

# Institute for Health Policy



## Sharing knowledge to help build healthier communities

Our key focus areas include delivery system reform, health information technology, reducing health disparities, and developing a strong evidence base that helps us manage use of medical technologies. Sharing our knowledge and expertise in these areas enables us to provide solid, unbiased information to help public health practitioners, health policymakers, and other stakeholders promote high-quality, affordable care for all Americans.

## Coordinating efficient health care delivery systems

At Kaiser Permanente, we believe that achieving health care “systemness”—all the many parts of the health care enterprise working together in an economically aligned and clinically coordinated system of care—will reduce fragmentation in America’s health care system. A growing body of research literature attests to the greater quality and efficiency that result when physicians and other clinicians, hospitals, and insurers collaborate and coordinate to provide the many services they deliver. Documenting and explaining how systemness promotes more affordable, high-quality health care for all Americans, including the most vulnerable populations, is a key way that we influence the nation’s health policy agenda and the communities we serve.

## Improving health information technology

Kaiser Permanente was an early adopter of a state-of-the-art electronic health record (EHR) system with extensive decision-support capabilities. Our analysts are translating our experience and learnings from this transformative technology into policy-relevant evidence on the value of electronic health information. We share this knowledge as part of our effort to improve the quality of health care delivery throughout the health care policymaking environment and among our safety net partners—community health centers, public hospitals, and local health departments. We work closely with these organizations to achieve the potential of health information technology to provide better medical care for the uninsured and underserved.

In our briefing paper, *Kaiser Permanente HealthConnect—Lessons from the Research Literature*, we summarize for policymakers the conclusions of dozens of published studies examining the benefits of Kaiser Permanente’s EHR. We expect many of the findings will be applicable in other organizations throughout the safety net that are implementing similar technology initiatives.

**Kaiser  
Permanente  
is committed**

to actively participating in shaping the nation's health policy agenda to advance the health of all communities. Our Institute for Health Policy (IHP) convenes policymakers and thought leaders and shares our knowledge as part of the nation's largest, private, integrated health care delivery system.

## Reducing health disparities

Resolving socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic disparities in health care services and health outcomes is one of the most important issues we face as a nation. At Kaiser Permanente, we employ innovative approaches that look beyond the conceptual walls of the medical care system. We believe it is important to include multiple strategies that health care systems can follow to address the nonmedical causes of health disparities, such as unsafe neighborhoods and lack of access to healthy food.

The information we share in our report, *Beyond Equal Care: How Health Care Systems Can Impact Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, outlines how health care organizations can work with communities to develop solutions for health disparities that lie outside the medical care system and to build healthier environments together.

## Creating forums for effective policymaking

IHP collaborates with foundations, policy institutes, research programs, and policymakers to create opportunities for dialogue between those who study and practice health care, and those who establish the policy context in which the delivery and health care financing systems operate. These opportunities foster the necessary exchange of knowledge to enable informed policymaking that leads to healthier communities.

## Partnering for Healthy Eating Active Living

Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) is Kaiser Permanente's Community Health Initiative's (CHI's) strategy to address the obesity epidemic and other health issues that can be a byproduct of poor nutrition and inactivity. HEAL's Convergence Partnership is a group of foundations and health care organizations focused on accelerating and supporting environmental and policy changes to promote healthy communities. Through this partnership, IHP is educating industry stakeholders and policymakers about how health policy and institutional practice reform can improve nutrition and physical activity.