

## Switch from Buying Many Different Telemetry Devices to Using a Telemetry Service

**Environmental and Human Health Impact:** Eliminate 2.5 tons of waste and avoid 50,000 clinic visits to obtain telemetry devices and instructions per year.

**Business Impact:** Contract delivered average annual savings of 14 percent or 380,000 dollars and KP no longer purchases devices nor has dedicated personnel to instruct patients on device use and testing.

### Challenge

The Cardiology Core Group explored a contracting opportunity with the launch of the outpatient telemetry initiative 2008. Holter monitors and event recorders (referred to as telemetry devices) are used to diagnose patient heart conditions by monitoring the activity of the heart for a determined period of time. These devices, weighing about 3 ounces, are typically worn at the belt and have two disposable leads which are attached to a patient's chest. Patients typically came to our facilities to get "hooked-up" and receive monitoring instructions.

Kaiser Permanente (KP) had many suppliers because many facilities were buying their own devices and utilizing in-house call centers staffed by KP personnel. Facilities that didn't have a call center outsourced their monitoring business for Holter and event monitors with a supplier who used disposable devices.

**KP performs over 50,000 of these telemetry tests per year.** At least half of the KP facilities were buying disposable devices, and those devices were ending up in landfills.

### Aim/Goal

- Reuse of Holter monitors and event recorders through a service provider contract with Medicomp.
- Reduce dependence on disposable devices.

### Team

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Timothy Cotter MD, Vice Chair - Cardiology Core Group SST and Chair - Cardiac Ultrasound SST  
Vincent Pagua, Associate Sourcing Manager, KP  
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### Actions Taken

- ✓ The Cardiology Core Group narrowed down the telemetry service suppliers through an evaluation process with many stakeholders.
- ✓ Their goal was to standardize on a single supplier to provide outpatient telemetry services across all KP regions.

### Results

- ✓ Patients are now provided re-usable cardiac monitors. There is no wasteful packaging, and the device is shipped in a re-usable pouch.



- ✓ Patients mail back the device back via prepaid mailer. There is no need for patients to travel to KP facilities, which helps reduce fuel emissions.
- ✓ Medicomp reprocesses the device and ships to other patients. These devices are reused for about five years or 100 times (whichever comes first) and then they are recycled.
- ✓ Eighteen locations in NCAL have converted since contract inception. Five locations in the NW have also made the conversion. Most of SCAL has transitioned from using in-house call centers to the Medicomp service model. The adoption rate has been steady in SCAL with NCAL at 100 percent.
- ✓ Average annual contract saving of 380,000 dollars.
- ✓ **Total annual electronic waste elimination is 4,688 pounds or 2.5 tons!**

### Lessons Learned

- ✓ Kaiser Permanente does not need to have dedicated personnel to perform telemetry related instructions for device "hook-ups."
- ✓ Patients do not need to make visits to pick-up and return devices.

### Next Steps

- ✓ Implement the out-patient telemetry service model across all Kaiser Permanente regions.