

# Sustainability in Health Care – It Starts with Leadership

## Leadership Talks, Walks and Envisions a Healthier Future

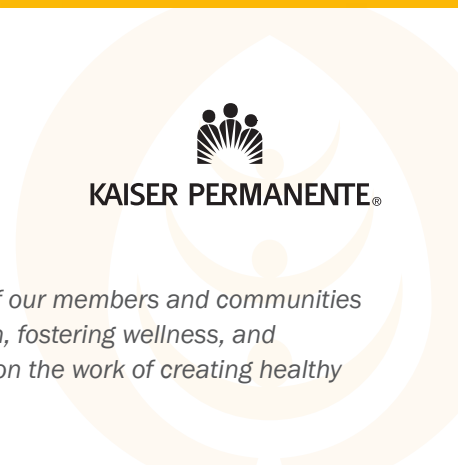


### Raymond J. Baxter, PhD

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*“Kaiser Permanente’s mission is to improve the health of our members and communities we serve. To make that a reality, our efforts at prevention, fostering wellness, and building healthy communities must take into consideration the work of creating healthy environments.”*



### Leadership Talks:

At Kaiser Permanente, we recognize that there are many influences that shape one’s health and well-being. We understand that health care services traditionally provided by doctors and hospitals are but one factor that contributes to an individual’s or community’s total health. Our mission requires us to pursue the goal of total health—that synergistic combination of physical, emotional, and spiritual health that creates wellness.

Achieving total health means that we engage clinical, behavioral, environmental, and community strategies to improve health for our members and the communities we serve. Our homes, our workplaces, our schools and communities are all spaces for health and wellness to be optimized. When the health of these spaces is threatened, everyone suffers.

This is why environmental stewardship is fundamental to our work. Our program is anchored in promoting the health of our communities and eliminating or mitigating environmental contributors to disease. We’ve set aggressive targets for reducing waste. We developed a Sustainability Scorecard to source safer alternatives to products used in medical devices and supplies. We procure environmentally sustainable food and advocate for policies and

programs that support access to healthy, sustainable food. And we’re improving our carbon footprint through an energy strategy that utilizes cutting-edge green building techniques and water and energy conservation measures, and powering our facilities with clean and renewable energy wherever possible

### Leadership Walks

- Re-engineered our Environmental Stewardship Council in 2008 to provide a coalescing force that would guide and maximize Kaiser Permanente’s efforts to reduce health risks associated with environmental factors.
- Created the Sustainability Scorecard, the first of its kind in health care, that allows us to evaluate the environmental impact of new products by requiring suppliers to provide specific data on the over \$1 billion worth of medical products and equipment we purchase annually. We’ve made this tool widely available through the nonprofit sustainability organization Practice Greenhealth. So the impact of the scorecard has grown to nearly \$135 billion in annual medical product purchasing and continues to climb.
- Committed to reuse, recycle, or compost at least 40 percent of our

waste materials systemwide by the end of 2015. Furthermore, we’ve prevented more than 346,000 pounds of surplus waste production by safely extending the usefulness of single-use medical devices, avoiding more than \$8 million in costs.

- Committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2020 from a 2008 baseline. Plans for reaching this goal include energy efficiencies in new buildings, improved energy conservation in existing buildings, and the use of on-site and off-site renewable energy sources and renewable energy credits.
- To date, Kaiser Permanente has installed solar panels on 11 facilities in California. As of January 2012, the solar panels are generating 11 megawatts of clean, renewable energy.
- Several of Kaiser Permanente’s buildings have been U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Energy Star certified and LEED certified.
- Completed our first systemwide emissions inventory in 2010 that will provide invaluable data for

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identifying our emissions “hotspots” and taking the steps to reduce them.

- Working to promote the increased sourcing and consumption of healthy, sustainable food within our hospital system and in the surrounding communities.
  - Host/sponsor 40 farmers markets at our facilities in six states to help reduce car trips to grocery stores and increase access to locally grown produce.
  - Made sustainable food choices account for 15 percent of our total food purchases.
  - Through Community Benefit programs and strategic grantmaking, Kaiser Permanente consistently funds community organizations and public-private partnerships that are working to create greater access to fresh, local produce in underserved communities.
- Purchase latex-safe, PVC-free exam gloves in all facilities; also eliminated DEHP/PVC from our intravenous (IV) medical equipment.
- Purged 630,000 grams of mercury from within our facilities to make our organization virtually mercury free.
- Powered 46 trucks in our courier fleet with biodiesel fuels, reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants by decreasing Kaiser Permanente's diesel usage from 115,000 gallons per year to less than 100,000.
- Increase public awareness and promote public policy through Congressional briefings and testimonies focused on

important issues of environmental and public health to improve environmental performance across the entire health care sector.

### Leadership Envisions

We at Kaiser Permanente want to remain an industry leader in promoting sustainability in the health care sector by setting aggressive targets for improving our environmental performance. We will continue to engage our 165,000+ employees and 16,000+ physicians throughout the organization to foster environmental stewardship through their daily actions and workflows. We will continue our work to increase public awareness and promote public dialogue that recognizes the importance of environmental stewardship as a component of healthy communities. And we will join together with other hospitals and health care systems, medical professionals, community groups, and non-profit organizations to transform the health care sector so that it is ecologically sustainable and supportive of public health and the environment.

