

# Changing the Trajectory

Kaiser Permanente's  
Comprehensive Public Health  
Approach to the Epidemic of  
Childhood Obesity

William Caplan, MD  
Director, Clinical Development

- Describe the strategy of directed social change for the prevention of childhood obesity
- Understand Kaiser Permanente's comprehensive public health approach and opportunities for other health care organizations to address the epidemic of childhood obesity

- America's oldest and largest private, nonprofit, integrated health care delivery and financing system — Founded in 1945
- Multi-specialty group practice prepayment program — Headquartered in Oakland, CA
- 8.2 million members — 6.1 million members in California
- Over 12,000 physicians representing all specialties and 130,000+ additional employees
- Operations in 9 states and Washington, D.C.
- KP Research Centers - \$100,000,000 in external funding in 2003 for Health Systems Research



Noon-hour loudspeaker health education program in Kaiser Shipyard, Richmond.  
Staff physician talking on the common cold

From *Industrial Medicine*, 1414, April 1945

**KP's Mission:** “To improve the health of our members and the communities we serve.”

Our members cannot be healthy if they live and work and go to school in communities that are unhealthy.

## The Epidemic of Overweight Children



“I think we’re looking at a first generation of children who may live less long than their parents as a result of the consequences of overweight and type 2 diabetes.”

Francine Ratner Kaufman, MD  
Head, Division of Endocrinology & Metabolism  
Children’s Hospital Los Angeles



Not enough physical activity.

Too much TV & video games.

Not enough milk, dairy, fruits and vegetables.

Too many sweetened drinks (e.g., soda, juice drinks, sports drinks) and too much fast food.

Skipping meals and breakfast.

“The ultimate aim of obesity prevention in children and youth is to create, through directed social change, an environmental-behavioral synergy that promotes positive outcomes both at the population and individual level.”

Preventing Childhood Obesity-Health in the Balance  
Institute of Medicine (IOM)2005

- **Advocacy**
- **Coalition building/partnerships**
- Crisis
- **Economics**
- **Environmental and policy change**
- Government involvement
- **Mass communication**
- Plan of action
- **Science base**
- Spark plugs

The Partnership to Promote Healthy Eating Active Living (PPHEAL)



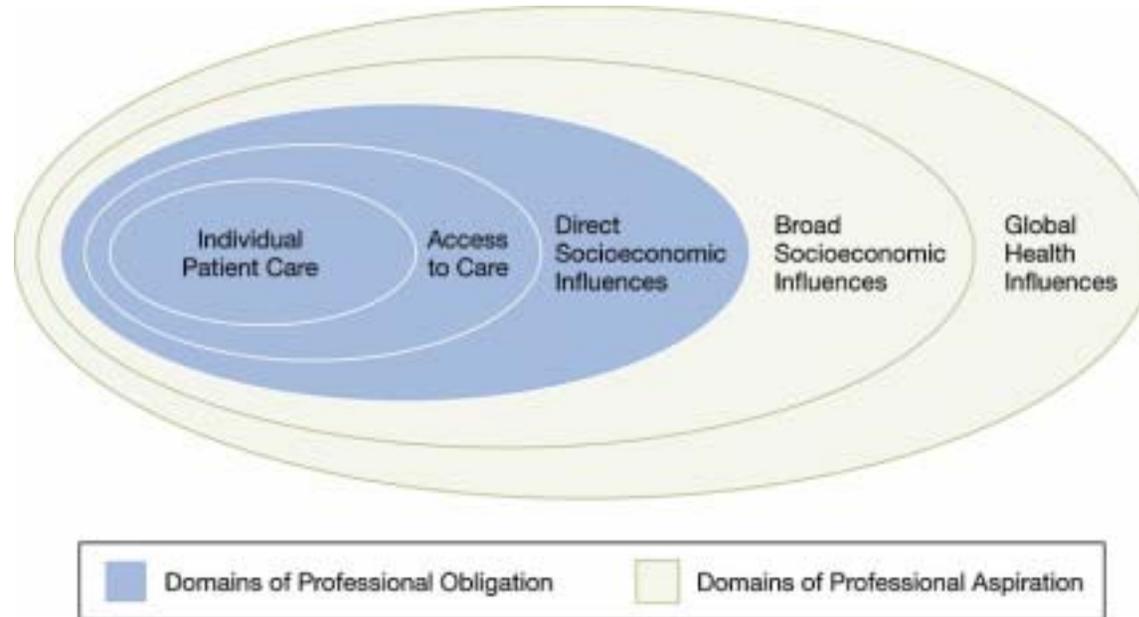
## Policy advocacy

- Policy training to support environmental, policy change
- Support of advocacy organizations
- Actor/organizers mobilizing school communities

## Patient advocacy

- Clinical training to support patient behavior change
- Office-based tools: tip sheets, posters, pocket cards





- Provide quality care to individual patients in regular practice.
- Improve the system of care delivered by group/organization.
- Provide quality care to uninsured patients.
- Improve insurance coverage, after-hours care and geographic distribution of services.
- Environmental change in local schools and communities to address tobacco, injury prevention, and obesity.
- Public policy to address same issues.

- TV Turnoff week
- Healthy Eating, Active Living – Program-wide initiative to create scale and impact through place based interventions
- Other partnerships
  - IOM
  - CDC
  - The California Endowment

# Key Elements of KP Community Health Initiatives

- Multi-level interventions including environmental and policy change
- A geographic, place-based focus
- Multi-sectoral collaboration
- A focus on racial and ethnic health disparities
- Community engagement
- Leveraging the assets and strengths of communities and our own organization
- Long-term partnerships (7-10 years)
- Evaluation and evidence-based public health

- KP grant making
  - \$16.5 million committed to KP's HEAL initiative
  - \$500K directed to Steps Sustainment Grants
- Farmers markets to address food security
- Sustainable agriculture and the food economy
  - What KP buys influences what is available

- Driving public policy
  - KP advocacy on key issues (e.g., SB 677)
  - Support of key orgs driving policy change (e.g., California Center for Public Health Advocacy, Torlakson Task Force)
  - Sponsorship of key convenings and reports
    - KP/CDC/RWJF Obesity Policy Roundtable (2003)
    - NASHP report on state policy approaches (2004)
- Leadership through organizational policy and practices
  - KP Farmer Markets
  - KP's Comprehensive Food Policy – *in development*
  - Employee Wellness



- Educational Theatre Production
  - Zips Great Day
  - Give Peas a Chance
  - Play HEAL (developed in partnership with the California Nutrition Network)
  - The Amazing Food Detective

- Social marketing efforts in collaboration with Steps to a Healthier U.S.
- Changing social norms through popular culture – KP's Thrive Campaign

- Translation of the Community Guide for the Prevention and Treatment of Obesity
- IOM dissemination
- Garfield innovation program
- Sponsorship of scientific meetings and symposiums

# Where We're Headed

Pounding in nails at the  
Colorado River  
Aqueduct

Oakland Med Center's  
Public Health Committee

Sound trucks  
at the shipyards

"Unavoidable"  
Health Education

Educational Theatre Program

Population-Based  
Health

Environmental  
Stewardship

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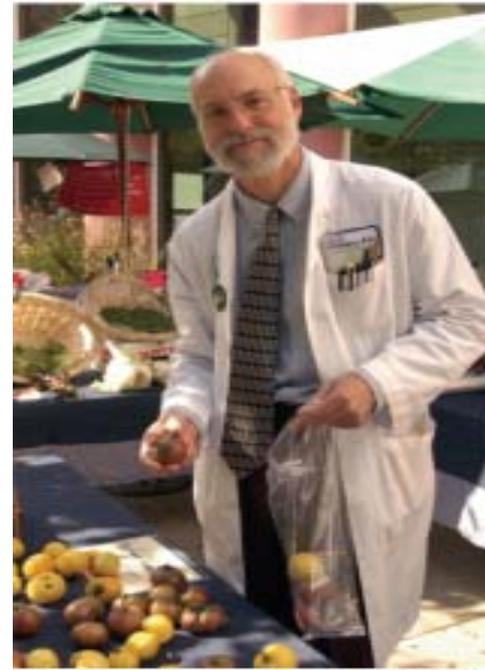
Early Years

War Years

Middle Years

Today

The next  
30 Years



- Undertake changes in your organizational policies and practices
- Mobilize your trade and professional organizations
- Share your knowledge, expertise with other change agents
- Seek out and work with untraditional partners

**“Be the change you want to see in the world”**

**-- M. Ghandi**

Directed social change is necessary to change the trajectory of the epidemic of childhood obesity. Kaiser Permanente and other health care organizations have an important role in leading and supporting this change.