

Resolution to Support UCSF Benioff/Children's Hospital Oakland
By M.V.

Whereas the 2014 Affiliation of Children's Hospital and Research Center Oakland with UCSF was purported to be a partnership of equals, in the interest of strengthening both hospitals; and

Whereas, in the years since the Affiliation, UCSF has jeopardized the future of Children's Hospital Oakland (CHO) and its mission to serve all children regardless of background, race, medical condition, or ability to pay, and has weakened the role of Children's Hospital Oakland as both a safety net hospital for the neediest children in our community, and a tertiary care pediatric referral center for the sickest; and

Whereas, the CHO serves a diverse population, with the majority of patients coming from Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano, and San Joaquin Counties, reflecting the demographics of the East Bay, with many immigrants, children of color, and families from working-class communities; and

Whereas, many of CHO's patients have been pressured to go to San Francisco for services that have been and often are still provided on the Oakland campus and in Children's Hospital Oakland's other East Bay facilities, or have not received care at all. Sending East Bay families to UCSF for care has caused their travel and healthcare costs to skyrocket at a time of devastating economic uncertainty; and

Whereas, inpatient and surgical volumes at Oakland have plummeted since the Affiliation, while San Francisco's census has increased significantly; and

Whereas, Children's Hospital Oakland has lost the skills and dedication of countless experienced and beloved health care workers, doctors, and nurses who have chosen to leave the hospital for better working conditions at other local facilities; and

Whereas, critical services, resources, and technology have been neglected or cut after UCSF took over the leadership and control of Children's Oakland; and

Whereas, UCSF continues to implement changes to operations that result in the degradation of the purpose and obligations of a full-service safety net hospital without the community's knowledge or employees' input; and

Whereas, since the affiliation, health care workers' and community advocates' attempts to engage UCSF leadership to address these increasing healthcare disparities created by the partnership, and have been met with a refusal to be transparent or accountable; and

Whereas, multiple requests for financial information, including information regarding past and future consolidation, elimination, and transfer of services from Oakland to San Francisco have been denied by UCSF; and

Whereas, the transfer of wealth and resources from Children's Oakland to UCSF can be seen as a form of structural racism, and an exacerbation of pre-existing classism, where people with less access to money and influence also get less access to healthy food, healthy air and water, equal rights, and quality health care; and

Whereas, National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW) represents roughly 1,200 workers at CHO in three bargaining units: Business Office Clerical, Service and Technical, and Professionals, with job classifications in a variety of essential roles: custodial staff and food service, X-ray techs, respiratory therapists, psychologists, physical therapists, clinical social workers, and countless others; and

Whereas, NUHW is a progressive independent union and East Bay DSA ally that has led the struggle along with DSA to win Medicare for All in California; and

Whereas, the healthcare and service workers at CHO have served the East Bay community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic with inadequate protections and communication from management regarding infection control, and are now facing a spike in pediatric COVID cases as schools have reopened and the Delta variant has proven to be highly infectious in children. Unlike nearly every other hospital in California, UCSF Benioff/CHO management has throughout the pandemic refused to meet with frontline staff to discuss infection control strategies; and

Whereas, healthcare workers employed by UCSF/Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland (CHO) and represented by NUHW are engaged in an ongoing and escalating contract campaign and preparing for two other contract campaigns to win better working conditions and job security for East Bay healthcare workers in order to keep vital pediatric healthcare services in the East Bay, where they are vastly more accessible to the diverse working class community that CHO serves; and

Whereas, several members of East Bay DSA are active in the campaign to keep care in Oakland, both as staff and as union member leaders; and

Therefore be it resolved that East Bay DSA stands with NUHW members in their struggle to keep vital pediatric healthcare services in Oakland and ensure job security for the working-class healthcare workers who serve the children and families of the East Bay, and fight for a healthcare system that works for all residents of the East Bay; and

Be it further resolved that East Bay DSA shall support the NUHW contract fight including any possible future actions or strike activity for the contract with material resources, organizing assistance, and publicity as needed; and,

Be it further resolved that the EBDSA/CHO Solidarity Committee shall lead this solidarity support in collaboration with chapter representatives and the aid of other chapter committees and bodies where there is interest.