

Developing and Disseminating Knowledge



Knowledge is powerful medicine. Sharing makes it even more potent.

Kaiser Permanente research teams have been at the forefront of some of the most exciting medical findings on record, making a difference in the lives of people around the world. We share this information to advance the health of all communities, by educating practitioners, supporting vital research, empowering consumers, and informing policymakers.

Our unique combination of assets provides a distinct advantage. We have a large, stable membership made up of diverse populations; highly experienced investigators; access to our state-of-the-art electronic health records; and large-scale training programs for health care workers. All of this enables us to conduct in-depth analyses, gain valuable insight, and translate our findings into practice as quickly as possible.

Groundbreaking discoveries

Kaiser Permanente Research Centers are located in all of our eight regions, employing more than 750 researchers and staff members. These investigators participated in nearly 1,500 research and evaluation studies, out of which

571 were published. Our research has far-reaching implications for public health—such as discovering a link between larger abdominal size at midlife and dementia; and the relationship between treatment of gestational diabetes and reduced risk of childhood obesity.

Transforming the future of health care

Several Kaiser Permanente measures have the potential to transform our understanding of health and health care for years to come. The Utility for Care Data Analysis (UCDA) consolidates detailed data on all Kaiser Permanente members, providing unprecedented opportunities for analysis, behavior reporting, and research. Our Research Program on Genes, Environment, and Health (RPGEH) explores how genes, environmental factors, and behavior influence the incidence, severity, and outcomes of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, asthma, Alzheimer's disease, and other diseases known to be linked to heredity. This knowledge can lead to important advances in preventive care and treatment. In addition, large-scale evaluation of our community health initiatives is helping us build a unique understanding of how complex interventions in communities work to improve health.

The knowledge we gain through our research, along with the investments we make to build and strengthen the country's source of health care professionals, are just two examples of some of the many ways we share Kaiser Permanente's assets with the public and the medical field. We do this to help doctors everywhere provide better care for their patients and to ensure that vital health issues get the attention they deserve.

Partnering for progress

Kaiser Permanente also collaborates extensively with major public health agencies, academic institutions, health foundations, and other research partners to launch large-scale studies. We helped form the Cardiovascular Research Network, a national partnership of 14 HMOs with Kaiser Permanente researchers in leadership positions. Our California regions jointly funded the University of California, Los Angeles, Center for Health Policy Research with nearly \$750,000 to survey 48,000 California households on behaviors linked to obesity. In the Mid-Atlantic States Region, we partnered with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in a trial of innovations to improve the assessment, treatment, and care coordination of the frail elderly.

Getting the word out

Once we make a discovery, we publish our findings, present them at policy roundtables, hold community forums, and communicate our knowledge to health care and public health practitioners, policymakers, and advocates as well as the public at large.

We also collaborate with influential professional and scientific organizations such as the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine (IOM) to share the discoveries from our research and experience, as well as those of others.

Additionally, Kaiser Permanente's Institute for Health Policy (IHP) engages various stakeholder groups to address critical challenges. IHP encompasses a range of initiatives, including efforts to better understand health disparities and obesity, and implementing electronic health record systems to improve health care.

Building the health care community of the future

To address the national shortage of medical professionals, Kaiser Permanente invested approximately \$66 million to educate new and established health care professionals. Through

clinical training, residencies, faculty support, scholarships, seminars, and mentoring, we are making a major contribution toward building, inspiring, and supporting the health care workforce for years to come.

Inspiring health through entertainment

Kaiser Permanente's signature Educational Theatre Program (ETP) make health education entertaining and motivate children and teens through the power of live theater, music, comedy, and drama. Performances highlight the value of healthy eating and physical activity, diversity, conflict resolution, dealing with grief and loss, peer pressure, HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, and the use of alcohol and tobacco. Follow-up activities promote the discussion of health issues among children, their families, and teachers.

The goal is to inspire people and communities to make healthier choices, and to increase collaborations that promote health and well-being. Performances are free to schools and community groups.

Kaiser Permanente also partnered with an independent children's game developer to produce an interactive game based on a popular ETP character, the Amazing Food Detective (AFD). Developed in close collaboration with our pediatric weight management experts, *The Incredible Adventures of the Amazing Food Detective* is the first video game designed to teach 8- to 10-year-old children about healthy food and exercise choices, extending the reach of our antiobesity messages.

Kaiser Permanente partnered with Scholastic Inc., the world's largest educational publisher, to develop an extensive program of teaching materials called *The Case Files of a Healthy Class*, and distributed 10,000 free game packages to fourth- through sixth-grade teachers in 5,000 primary schools from coast to coast. The AFD program received the 2008 Best Products award from iParenting Media Awards and was recognized as Best in Class by Interactive Media Awards.

If you would like to learn more about our commitment to our communities and our charitable activities, visit kp.org/communitybenefit.