



2020 Kaiser Permanente

# Community Health Snapshot



## Our values and commitment

2020 called on us to respond to a global pandemic, accelerate our efforts to support the social health of our communities, and to confront — unequivocally — the health and wealth gaps created by systemic racism and deeply entrenched inequities in our society.

We recognized that this was a time when our values and our commitment to health compelled us to do even more to create more healthy years for all. In pursuit of this goal, we brought our energy and ingenuity to foster healthier, more equitable communities.

At the heart of these efforts are initiatives and interventions designed to meet the social needs of our members and communities, which grew at an accelerated pace during the pandemic. As needs expanded, we continued our work to house homeless individuals and invest in affordable housing; increase access to nutritious, affordable food; and develop economic opportunities in our communities.

We dedicated ourselves to improving the health of the millions of people who live in the communities we serve and our 12.4 million members. In the midst of the pandemic and the disproportionate toll it has taken on Black, Indigenous, Latino, and various communities of color, we moved quickly and intentionally to provide increased support for people who are too often the first to absorb the brunt of society's crises and the last to feel relief.

We are proud of the work we were able to accomplish in 2020, together with our teams and many community leaders and organizations, even as we acknowledge the tremendous challenges that remain ahead of us. We will continue our focus on furthering health equity across our communities, unwavering in our dedication to efforts that result in fair and just treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement of all people in pursuit of their total well-being.



**David Grossman, MD, MPH**

Interim Senior Vice President,  
Social and Community Health  
Kaiser Permanente



**Stephanie Ledesma**

Interim Senior Vice President,  
Community Health Programs  
Kaiser Permanente



**Cynthia A. Telles, PhD**

Chair, Community Health Committee  
of the Boards of Directors  
Kaiser Permanente





## Community Health Investment

As the nation's largest nonprofit integrated health care organization, Kaiser Permanente is mission-driven to improve health and well-being in the communities we serve. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored deep-seated inequities in health care for communities of color and amplified the social and economic disparities that contribute to poor health outcomes. We carry out work in our focus areas through a lens that includes deepening our commitment to equity and inclusion.

## Economic Opportunity

**Communities of color are disproportionately affected by a lack of economic opportunity, living under sustained financial strain that creates multiple barriers to good health.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has fueled dual health and economic crises, widening racial health and wealth gaps even further. Kaiser Permanente sought innovative ways to help increase support for long-term economic opportunity, weaving these activities into a broader pandemic response.

In June 2020, Kaiser Permanente announced a series of actions to address systemic racism



and lack of economic opportunities that have persisted for far too long and prevented communities of color, and especially Black communities, from achieving total health. This included a \$60 million joint investment with Local Initiatives Support Corporation to provide recovery and growth capital to entrepreneurs of color and \$40 million in grants to address emotional trauma and support equitable economic opportunity. Our work with nonprofits and community organizations supported approximately 1,400 entrepreneurs in 2020.

## Housing for Health



**Without a safe place to call home, it's nearly impossible to focus on basic health and medical needs.** Kaiser Permanente is leading efforts to end homelessness and preserve and increase affordable housing by making investments that have long-term impact, shaping public policy, and catalyzing innovative partnerships.

To respond to the increased vulnerability to COVID-19 among people experiencing homelessness, Kaiser Permanente provided 46 grants totaling \$6.3 million to strengthen COVID-19 prevention and response for this population across our regions and markets. This vital funding enables communities to respond to specific local needs, such as expanding testing, increasing staff capacity for symptom monitoring, enhancing coordination with local public health departments, and building capacity for health care providers who serve homeless people.

Long-term solutions to the homelessness and affordable housing crisis continue to be a cornerstone of our work. To this end, Kaiser Permanente contributed \$25 million to California's Project Homekey. This public-private partnership is providing \$800 million in grant funding to local public entities to help expand long-term housing for people experiencing homelessness through acquisition and rehabilitation of hotels, motels, and vacant apartment buildings. Kaiser Permanente has also partnered with the national nonprofit Community Solutions on the Built for Zero initiative to help accelerate the end of homelessness. Additionally, Kaiser Permanente supported the production of "The Way Home" — a documentary series created by KTF Films and Bread and Butter Films to document and tell personal stories about the affordable housing and homelessness crisis in California. This series was produced to deepen understanding, spark dialogue, and illuminate root causes — as well as promising solutions — to the homelessness crisis.





## Thriving Schools



**The COVID-19 pandemic radically changed the landscape of our nation's schools and school communities.** For schools, it has meant teachers adapting to new distance-learning methods; new means of connecting with students who have a variety of mental, physical, and social health needs; new ways to distribute school meals to people who rely on them for daily sustenance; and new levels of stress for teachers, staff, and students.

In 2020, we expanded our focus to address the broader social health needs of the school community that had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, including food and housing security, economic opportunities, and safety net resources. In collaboration with over 30 national school health organizations, including Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Action for Healthy Kids, Healthy Schools Campaign, SHAPE

America, and FutureEd, we also developed the playbook “Planning for the Next Normal at School: Keeping students, staff, and families safe and healthy.” The playbook is an evolving collection of actions recommended to help school leaders provide safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments, whether in person or virtual. Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools and Alliance for a Healthier Generation developed the Quick Start Health Assessment, a unique online tool designed to help schools and districts prioritize and implement key mental, physical, and social health practices as they navigate teaching within the context of COVID-19. In May 2020, Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools partnered with Discovery Education and Alliance for a Healthier Generation to launch Ready, Set, RISE! — a series of no-cost, digital resources for educators to support human connection and empathy in school environments.

## CityHealth



**CityHealth, Kaiser Permanente's collaboration with the de Beaumont Foundation, advances a package of policy solutions that will help millions of people live longer, better lives in vibrant, prosperous communities.** CityHealth's policy recommendations are based on evidence, supported by experts, and have a track record of bipartisan support. CityHealth regularly evaluates cities on the number and strength of those policies. In December 2020, CityHealth released its annual ratings of America's 40 largest

cities, and 4 cities served by Kaiser Permanente earned overall gold medals. Atlanta earned its first overall gold medal, buoyed by achievements in food safety, safer alcohol sales, smoke-free indoor air, Tobacco 21, and high-quality, accessible pre-K. Additionally, Kaiser Permanente and CityHealth have helped in recent years to secure major policy wins on laws establishing 21 as the minimum age for purchasing tobacco in Denver, Washington, and Maryland, and complete streets policies in Portland and Seattle.

## Medicaid and Charity Care



**Striving to improve health access also means serving people most in need of health care through Medicaid, medical financial assistance, charitable health coverage, and other forms of subsidized care and coverage.** We provided high-quality care to nearly 1,145,000 members through Medicaid and the Children’s Health

Insurance Program. We also provided health care coverage through charitable health coverage programs to more than 17,000 individuals with low incomes and families who don’t have access to other public or private health coverage, and we provided more than \$551 million in medical financial assistance to patients in need in 2020.

## Environmental Stewardship



**Climate change causes many conditions that drive poor health.** Damaging extreme weather events such as wildfires, hurricanes, and droughts are increasing the rates of asthma and respiratory diseases, and the spread of infectious diseases such as malaria and Zika virus infection.

In 2020, Kaiser Permanente became the first health care organization in the United States to achieve carbon neutral status. This eliminates

the organization’s 800,000-ton annual carbon footprint, the equivalent of taking 175,000 cars off the road. To reach this milestone, Kaiser Permanente improved energy efficiency in our buildings, installed on-site solar power, and made long-term purchases of new renewable energy generation. Kaiser Permanente then invested in carbon offsets to counter the currently unavoidable emissions from the natural gas power that heats and cools our hospitals.



Review California [AB 1305 compliance disclosures](#) on our greenhouse gas emissions reduction efforts.

# Total Community Health Investment



**\$2.1B**  
Medicaid  
and other  
government  
programs

**\$574M**  
Philanthropy

**\$611M**  
Charity care  
(Medical Financial  
Assistance Program  
& Charitable Health  
Coverage Program)

**\$145M**  
Health  
professions  
education

**\$69M**  
Research

**\$82M**  
Other

**Total:  
\$3.6B**





## Member-Focused Initiatives

What we have learned from our work in communities applies to our members as well.

## Social Health

**In 2020, Kaiser Permanente asked more than 10,000 of our health plan members about their general health and related social factors, including their ability to afford housing, pay bills, and make personal connections.** Sobering findings included significant disparities among our members: Latino members were nearly 5 times more likely to need help buying and finding healthy food than white respondents, Black members were 3 times more likely to need help paying for utilities than white members, and members who self-identified as multiracial were more than 5 times more likely to experience transportation issues compared to white members.

As Kaiser Permanente worked to implement an equitable pandemic response, we launched new social health resources to help address the



myriad social factors affecting our members and communities, with these resources tailored to meet the demands of COVID-19. We published a social health playbook with guidance for care teams on screening patients for social needs and helping them find resources. Thrive Local\*, a resource we developed for connecting members and patients to community-based programs and services and integrating social health into care delivery, was launched in 2019 and continued to grow in 2020. In addition to providing the tool to our clinical partners, we also opened a national call center for members seeking help locating resources in their communities. The call center received nearly 7,000 calls in its first 8 months of operation in 2020 and was a vital resource for helping patients with COVID-19 receive food, housing support, and other essentials.

\* The services described above are not covered under your health plan benefits and are not subject to the terms set forth in your Evidence of Coverage or other plan documents. These services may be discontinued at any time without notice.



# Food for Life



The need for food assistance grew in our communities in 2020, and a survey of our membership showed that 1 in 5 Kaiser Permanente members are experiencing food insecurity while 1 in 7 members experienced new challenges to accessing healthy food during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response, Kaiser Permanente expanded our existing food security efforts and launched new initiatives to help meet our most vulnerable members' needs. We continued to make strides toward transforming the economic, social, and policy environments connected to food with the launch of our Healthy Savings coupon program to help lower the cost of healthy food at major

grocery stores, and through our research on how to best provide medically tailored meals to people who are discharged from the hospital. By December 2020, over 1,500 patients and their households received 84,000 meals through Kaiser Permanente's medically tailored meals program. Another key achievement of 2020 was the expansion of our Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program enrollment outreach program to include Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income members who may be at increased risk of food insecurity. As of late 2020, the campaign had reached 2.5 million people and resulted in over 68,000 applications submitted for benefits.

## Read more about our work

### Economic Opportunity

- [Actions to fight racism and promote equity](#)
- [Pandemic-readiness training for LVNs/LPNs for COVID-19 surge](#)

### Housing for Health

- [Spotlighting the human side of homelessness](#)
- [Grants strengthen COVID-19 response in homeless communities](#)
- [A place to call home](#)

### Thriving Schools

- [The Planning for the Next Normal at School playbook](#)
- [Ready, Set, RISE!](#)
- [Caring for the education community during COVID-19](#)

### CityHealth

- [CityHealth](#)

### Medicaid and Charity Care

- [Medical Financial Assistance Program](#)
- [Charitable Health Coverage Program](#)

### Environmental Stewardship

- [The first carbon neutral health system in the U.S.](#)
- [The road to carbon neutral](#)

### Social Health

- [Kaiser Permanente creates COVID-19 Social Health Playbook](#)

### Food for Life

- [Food assistance outreach to ease COVID-19 financial strain](#)



## Leadership

**Community Health Committee of the Boards of Directors, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., and Kaiser Foundation Hospitals**

**Greg A. Adams** | Chair and CEO

**Cynthia A. Telles, PhD**

**Ramón Baez**

**Regina Benjamin, MD, MBA**

**Richard P. Shannon, MD**

### Community Health National Leaders

**David Grossman, MD, MPH**  
Interim Senior Vice President  
Social and Community Health

**Stephanie Ledesma**  
Interim Senior Vice President  
Community Health Programs

### 2020 Community Health Regional Leaders

**Jill Feldon**  
Kaiser Permanente  
Mid-Atlantic States

**Dan Field**  
Kaiser Permanente  
Northwest

**David Grossman, MD, MPH**  
Kaiser Permanente  
Washington

**Chris Hause**  
Kaiser Permanente  
Hawaii

**Yvette Radford**  
Kaiser Permanente  
Northern California

**Beverly Thomas**  
Kaiser Permanente  
Georgia

**Amy Whited**  
Kaiser Permanente  
Colorado

**John Yamamoto**  
Kaiser Permanente  
Southern California