

Revolutionizing Cancer Care in an Integrated Delivery System

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In response to the widespread impact of cancer on patients, their families, and communities, the physicians of the Permanente Medical Groups at Kaiser Permanente have set a goal to be the national leader in quality for cancer care. Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) scores show that Kaiser Permanente has nation-leading performance in breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer screening. The organization also exceeds the national average for five-year survival rates in breast, lung, and colorectal cancer – some of the most common forms of cancer.



CANCER CARE AT KAISER PERMANENTE

The Permanente approach is rooted in the coordination and connectivity enabled by Kaiser Permanente’s integrated care delivery system, beginning with robust screening and prevention. With patient communication as a cornerstone, the organization has comprehensive programs to ensure proactive screening at any point of contact with patients. If cancer is detected, Kaiser Permanente has pathways in place to speed up the time from diagnosis to treatment and reduce the mental burden and anxiety for patients. Clinical leaders have also prioritized early integration of palliative care, which means higher quality of life and longer survival for patients battling aggressive cancers.

Leading in Research

The Kaiser Permanente cancer research program is one of the largest in the nation. Its size enables the organization to be highly effective in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of all aspects of cancer. Highlights of the organization’s research program include:

- Higher patient enrollment into the National Cancer Institute (NCI)-sponsored National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN) than any other program in the United States (2016).
- Participation in trials including genomically targeted new drugs and immune therapy for various cancers.
- An NCI-designated National Community Oncology Research Program that enrolls more minority and underrepresented patients than any other institution.

Patient Journey



How Kaiser Permanente Addresses This Issue

Kaiser Permanente’s coordinated care model allows doctors, nurses, and other caregivers to connect to patients and to each other through an advanced electronic medical record at every stage of their cancer journey.

- **Colon Cancer Screening:** Recognizing the link between early detection, screening, and improved outcomes for colon cancer, Kaiser Permanente mails fecal immunochemical test (FIT) kits to patients’ homes to be screened based on age, family history, or previously documented conditions. When tests return

positive, care coordinators reach out directly to patients to schedule additional testing. They also follow up with those who didn’t return tests. The Southern California Permanente Medical Group (SCPMG), for example, screens just under 90 percent of its eligible population, up from 45 percent one decade ago.

- **Care for High-Risk Patients:** Only about 5 to 10 percent of breast cancers are linked to inherited mutations in a BRCA gene. But a woman who has the BRCA gene mutation may have as high as an 85 percent lifetime risk of

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developing breast cancer, whereas an average woman's lifetime risk is about 12 percent. At Kaiser Permanente's high-risk clinics, patients meet with a multidisciplinary team of physician experts, including a genetic counselor, oncologist, breast surgeon, plastic surgeon, and peer navigator. Individualized risk-reducing care plans are created based on family history, genetic testing, or other factors so that women can make informed decisions to protect their health.

- **Chemotherapy:** Kaiser Permanente's oncology module – embedded in the system-wide electronic health record – addresses chemotherapy ordering, alerting, reviewing/verifying, dispensing, and administration in both the ambulatory and inpatient care settings. This program optimizes cancer care delivery, makes chemotherapy administration safer, and provides real-time clinical information to the entire care team at the point of care.
- **New Procedures and Technology:** If surgery or radiation is needed, minimally invasive procedures – including laparoscopic and robotically-assisted surgery – are standard for most cancer cases. Kaiser Permanente uses a robotic radiosurgery system to non-invasively target high doses of radiation on tumors without damaging surrounding normal tissues. A linear accelerator and radiosurgery systems are also used to deliver minimally invasive, precision treatment while avoiding nearby healthy tissue.

On the Horizon

Kaiser Permanente will expand its efforts to improve cancer screening rates and reduce mortality system-wide. Through the use of precision medicine and genomics, Kaiser Permanente will continue to prioritize and improve identifying at-risk patients and using the most effective care to keep them well.

Through system-level improvements, SCPMG is on track to reduce colon cancer mortality by 50 percent over the course of 10 years. SCPMG leaders say that setting ambitious goals sends a message to patients, employees, and the public that they are focused on helping their patients get healthier, live longer, and achieve a higher quality of life.

Selected Publications

Schottinger, Joanne E., Michael H. Kanter, Kerry C. Litman, Helen Lau, Gary E. Schwartz, Farah M. Brasfield, Najeeb S. Alshak, and Louis A. DiFronzo. "Using Literature Review and Structured Hybrid Electronic/Manual Mortality Review to Identify System-Level Improvement Opportunities to Reduce Colorectal Cancer Mortality." *The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety* (2016), 42(7): 303-AP2. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1553725016420416>

Permanente Physician Experts

Our physician experts are available to discuss our many cancer care services.



Stephen Tarnoff, MD, president and executive medical director, Washington Permanente Medical Group



Mary Wilson, MD, MPH, executive medical director, The Southeast Permanente Medical Group

About the Permanente Medical Groups

The Permanente Medical Groups are composed of more than 21,000 physicians. Our mission is to improve the health of our patients and the communities in which we provide care. We practice in eight self-governed, physician-led, prepaid, multi-specialty medical groups that work with the Kaiser Foundation Health Plans and Kaiser Foundation Hospitals to provide care for more than 11.8 million Kaiser Permanente members. We work collaboratively, enabled by state-of-the-art facilities and technology, to provide preventive and world-class complex care in eight states – from Hawaii to Maryland – and the District of Columbia.

About The Permanente Federation

In 1997, the Permanente Medical Groups formed The Permanente Federation LLC to represent their shared interests. The Federation serves as the key partner on behalf of the medical groups with Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and Kaiser Foundation Hospitals on national initiatives.

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