

Responding to the health needs of our communities



Prioritized health needs: Access to care, economic security, access to healthy food and physical activity, and mental health

Our vision at Kaiser Permanente Washington is for our communities to be the healthiest in the nation. We recognize that good health extends beyond the doctor's office and the hospital. Good health for all requires equity and social and economic well-being.

Our approach to community health puts relationships at the center. We collaborate closely with community-based organizations, schools, businesses, state and local governments, and coalitions to improve the social and economic factors that contribute to health. By concentrating on communities where we have a physical presence, we are able to pair our financial resources with other assets, including our hiring and purchasing practices, clinical expertise, and workforce volunteerism.

Impact requires focus. Every 3 years we complete a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and Implementation Strategy. Through those activities we identify the most pressing needs in our community and strategies for addressing them. This summary highlights our 2019-2021 prioritized needs and implementation strategy.



Through the CHNA, we identified the most pressing issues using public health data, community reports, interviews, focus groups, community events, and an Instagram campaign. See the full report for details.



For the implementation strategy, we prioritized health needs and strategies by considering severity and magnitude of the need, clear inequities, community resources already dedicated to the issue, potential for collaborating with local organizations, and ability to address the issue using Kaiser Permanente resources. See the full strategy for details.

The CHNA and Implementation Strategy will guide Kaiser Permanente Washington's efforts from 2019 through 2021.



Implementation Strategy Summary

Advancing health equity is foundational to our community health strategy. We focus our efforts on under-resourced communities, and when possible, we aim to address structural factors that contribute to inequity, poverty, and oppression.



Access to care

Despite efforts to expand coverage across the state, many residents in Washington remain uninsured or can't afford care.

Goal

All community members have access to high-quality health care services in coordinated delivery systems.

Intermediate Goals

- Increase access to comprehensive care for low-income and uninsured populations and strengthen the systems that serve them.
- Increase access to social, nonmedical services for low-income populations.
- Increase access to school-based health services and mental health support.
- Improve the health status of students, teachers, and staff in schools.

Our Response

- Provide high-quality medical care to patients on Medicaid.
- Provide financial assistance to eligible people who receive care at Kaiser Permanente facilities.
- Make available a social services resource locator that connects people who are low income to community and government resources.
- Strengthen the capacity of clinical and social safety net organizations.
- Improve access for the underserved, build capacity of the primary care workforce, and improve health care utilization.
- Engage community partners to address transportation barriers to health care.
- Support efforts to expand school-based health centers.



Economic security

Many Washington residents are struggling to meet basic needs, including affordable housing and enough food to eat.

Goal

All community members experience improved economic security, including access to employment, education, and housing opportunities and other factors that influence health.

Intermediate Goals

- Increase economic opportunities as we hire, purchase, invest, and build our facilities.
- Increase access to living-wage careers for young adults who face barriers to employment, focusing on youth of color.
- Increase access to safe, affordable housing and support services for people who are homeless or at risk of displacement.
- Strengthen capacity of coalitions and nonprofits to advance equity, increase economic opportunity, and improve built environments.

Our Response

- Support economic vitality near Kaiser Permanente facilities through purchasing, hiring, and workforce pathways, impact investing, and improving the built environment.
- Support community efforts to improve structural factors that contribute to poverty and oppression, including family violence, youth detention, and institutionalized racism.
- Make available a social services resource locator that connects people who are low income to community and government resources.
- Support cities in implementing policies to advance health, prosperity, and equity.
- Increase access to affordable housing and support services;



provide direct services to homeless youth and housing insecure families.

- Leverage Kaiser Permanente assets to support school and nonprofit STEM programs, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships for people under-represented in STEM.



Equitable access to healthy food and physical activity

Many Washington residents struggle to access healthy, affordable food and face barriers to physical activity.

Goal

All community members eat better and move more as a part of daily life.

Intermediate Goals

- Improve access to healthy food in low-income, under-resourced communities.
- Increase opportunities for physical activity in low-income, under-resourced communities.

Our Response

- Make available a social services resource locator that connects people who are low income to community and government resources.

- Support high-need schools with implementing policies and practices that promote Healthy Eating Active Living.
- Deliver a multipronged strategy to improve food security.
- Build active spaces that are open to the public and strengthen community vitality.



Mental health

In Washington, income is related to mental health – people with higher incomes report better mental health and higher levels of social support.

Goal

All community members experience social-emotional health and well-being and have access to high-quality mental health services.

Intermediate Goals

- Increase screening related to mental health/illness.
- Expand mental health and well-being knowledge, skills, and support services for low-income and uninsured populations.
- Increase access to appropriate mental health services for vulnerable and low-income populations.

- Increase access to social, nonmedical services for youth, vulnerable, and low-income populations.

Our Response

- Make available a social services resource locator that connects people who are low income to community and government resources.
- Build student and staff resilience to address adverse childhood experiences through the Resilience in School Environments (RISE) initiative and multitiered systems of mental health supports.
- Promote healthy choices through theatrical productions and experiential learning.
- Partner with community organizations to strengthen policies for providing coordinated mental health supports and trauma-informed services.
- Support community efforts to improve structural factors that contribute to poverty and oppression, including family violence, youth detention, and institutionalized racism.
- Increase access to school-based health services and mental health support in Kaiser Permanente communities.



Moving forward together

At the heart of our work is our mission – to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve.

As we work toward health equity and lasting change, we put collaboration at the center of our efforts. As a partner we serve in various roles, including convener, connector, researcher, health care provider, funder, thought leader, and advocate. We aim to leverage our scale and assets to ensure our communities are healthy, equitable places where everyone can thrive.



Visit kp.org/wa/community or email communityhealth.wa@kp.org to see the full community health needs assessment and implementation strategy plan. We welcome your feedback and look forward to hearing from you.

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