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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Kaiser Permanente (Kaiser) is California’s largest health insurer and provider of health care services, with more than 8.8 million covered lives statewide, and as
such plays a leading role in driving standards of mental health care for California patients and caregivers; and

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Understaffing remains so severe that more than 60,000 California Kaiser patients are being referred to outside therapists, who do not have sufficient appointments available, who cannot access their Kaiser charts, and who cannot coordinate their care with other Kaiser health professionals, denying them the integration of health care services that Kaiser promises; and
WHEREAS, Just as Kaiser's mental health patients have been denied parity with other
Kaiser patients, Kaiser's mental health clinicians have been denied parity with other Kaiser
caregivers, losing their pension for new hires in Southern California and enduring past wage
freezes; and

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

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

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

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

3. Providing Kaiser's mental health clinicians with the same raises and benefits
   enjoyed by all other members of Kaiser's unionized workforce throughout the State of
   California, as required to address staff shortages and recruit and retain a stable and
   experienced workforce; and, be it
FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors directs the Clerk of the Board to send a copy of this resolution to Kaiser Permanente, for distribution among the Board of Directors of Kaiser Permanente, CA.
Resolution supporting full parity for mental health patients and clinicians at Kaiser Permanente.

April 23, 2019 Board of Supervisors - AMENDED, AN AMENDMENT OF THE WHOLE BEARING SAME TITLE
Ayes: 11 - Brown, Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

April 23, 2019 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED AS AMENDED
Ayes: 11 - Brown, Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED AS AMENDED on 4/23/2019 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without her approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board