

Kaiser Permanente Northwest: Responding to the Health Needs of Our Communities



As a nonprofit health care provider, Kaiser Permanente Northwest is dedicated to caring for the health needs of our communities and addressing the social and environmental factors that create barriers to health.

In order to better understand the needs and resources of each community we serve, we regularly conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment. This process not only informs our community investments, helping us make long-term, sustainable change, but it also allows us to deepen the strong relationships we have with partner organizations and holds us accountable to our mission as we work together to improve community health.

Our carefully selected investments, the dedication of our organizational resources, and our long-standing commitment to providing high-quality care and service are an investment in the total health of the communities where we all live, learn, work, and play.

Our Process

"We rely on research, data, and evaluation to decide how to most effectively invest in the communities we serve."

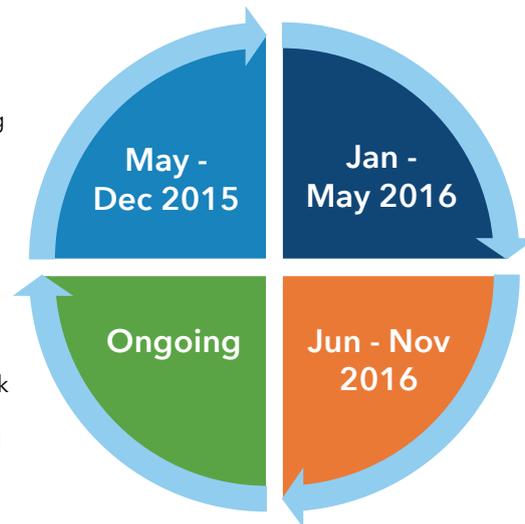
Kaiser Permanente conducts a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years to inform its community investments and meet federal regulatory obligations. The CHNA process provides a rigorous method for identifying high-priority health needs in communities and developing corresponding strategies to address those needs.

During the CHNA process, Kaiser Permanente collects information using a variety of tools and sources – public data and analytical mapping tools, online surveys, and listening sessions conducted with community members, representatives of underserved populations, community health workers, and local health system leaders – to identify a list of community health needs.

We then select which needs to focus on by considering which needs are most pressing and which needs we are best equipped to address with our unique organizational assets.

DATA COLLECTION

Collect and synthesize input gathered from publicly available health data, listening sessions and community partner surveys.



SELECT HEALTH NEEDS

Through a process of data analysis and identification of pre-defined criteria, identify, prioritize, and select community health needs that KP will address.

MONITORING

Implement strategies and track progress and impact of plan through evaluation efforts and results tracking. Report on impact in 2019 CHNA.

STRATEGY PLANNING

Plan for impactful strategies to address selected health needs. Apply evidence-based practices using KP resources for maximum impact.

What We Discovered

Kaiser Permanente Northwest's 2016 CHNA process illuminated five high-priority health needs that were most critical to the health and well-being of the communities we serve. These health needs will serve as the foundation for our community benefit efforts for the next three years:

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE – Access to high-quality, affordable, holistic, and culturally specific care.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY – The ability to meet basic needs through access to housing, jobs, education, and healthy foods.

CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT – Prevention and treatment of chronic diseases and conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, and cancer.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS – Access to mental health care that is integrated with primary care, substance abuse treatment, community safety, and violence prevention.

ORAL HEALTH – Prevention and treatment of conditions of the mouth, teeth, gums, and throat that cause pain and disability leading to poor overall general health and an array of other health problems.

How We Will Respond

Kaiser Permanente employs a variety of approaches – grant making, employee volunteerism, strategic collaboration, resource sharing, and programming – to respond to community health needs. We work with community partners and key stakeholders to invest in solutions for creating health that are tailored to the strengths and needs of each community we serve.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

GOAL: Increase the ability of low-income and underserved individuals in our communities to receive the right care, at the right times, in the right settings, from a diverse workforce that meets their needs.

OUR RESPONSE:

- Increase access to high quality, culturally appropriate health care and coverage for low-income and underserved populations through Medicaid, charitable health coverage for children, medical financial assistance, and community access programs.
- Foster greater coordination with community partners to meet people's social non-medical needs by funding school-based health centers, sharing our clinician expertise with community clinics, and fostering a strong network of community health workers.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

GOAL: Increase economic opportunity for vulnerable populations in our communities, with a focus on educational attainment, skilled employment, and stable housing.

OUR RESPONSE:

- Strengthen the ability of students to learn through programming that supports the physical, social, and emotional well-being of staff and students in the pre-K to 12 system.
- Increase the number of diverse and low-income students who are college and career ready by investing in efforts that promote college aspirations, career exploration, and academic/skill development.
- Increase opportunities for diverse and low-income individuals to complete postsecondary education or training and secure skilled jobs, particularly in health care.
- Increase access to high-quality, affordable housing and supportive services for housing-insecure individuals and families by supporting organizations working to improve economic and housing security.

CHRONIC DISEASE

GOAL: To improve health and prevent chronic disease in populations with inequitable health outcomes through strategies that create healthy places and policies and empower individuals and families to prevent, manage, and treat their chronic disease(s).

OUR RESPONSE:

- Improve healthy eating and active living opportunities in community and institutional settings through support for community collaboratives, municipal policies, and local programming that helps people treat, manage, and prevent chronic disease.
- Improve the health of students, staff, and teachers in K-12 schools through programs, partnerships, and volunteerism that support healthy eating, active living, and social and emotional wellness.
- Increase community capacity and cohesion of local community networks to advance greater health equity and address chronic disease.

"We bring people together to collaborate, share ideas, and create new opportunities for everyone to live a long, healthy life."

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

GOAL: Improve the mental health and resilience of our communities through trauma-sensitive systems of care and prevention efforts and the integration of physical and mental health care in clinical and community settings.

OUR RESPONSE:

- Improve accessibility to high-quality, culturally sensitive, integrated mental and physical health services for low-income and vulnerable individuals and families.
- Increase availability of crisis services and long-term social supports for individuals with mental health challenges by supporting organizations and efforts that secure and maintain supportive housing.
- Promote prevention and resiliency strategies in mental health and trauma-informed care through screening for early trauma and appropriate culturally informed interventions in schools and primary care settings.
- Build a diverse, skilled mental health and wellness workforce, including traditional health workers.

ORAL HEALTH

GOAL: Improve the quality and access to affordable, integrated oral health care in community and clinical settings.

OUR RESPONSE:

- Ensure access to high-quality and equitable oral health services through direct care and support of community partners who care for low-income individuals.
- Build a diverse, adequate, and well-distributed oral health workforce by partnering and investing in dental workforce programs, and professional development.
- Reduce oral health disparities by supporting workforce participation in community dental events and developing and maintaining oral health services at school-based health centers.
- Promote integrated medical care that includes oral health by encouraging combined medical and dental records, coordinated care, and greater oral health prevention efforts.

Our Promise

Kaiser Permanente is here to improve the lives of our members and everyone in our community. But we know we cannot do this alone. That is why we are committed to working alongside community partners and stakeholders here in the Northwest region to continuously grow and enhance our understanding of what the best approaches are to addressing community health needs.

The community health needs and approaches articulated here underscore our vision of total health, our promise to strive for the highest quality of care for each individual, each family, and each community, honoring their individual needs and aspirations while recognizing their experiences as integrated and whole – body, mind, and spirit. That’s what total health means to us.

Join with us in creating the future of health.

“We engage in partnerships and investments that focus on eliminating barriers to health experienced by members of underrepresented, low-income, and marginalized populations.”

Kaiser Permanente’s CHNA process was conducted in association with the Healthy Columbia Willamette Collaborative, a public-private partnership that we helped to co-found. We are grateful for the contributions of the 15 hospitals, four health departments, two Coordinated Care Organizations, and more than 20 local community organizations who have provided invaluable input for our continued work together.