

# WHAT IS LABOR MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP?

Labor Management Partnership is a strategy for high performance—and a formal commitment between Kaiser Permanente and the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions to work together collaboratively. We use the Value Compass, which puts the member at the center of every decision, to focus our teams on achieving the highest quality, the best service, the most affordable care and the best place to work. These achievements are created by high-performing teams that engage physicians, managers and frontline workers in ensuring that each patient has the best possible experience.



The strategy has led to measurable results:

- An operating room team in San Diego increased the number of cataract surgeries per day through workflow improvements, reduced length of stay for gall bladder patients and saved tens of thousands of dollars a year by reducing supply waste.
- An adult medicine team in Rockville, Maryland, increased its mammogram screening rates by six percentage points—to 87 percent — by coordinating scheduling across clinical departments.
- A laboratory team in Englewood, Colorado, reduced the number of bad blood draws—and the need for return patient visits and rework—by more than 50 percent by improving staff communication and equipment.

- An orthopedic surgery and sports medicine team in Northern California increased osteoporosis screenings for at-risk patients to 71 percent, up from less than 20 percent, in one year, becoming one of the highest performers in the region.
- The environmental services department in the Northwest region went from being one of the most-injured workgroups in any region to being one of the least, achieving nearly a five-fold improvement in safety in just one year.

## How does it work?

Partnership brings managers, frontline workers and physicians together to make full use of each group's—and each individual's—expertise. These different perspectives help to bring about solutions that address and resolve systemic issues, improving service, the quality of care, and eliminating waste that drives up costs. Frontline employees, who do the job every day, are able to offer innovative solutions to the problems at hand. Stewards are evolving into work-unit leaders. Managers are moving away from directing how work is done and into coaching and mentoring roles. Physicians are supported in providing high quality, compassionate patient-centered care. For members and patients, the entire care experience improves.

## Unit-based teams

Some 3,500 unit-based teams are in place across Kaiser Permanente, bringing together 110,000 workers in coalition unions, their managers, and physicians. A unit-based team includes all the members of a natural work group and focuses on improving performance in that area. A UBT may function within a department or, when the nature of the work is interdependent, it may draw its members from across department lines. UBTs are an organizational structure, a platform for doing the work that needs to be done. Their work is closely aligned with regional business priorities.

“The UBTs unleash the knowledge of the workers,” says Ben Chu, MD, executive vice president of Kaiser Foundation Hospitals and Health Plan and group president of the Southern California and Georgia regions.



## Continuous improvement

Modern health care is a constantly changing environment, with quick responses needed to address all manner of change, from competitive pressures and changing regulations to technological advances. The Rapid Improvement Model gives employees and physicians an easy four-step process—plan, do, study, act—for adapting to change quickly, on the job, and working daily to improve performance. Each person has two primary responsibilities: to do his or her job well, and to actively seek out new ways to do the job better.

Kaiser Permanente's historic mission and model of care—our unique system of high-quality, affordable care for working families—have served our members and communities well for more than 60 years. To transform Kaiser Permanente to be the future of health care and to safeguard our social mission, we focus every day on what is best for each member and patient.

We're changing to meet the challenges we face—and that means every worker, manager and physician needs to think and work differently in their day-to-day jobs. Our unique care model and our shared focus on our members and patients is leading the way to a health care solution for our country.



## History of LMP

When Henry J. Kaiser and Dr. Sidney Garfield created a health plan for Kaiser's shipyard and construction workers in the 1930s and '40s, they laid the foundation for the future Kaiser Permanente. From a customer base that was almost exclusively union members, Kaiser Permanente grew into the largest nonprofit health care organization in the country.

Today, an innovative partnership among Kaiser Permanente managers, workers and physicians—the Labor Management Partnership—honors that early cooperative spirit between the company and its union employees. Our partnership is the largest and most comprehensive of its kind and is credited with yielding superior health care results and a high-performance workplace.

The Labor Management Partnership was founded after years of labor turmoil within Kaiser Permanente and competitive pressures within the health care industry. In 1995, 26 local unions representing KP workers formed the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions to better coordinate bargaining strategy. In 1997, Kaiser Permanente and the Union Coalition created LMP as a way to transform the relationship and the organization. Today LMP covers 110,000 union-represented employees (about 80 percent of all union-represented employees at KP) in California, Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Georgia, the Washington, D.C., metro region and Hawaii.