EXECUTIVE LETTER

As we reflect on the past year, we must recognize that our communities — and the world — are coping with unprecedented challenges magnified by the coronavirus pandemic and a renewed struggle for racial equity and social justice.

In 2019, we could not have anticipated our new reality. Through our continued focus on expanding our community health approach, however, we laid the foundation for an acceleration of work to meet the challenges posed by the public health crises we now face. We dedicated ourselves to improving the social health of our 12.2 million members and the millions of people who live in the communities we serve.

In 2019, we built strong foundations for our work to house homeless individuals and invest in affordable housing, increase access to nutritious, affordable food, and foster real economic opportunity in our communities. Working with community partners, we housed more than 500 homeless seniors in Oakland, California, an approach we’re expanding to additional communities in our footprint. In its first 6 months, our digital campaign to increase participation in CalFresh, California’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, helped more than 15,000 Kaiser Permanente members apply for benefits. Through the Thrive Local network, our health care providers and staff are connecting individuals to appropriate services provided by a robust set of nonprofit, public, and private resources. Thrive Local launched in the summer of 2019 in Kaiser Permanente’s Northwest Region.

We made great strides to help support the mental, physical, and social health of all students, teachers, and school staff, especially those who have experienced poverty or trauma, or are facing other social challenges. At the same time, we kept our focus on maintaining a healthy environment for all, building on our renewable energy efforts to help us reach our goal of becoming carbon neutral in 2020.

As we look ahead, we will continue our work with community partners and government leaders to meet the formidable community health challenges facing our society. Kaiser Permanente is well positioned in this effort as we take a comprehensive approach toward prevention of and recovery from COVID-19. We remain resolute as our organization deepens its 75-year commitment to equity and inclusion, supporting the fight for equal opportunity and social justice for all.
CREATING A SOCIAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic swept the world with far-reaching effects on our members and communities, Kaiser Permanente was committed to screening for and addressing people’s unmet social needs, including assistance with housing, food, and economic insecurity. Now more than ever, we need to address social health with the same level of effort we use to pursue physical and mental health. In 2019, we laid the groundwork to help improve the social health of our members and communities through several initiatives.

Thrive Local: This program enables health care providers to connect people with available community resources to help them live healthier and fuller lives. Thrive Local launched in the summer of 2019 in Kaiser Permanente’s Northwest Region and will be available to all of our 12.4 million members and the 68 million people who live in the communities we serve by early 2022.
- Kaiser Permanente Northwest launches Thrive Local social health network
- Survey: Housing, food, isolation major barriers to health

Food for Life: We launched this landmark initiative to help increase food security on a national scale. As first steps, we began a broadscale texting campaign to connect eligible California residents with CalFresh, the state’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. California’s Medicaid program, Medi-Cal, has one of the highest enrollments in the country – yet the state has one of the lowest rates of SNAP enrollment, with only 70% of eligible families enrolled. The national average is 83%. The majority of Medi-Cal enrollees are from underserved communities, and nearly half of enrollees are Latinx. In the first 6 months after launch, the Food for Life texting campaign reached more than 600,000 Kaiser Permanente member households to help those who are eligible apply for CalFresh benefits.
- Boosting food security to improve nation’s total health
- Food for Life: Why health cannot happen without housing

Housing for Health: Without a place to live, it’s nearly impossible for a person to take care of basic health needs. Chronic homelessness can cut 27 years from a person’s life and overall death rates among people experiencing chronic homelessness are 3 to 4 times that of the general population. Even well before becoming homeless, people who struggle with high housing costs can also have trouble paying for food and medical care. People of color, in particular African Americans, are disproportionately impacted by homelessness. African Americans make up 40% of the homeless population in the United States despite only representing 13% of the general population, and the disparities are only widening. We believe that Kaiser Permanente and other health care organizations can play a key role in the effort to help solve the affordable housing and homelessness crisis:
- Housing for health: Why health cannot happen without housing
- We committed to invest up to $200 million in affordable housing through our Thriving Communities Fund: Improving health through stable housing
- Kaiser Permanente’s Colorado Region joined with local and state organizations in a partnership designed to help end chronic homelessness in Colorado: Kaiser Permanente in Colorado working to end homelessness
- In Oakland, California, in partnership with Bay Area Community Services, we committed to find housing for 515 aging, homeless individuals with at least one chronic medical condition: Transforming housing for a growing aging homeless population

Thriving Schools: We supported the physical, social, and emotional health of students, teachers, and school staff to help create healthy, positive learning environments for all. We launched RISE (Resilience in School Environments), which provides virtual, no-cost mental and social-emotional support to schools and school districts nationwide, and we set the foundation to be able to expand our social health efforts in schools related to food insecurity, housing, and economic supports.
- Forging resilience in Georgia’s schools
- Expanding emotional wellness across America’s schools

Economic Opportunity: Income-earning and wealth-building opportunities are foundational to healthy communities, housing stability, food security, and physical, mental, and social health.

Kaiser Permanente continues to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of members and communities.

Joyce Bigelow’s Kaiser Permanente care team helped her connect with resources to find housing.
We support local, inclusive economic opportunities through our own business decisions and practices, as well as through partnerships with community-based organizations and peer anchor institutions.

- We invested in economic opportunities in underserved communities through programs such as Inner City Capital Connections: New program to strengthen diverse small businesses; Grant supports women leaders and entrepreneurs

- We committed to a partnership with Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers West (SEIU-UHW) to establish Futuro Health, a nonprofit organization dedicated to growing a large network of certified health care workers: New nonprofit to address health care worker shortage

Alongside our commitment to addressing social health, we also worked to strengthen our efforts in key areas by making progress toward our environmental stewardship goals; improving health in schools and cities; and serving our communities through charitable coverage and care, Medicaid, and other government programs.

We provided high-quality care to nearly 977,000 members through Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) as measured through the National Committee for Quality Assurance’s Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS), a tool used by more than 90% of America’s health plans to measure performance on important dimensions of care and service. In each of our markets, Kaiser Permanente Medicaid plans perform at the 90th percentile or above on measures related to consumer satisfaction, prevention, and treatment. In California, our largest Medicaid market, Kaiser Permanente Medi-Cal holds 5-star ratings on the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers Survey (CAHPS) in San Diego and Sacramento counties, and the highest ratings of any Medi-Cal-managed care plan in the state.

TOTAL COMMUNITY HEALTH INVESTMENT

Kaiser Permanente spent more than $3.4 billion on community health in 2019 as part of our ongoing commitment to improving the health of the communities we serve.

$3.4B

$1.74B Medicaid and other government programs

$132M Health professions education

$706M Philanthropy

$72M Research

$663M Charitable coverage and care

$117M Other

Victor Nelson, who had been homeless, now prepares meals in his home, courtesy of a partnership between Kaiser Permanente and Bay Area Community Services.
LEADERSHIP

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

Greg A. Adams
Chairman and CEO

Cynthia A. Telles, PhD

Ramón Baez

Regina Benjamin, MD, MBA

Richard P. Shannon, MD

Community Health National Leader

Bechara Choucair, MD
Senior Vice President and Chief Health Officer

Community Health Regional Leaders

Amy Whited
Kaiser Permanente Colorado

Jill Feldon
Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States

Dan Field
Kaiser Permanente Northwest

Yvette Radford
Kaiser Permanente Northern California

Christina Hause
Kaiser Permanente Hawaii

Beverly Thomas
Kaiser Permanente Georgia

John Yamamoto
Kaiser Permanente Southern California

David Grossman, MD
Kaiser Permanente Washington