

New Kaiser Center Showcases Health Care Innovation

By [Melanie D.G. Kaplan](#) | Apr 13, 2011 | [smartplanet.com](#)



WASHINGTON – On Monday, [Kaiser Permanente](#) opened its [Center for Total Health](#), located a couple blocks from the [U.S. Capitol](#). The space, next to a new Kaiser medical facility, will serve as a conference and education center and a showcase for innovative health care technology.

President and CEO of the Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group [Robert Pearl](#) told guests at a grand opening event that he wanted every schoolteacher, every city planner and every application developer who comes to Washington to visit the center. He said he wants them all to take part in the health care dialogue and help create solutions—whether it's in the form of city walking paths or new mobile technology.

Among several large touch-screen exhibits designed by [Brand New School](#) (using [Electrosonic](#) screens), the centerpiece is an 80-foot-long touch-screen mural—one of the largest in the world—that builds on Kaiser's [Every Body Walk!](#) campaign. The screen has several touch points during different periods of a day, with fast facts about walking, body part icons that show how we benefit from walking and ways people can incorporate walking into their daily lives.

The center, open to the public, has several stations that demonstrate new health technology prototypes (from [Sprint](#), [RIM](#), [GE](#), [Cisco](#) and [Philips](#)) currently being piloted at Kaiser medical centers. Visitors can interact with the tablet, handheld and smart phone devices in areas such as telemedicine and facial recognition. Below are some of the innovations being tested at Kaiser locations.



GE Health's [Vscan](#) ultrasound: A tiny, hand-held ultrasound, equipped with cellular technology, that enables sonographers to visit patients and generate images in rural areas (i.e. through Kaiser's mobile health service in California and Hawaii). The device is not yet being used at Kaiser but has been tested at Kaiser's [Sidney Garfield Innovation Center](#).

[Blackberry PlayBook:](#) Kaiser is looking at potential uses for RIM's new tablet, such as videoconferencing, videochat, access to electronic medical records, or use by patients after they check in at a medical center. Kaiser is also looking at replacing doctors' pagers with Blackberry devices and using them to scan barcodes on medications.

Facial recognition software: The software captures attributes of facial topography, i.e. the distances between one's eyes. It enables doctors and nurses to access patient records without having to manually log in and out dozens of times a day. (They are required to log out every time they step away from the computer.) In addition to saving time, it helps prevent the spread of diseases, because doctors and nurses don't have to touch a keyboard after they've scrubbed or washed their hands. This is currently being piloted at the Kaiser South Sacramento facility.

[Philips Lifeline:](#) A fall-detection sensor that patients wear around their necks, which detect falls and call care centers. The new technology is a motion sensor that can detect the severity of a fall and can tell what happened after the fall—whether the individual got up or hasn't moved.



Philips Medication Dispensing Service: A device, controlled and pre-loaded by a clinician or family member, that dispenses the right medication, with the right dosage, at the right time. If a dosage is missed, an alarm will be triggered. This is being piloted at the Sidney Garfield Innovation Center.

Intel Reader: A device that reads care instructions, medication label sheets or procedure fact sheets for the blind or vision impaired. The reader can also turn a page of text into an audio file that a patient can access on My Health Manager.



Cisco Telepresence: Enables a patient and physician (or two physicians) to virtually interact in real time. Physicians can connect with specialists for a face-to-face consultation, or patients in a remote facility can connect with a specialist. In telederm situations (being piloted in Baltimore), it can be used for wound or skin irritation diagnosis.

Intel Health Guide: A home monitoring device that patients can use for medication reminders and to measure blood pressure, blood sugar, blood oxygen, weight. The device can also be used as a video phone to enable the patients to video-chat with their clinicians.