

# Kaiser Permanente Heritage



## KP's Heritage

Kaiser Permanente was born out of the challenge of providing medical care to industrial workers during the Great Depression and World War II, when most people could not afford to go to a doctor. It applied multiple innovative ideas:

- Prepaid insurance spread the cost to make it more affordable.
- Physicians evolved group practice to maximize their abilities to care for patients.
- They began to focus as much on preventing illness as on caring for the sick.
- They organized the delivery system to put as much care as possible under one roof.

Thus, while others talked about such ideas, Henry J. Kaiser and Sidney R. Garfield, MD, acted. Their legacy is America's largest not-for-profit health care organization.



Sidney Garfield (left) with Henry J. Kaiser

*"Henry J. Kaiser and Sidney R. Garfield, an industrialist and a doctor, together pioneered a medical program that changed the face of U.S. health care. ... (Theirs) is a story of bold individuals who made a dramatic impact on the contemporary shape of U.S. medicine and health."  
– Medical historian Rickey Hendricks*

## KP's Founders

**Henry J. Kaiser** was an industrialist who is considered one of America's great business leaders of the 20th century. He's remembered for his role in building the giant dams of the West – Hoover, Bonneville and Grand Coulee. He's been called the "patriot in pinstripes" for revolutionizing shipbuilding during World War II. His global enterprises included automobiles, steel, cement, aluminum, engineering and mining. Today, however, he's remembered mainly for his socially responsible approach to business: better wages and pensions, a collegial approach to working with labor unions and Kaiser Permanente.



Henry J. Kaiser



Dr. Sidney R.  
Garfield

**Dr. Sidney R. Garfield** was a surgeon and visionary. Although others contributed to the ideas, it was Dr. Garfield who defined the basic principles and invented the basic techniques for group medical practice, prepayment and a delivery system focusing as much on prevention of illness as caring for the sick in the 1930s and 1940s. In the 1950s, his revolutionary hospital designs drew international praise for their innovations. And in 1960, he was in the vanguard of physicians who embraced the computer as a tool that could radically improve the delivery of medical care. Those ideas led to innovations in KP's delivery system, including KP HealthConnect, KP's state-of-the-art clinical information system.