

Assembly Select Committee on the Master Plan of Higher Education in California
Kaiser Permanente Testimony
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Introduction

Good morning, Mister Chair and Members. My name is Scott McGuckin and I am a Senior Director of Talent Acquisition at Kaiser Permanente. Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today.

Kaiser Permanente is recognized as one of the nation's leading health care providers and not-for-profit health plans. We currently serve 11.8 million members in 8 states and the District of Columbia.

A robust healthcare workforce is critical to Kaiser Permanente accomplishing its mission to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve.

California's population is growing, aging, and becoming increasingly diverse — trends that place an untenable burden on the state's health workforce. The pipeline of caregivers, including doctors, nurses, therapists, and elder care specialists, has not kept pace with demand, particularly in underserved, rural, and ethnically and linguistically diverse communities.

More coordinated planning and investment is needed now to ensure California has the right people, with the right training, in the right places to fill current and new roles that will be essential to meeting future health needs.

What are the challenges or barriers in meeting Kaiser Permanente's (KP) workforce needs today and in the future?

Kaiser Permanente has over 208,000 employees in multiple disciplines among the 8 states in which we operate. In CA alone, we have over 149,000 employees and almost 16,000 physicians. So, it's difficult to distill our organization's workforce needs to a few bullets. With that said, however, I will highlight a few, specific, challenges in meeting our workforce challenges.

- 1) **Primary Care Clinicians:** According to the Healthforce Center at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF), California is facing an eminent shortage of primary care clinicians. The number of physicians completing primary care residencies in California does not appear adequate to replace primary care physicians who are likely to retire in the coming decade. Demand for full-time equivalent (FTE) primary care clinicians in California including physician assistants and nurse practitioners is projected to increase by 12% - 17% between now and 2030 due to population growth, aging and changes in the volume and intensity of the use of health care services. In addition, the distribution of primary care clinicians across

regions of the state is uneven and Latinos, African-Americans, and Native Americans are underrepresented among them.

- 2) Behavioral Health: Access to care in our Behavioral Health and Wellness areas is a concern for the healthcare industry. The gap is due to a lack of trained Psychiatrists (Med Doctor education), Psychologists (PhD), and other licensed skilled Medical Social therapists (LCSWs, MFTs). This gap will likely continue to be a challenge as there are not enough programs graduating students and there is an increasing need for behavioral health services.
- 3) Nursing Management: Nursing constitutes the largest licensed health professional group in the US. They practice in nearly every setting of the health care system and many are poised to take on leadership roles. But plenty of nurses will need to gain new skills, including leadership and management competencies, to meet patient needs.
- 4) Allied Health: When most people think about the health care workforce, they think about doctors and nurses who provide care directly to patients. Many health care professionals, however, work at the bedside or behind the scenes to provide laboratory, imaging and other critical services needed to diagnose and treat patients. Numerous studies have been completed that analyze certain allied health workforce shortages, and this is something else that we're focused on.
- 5) Workforce Diversity: Workforce diversity is important to improving the health and wellness of Californians. Many experts believe that a workforce that mirrors the racial and ethnic diversity of California will increase access to care and improve the quality of care that is delivered. As such, a more diverse cadre of physicians, nurses and other health professionals is a crucial strategy for improving the health and wellness of underserved communities

What programs or initiatives, public or private, have been successful in meeting KP's workforce needs? Does KP provide or promote training, skill development, or other professional development?

We offer a wide range of development options for our employees. Like many organizations, we offer a wide variety of training programs that support soft skill development, technical skill development, business skill development, and role specific development (Program Management Advanced Training, Nurse education, process training, etc.). We offer over 1,200 courses, videos and KP specific courses to support employee development. We also offer several certification prep courses for program-specific disciplines (i.e. Project Management Institute, etc.).

For our leaders, we have a curriculum in place that addresses management development, strategic planning, and executive development.

Kaiser Permanente has several internship programs that have been successful in meeting KP's next generation workforce needs in many of our non-clinical areas. Through these programs, we promote and provide training, mentorship and professional development opportunities. Post graduate rotation & fellowship opportunities also exist to train and integrate early career professionals into certain disciplines like Finance, Insurance, and Information Technology.

How does KP interact with higher education institutions? Which institutions do you interact with and what does it look like? Are there success stories that you can share that are scalable across the state?

I'll start by providing you with an overview of a few of our programs:

Graduate Medical Education (GME) - Kaiser Permanente's university-affiliated residency, intern, and Graduate Medical Education programs are among the largest training programs in the country, offering training in almost two dozen specialties. The purpose of Graduate Medical Education is to provide an organized educational program with guidance and supervision of the resident (includes interns, residents, and fellows), facilitating the resident's professional and personal development while ensuring safe and appropriate care for patients. Kaiser Permanente Northern California trains residents from university and community-based programs throughout the region, including **UC Davis** and **UC San Francisco**. In our Southern California Region, **UC Irvine, UC Riverside and UCLA** are among our current list of affiliates.

In addition to this work, our residency programs also offer initiatives focused on **Increasing the Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse, Culturally Educated Healthcare Workforce:**

- **Undergraduate Research Internship (URI)**- The Kaiser Permanente Northern California/**UC San Francisco** Undergraduate Research Internship (URI) program is designed to increase the number of underrepresented minority medical student applicants from the **University of California at Berkeley** who gain acceptance to medical school. The curriculum includes research, clinical shadowing, and didactics. The URI is designed to acculturate these premedical students to a career in primary care.
- **UC Davis/Kaiser Permanente – Prep Medico**- This six-week summer program is offered to freshman and sophomore college Latino students interested in becoming physicians. The program's main focus is to help students navigate through their educational journey towards medical school and provide exposure to the world of patient care.
- **Kaiser Permanente – La Salud Permanente Latino Health Elective**- A four-week elective for Spanish speaking medical students and residents who are introduced to our integrated health care delivery system including technology, patient education and wellness programs, and culturally competent care. Students and residents work within primary care departments whose primary focus is Spanish-speaking patients.

As we move on to the broader healthcare workforce, Kaiser Permanente also has a trust, called the Ben Hudnall Memorial Trust (established in 2007), which provides career counseling services and access to education and training programs across Kaiser Permanente Regions. I'll reference a few program examples:

- Degree Completion Program with **Coastline Community College** (Costa Mesa) is designed for those who have already completed some college-level course work (perhaps from a variety of academic institutions) who would now like the opportunity to turn that collection of classes into an Academic Certificate or an Associate's Degree. What makes this program successful for our employees is that Coastline has several articulation agreements with institutions within California that offer guaranteed admission to community college students who meet specific requirements. These programs are free to employees who are eligible for the Ben Hudnall Memorial Trust. For more detail, visit <https://bhmt.org/coastline-community-college/>.
- RN to BSN Program with **CSU Fullerton** - The RN to BSN Program is a customized Individual Stipend Program developed for those pursuing a BSN degree. Students can complete coursework online or on campus and progress at their own pace, taking as little as one year (three semesters) to graduate. RN to BSN program participants receive a maximum benefit of \$19,673 that can be used to replace wages while completing the BSN degree program. For more detail, visit <https://bhmt.org/california-state-fullerton/>.
- We have a partnership with **CSU San Marcos** for employees to complete lab science prerequisite courses, on-line, that may be required for Nursing and Allied Health programs. These courses include lecture and an experiential, hands-on lab component using lab kits that academically align with standard, face-to-face lab courses. The programs are offered through the Ben Hudnall Memorial Trust at no cost to the employee. For more detail, visit <https://bhmt.org/lab-science/>.
- In addition to the above programs, Kaiser Permanente also provides community benefit workforce development grants. One example is the **Santa Rosa Junior College High School Pathways to Health Careers Program**: Since 2015 KP has supported this program which works with Sonoma County 11th and 12th grade students from underrepresented backgrounds in a multi-year program that features advanced healthcare professional training, skills lab, job shadowing and work based learning. Over 375 students have gone through the program since 2015.

KPSAH & SOM - Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't reference the fact that our organization is directly contributing to the academic development of the healthcare workforce through our KP School of Allied Health Sciences and our School of Medicine. The KP School of Allied Health Sciences offers programs of study in: medical assisting, nuclear medicine, phlebotomy, radiography, and cardiac/general sonography. The Kaiser Permanente School of Medicine, which will open fall 2019, will prepare a new generation of physicians to influence positive change within the U.S. health care system. The School will be embedded in Kaiser

Permanente's health care system and will move beyond traditional health care settings, acknowledging the importance of team-based care, and promoting a focus on diversity and inclusion to deliver health equity.

What role should higher education institutions play in meeting workforce needs? What role should businesses play?

Industry should articulate their needs including trends in the marketplace. Industry needs to invest in higher education to ensure that higher education is as relevant as possible. Healthcare is in a period of transformation. Unfortunately, change comes in relatively short, 18-24 month, waves so we cannot provide 5 year plans which have been requested in the past. In addition to fostering strong relationships between industry and higher education, universities need to become as agile as possible. Together we can provide education, develop critical thinking skills and provide access to the latest scientific research. All of this will provide relevant and needed knowledge, skills and experience for a ready California workforce.

Closing

The health care workforce is vital: it constitutes a significant portion of the state's labor market and is the source of care for Californians. Developing a coordinated and comprehensive strategy to expand the training and educational supports and programs is needed to increase the supply of California's health care workforce. This cannot be done in isolation and will require intentional levels of collaboration and cooperation between multiple players. Kaiser Permanente looks forward to working with policymakers and the state, as well as other health workforce partners, as solutions are developed and implemented.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I will be happy to entertain any questions that you may have.