

# Days of Protest Makes a Splash

Despite uniquely Southern Californian inclement weather, the Kaiser “Days of Protest” in December involved over a thousand Registered Nurses (RNs), Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Physician Assistants (PAs), Optometrists (ODs) and other supporters, who picketed Kaiser facilities to protest cuts to patient care that will result from Kaiser eliminating 175 UNAC/UHCP health care positions. Picketing took place in the heat at Kaiser South Bay, in the pouring rain at Kaiser Riverside, in the freezing cold at Kaiser Ontario Vineyard and again in the pouring rain at Kaiser Fontana.

Despite Kaiser’s own projections that have them earning \$735 million this year, Kaiser claims these cuts are necessary to avoid raising rates on members.

“Kaiser is a very profitable corporation. There is absolutely no financial justification for them to cut patient care or raise rates on families in Southern California,” said Ken Deitz, RN, President of UNAC/UHCP.

“We’re already sometimes out of ratio on this floor, which should be no more than four patients per nurse,” said Javier Rodriguez, an RN in the Emergency Department and the Medical-Surgical and Oncology

units at Kaiser South Bay. “Now the staff is being thinned out even more. Ultimately it’s the patients who suffer.”

“The effect of these cuts on patient care will be dramatic,” said Jacque Bowman, RN in Pediatrics at Kaiser Fontana. “When units are short-staffed, with not enough nurses to meet safe nurse-to-patient ratios, our nurses fill out staffing objection forms. In some units at Fontana I’ve seen hundreds of staffing objection forms every month. So how can they safely cut nurses?”

“Riverside residents can expect three-hour wait times in the ER





now, because of these cuts,” said Dana Amaral, a Registered Nurse in the Kaiser Riverside Emergency Department. “They cut five Physician Assistants from our ER. Plus, they’re shutting down a whole wing, 3 West, which means ER patients who are being admitted to the hospital won’t have beds. That will back up the ER even more. And they’ve picked the very worst time of year to do this, flu season—our busiest time of the year.”

“We don’t have enough staff now to take care of our patients,” said Paula Marshall, RN at Ontario Vineyard. “What will it be like six months from now? Urgent Care will now close at 7 PM instead of 9 PM. Those patients will have to go to the ER or go all the way to Fontana. That means longer wait times for everyone in the ER. Urgent Care used to be open on weekends. Now it won’t be.”



## The Born Nurse

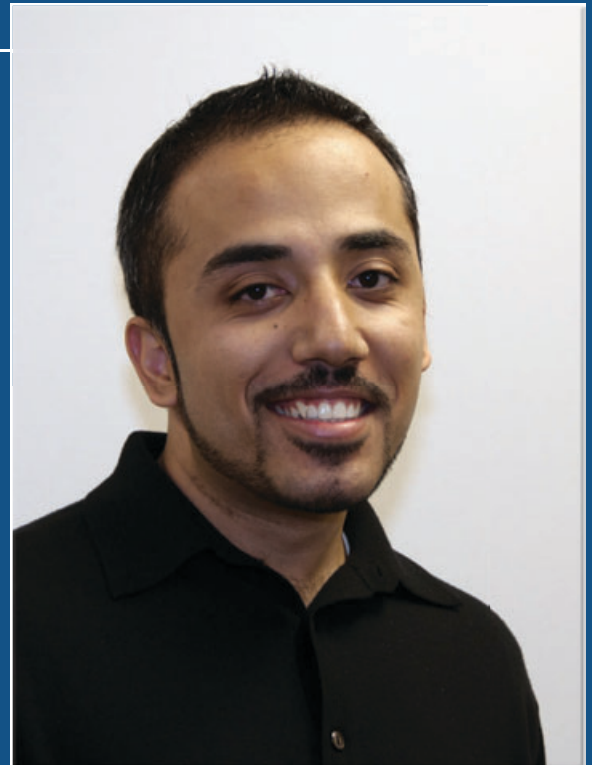
NEW STAFF

**Peter Sidhu** joins Donna Smith representing the Kaiser Specialty Care Nurses of Southern California and the Midwives and Wound Ostomy Nurses. When he was just a wee lad of 10, Peter moved to the Los Angeles area from England. His mother is a nurse, but never pushed him into nursing. But she strongly hinted.

Before settling on nursing, Peter had a wide variety of unusual jobs, none more bizarre than Game Room Manager at Chuck E Cheese, a position created for him so he could play with the kids instead of giving them extra toppings as a pizza maker in the kitchen.

Peter finally chose to become a nurse, and soon gained a reputation as a

“golden child.” He became involved in the union after seeing his staff rep, Denise Duncan, in action, and served as Hospital President for a year at Kaiser Woodland Hills. As a staff representative himself, Peter has already shown himself to be a nimble chant leader by creating many oddball chants during the recent “Days of Protest” pickets at Kaiser facilities and leading them without a bullhorn. He has also distinguished himself as a leader in technology use at UNAC/ UHCP, and has joined our social media activist group.



# Nurse, Interrupted

NEWSTAFF

**Pam Pressney** joins us as our second Staff Representative at Kaiser Orange County. After a childhood spent on the beaches of Long Beach with a retired Navy Commander father and RN mother, Pam Pressney always planned to become a nurse. Fate had different plans, and after majoring in English at UCLA, she went on to become an Apprentice Plant Equipment Operator at Southern California Edison. While using that English degree operating and maintaining oil and gas fired steam generators of electricity, she met her husband-to-be, John, who was her Union Steward!

Inspired by her new love, Pam started taking classes at Cal State Long Beach in Labor Relations. However, soon after they were married, the family moved out of state and Pam turned back to nursing. In due time

they were back to California, and Pam finished up her BSN at Cal State Long Beach. She moved from Kaiser Anaheim to Kaiser San Diego, and quickly became involved in the union.

These days, Pam enjoys time with her family, and acquiring knowledge about her family. She's not just a genealogy buff, but an educated one, with beginning and intermediate certificates to her name, and an advanced certificate on its way.



# The Advocate

NEWSTAFF

**Greg Lutz** is our new Staff Representative at Kaiser San Diego, joining Sandy Oleson. Greg's path to UNAC/UHCP was long, winding, and utterly unique. Greg had a fairly idyllic childhood in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he lived across the street from a ski resort. He filled his time with fishing and skiing. He was also a member of the ski patrol, where he had to help injured skiers safely off the mountain.

Greg studied business in college, and then became a lawyer. He eventually went to work at a law firm, where one day his partner retired from practicing law to attend clown school. That was the final straw for Greg, and he moved on to take a job at an airline. Unfortunately, shortly thereafter, September 11th occurred. His

lemonade, as he said, was that a fellow union member pointed out to him that he was eligible to be retrained. After some soul searching, he thought about his time on the ski patrol. Nursing called to him, and off to nursing school he went.

When he started at Kaiser San Diego, he quickly was noticed by UNAC/UHCP after reading the contract and complaining to his staff representative about unclear language. Who better to advocate for patients than a former lawyer?



# EVERYDAY LEADER

sunday monday tuesday wednesday thursday friday saturday



Maria Palacio, RN, CM

## **SPECIALTY CARE NURSES OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

Unit: Outside Utilization at Independence Park outside Downey

RN: 29 Years, CM: 10 Years

UNAC/UHCP Member: Less than 1 Year

Hometown: Buena Park, CA; Raised in Downey, CA

I'm a loudmouth. As a Case Manager in Outside Utilization, it's my job to see how fast I can get Kaiser members who've been hospitalized outside back into Kaiser facilities. I have a lot of ambitions for SCNSC, and I'm impatient for change. I want to make sure the voices of all our members are heard, and they're satisfied with their jobs. I want to get it all done now.

Erica Mays, President (South) and I are in constant communication. We're both new, but eager to learn, and we were on the Bargaining Team together. We saw that it was important to represent all the Case Managers and Patient Educators. I never worked under a union before. From the news, it seemed like they were always on strike. I wouldn't even

have signed up if management was fair to everyone. We're treated much better now. Management's attentive about how they talk to us. So if there was one thing I could tell all my members, it would be, make your opinion heard. Come forward and say what you have to say.



Erica Yvette Mays, RN, CM

## **SPECIALTY CARE NURSES OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

Unit: Inpatient Utilization, Kaiser Riverside

RN: 10 Years, CM: 7 Years

UNAC/UHCP Member: Less than 1 Year

Hometown: Riverside, CA

As a Case Manager in Inpatient Utilization, I don't do direct patient care. But I get to take a case all the way through to the end—not just in the hospital, but after they leave. Making sure that after they get well, they stay well. That's gratifying. And that's what I want to do as President (South). Some of us on the Bargaining Team feel like the contract is our baby. I don't want to let it go. I want

to see the affiliate through to being fully set up. Make sure that all our hard work pays off.

For so long we were told what to do. Many of my colleagues worked in constant fear of being written up, losing their jobs. I had no experience with unions before. But I've become enlightened. Management definitely treats you better when you're union.

What I seek for our affiliate is for SCNSC members to be part of decision-making when it comes to our jobs and our patients, so that when Kaiser is implementing things they actually listen to us. I want all the Case Managers and Patient Educators to know: your opinions are important. Don't be afraid to speak up.



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## Union in Brief

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### DUES INCREASES —

Union dues increase effective first pay period in January 2013.

Fountain Valley: Dues will be \$42.87 per pay period. Per diem- Dues will be \$2.144 per hour up to a maximum of 20 hours and \$42.87 per pay period.

Garden Grove: Dues will be \$40.58 per pay period. Per diem-Dues will be \$2.029 per hour up to a maximum of 20 hours or \$40.58 per pay period.

Kaiser Affiliates: Dues will be \$54.59 per pay period. Per diem-Dues will be \$2.73 per hour up to a maximum of 20 hours or \$54.59 per pay period.  
Kaiser Optometrists (KPASCO): Dues will be \$68.80 per pay period. Per diem- Dues will be \$3.44 per hour up to a maximum of 20 hours or \$68.80 per pay period.

Lakewood: dues will be \$46.41 per pay period. Per diem-Dues will be \$2.321 per hour up to a maximum of 20 hours or \$46.41 per pay period.

Parkview: Dues will be \$18.95 per (weekly) pay period. Per diem- Dues will be \$1.895 per hour up to a maximum of 10 hours and \$18.95 per (weekly) pay period.

Sharp (SPNN): Dues will be \$43.85 per pay period. Per diem-Dues will be \$2.193 per hour up to a maximum of 20 hours or \$43.85 per pay period.

St. Francis: Dues will be \$57.85 per pay period. Per diem-Dues will be \$2.893 per hour up to a maximum of 20 hours and \$57.85 per pay period.

### IMPORTANT UNION NOTICE —

On December 22, 2012, President Ken Deitz received and accepted Secretary/Treasurer Barbara Blake's letter of resignation.

The Executive Council has approved Pam Brodersen, NP, as the Interim Secretary/Treasurer. Pam has served as the Medical Office President at Kaiser Downey for 24 years and in addition has served on the UNAC/ UHCP Board of Directors for 20 years. We are confident Pam will serve in the interim role to her fullest capabilities.

Ken will be working with both the Board of Directors and the Executive Council as we move forward in the appropriate processes called for in the UNAC/UHCP Constitution to fill the position.