

■ permanente in the news

A compilation of news, significant awards, and accomplishments about Permanente clinicians and employees and the Permanente Medical Groups.

KP News Roundup

KP Clinicians 'Star' in Thrive TV Ad

The Thrive advertising campaign kicked off August 2 in all Kaiser Permanente (KP) regions, except for Hawaii, where it will debut this winter. There are four TV ads: "Winner," "We Stand for Health" (also known as the "Broccoli Credo"), "Another Day," and the Spanish language ad, "Viva Bien." One of the television ads, "Another Day," features a fictitious Health Plan member surrounded by his KP entourage of providers. Featured in the commercial are clinicians from KP's Northern California, Colorado, and Ohio regions. **Debbie Murphy, OD**, an optometrist at KP's Arapahoe Medical Offices in the Colorado Region, is seen handing the member a pair of glasses; **Alan Kroll, MSPT**, physical therapist at the Westminster Medical Offices in the Colorado Region, is massaging the member's shoulders as he drives home from work; **Dana Weisshaar, MD**, a heart failure and transplant cardiologist at KP's Santa Teresa Medical Center in Northern California, is checking the Health Plan member's blood pressure; the guy with the stethoscope is **Thomas Connolly, MD**, an internist at KP's Park Shadelands Medical Center in Northern California; **Melena Perdomo, RD**, a registered dietician at the Skyline Medical Offices Clinica de la Familia, KP Colorado, is replacing the member's "bad-carb" meal with healthier choices; and standing outside the bedroom door is **Eddie Wills Jr, MD**, pediatrician and Assistant Medical Director, Professional Development and Support Services, Ohio Region. (You may recognize Dr Wills from a previous ad campaign as the pediatrician signing the cast on the boy's arm.)

KP HealthConnect Gets a Hearing in the Halls of Congress



Andrew M Wiesenthal, MD, Associate Executive Director, The Permanente Federation, provided testimony on the benefits of KP HealthConnect to the Subcommittee on Health of the House Committee on Ways and Means this past summer. The subcommittee has been investigating the need to develop an electronic medical record standard for the nation's various health care systems.

"Having the complete medical record available makes it possible for physicians to be aware immediately of comorbidities, past visits, and patient concerns, as well as recommendations the patient has received from other clinicians," Dr Wiesenthal told the subcommittee members. "In addition, test results will be immediately available electronically. This means clinicians will always be able to work with the most current information and provide the best service possible."

In his remarks, Dr Wiesenthal called on subcommittee members to urge Congress to mitigate the risk of obsolete systems by creating a set of standards for the adoption of electronic medical record systems. He also called for the federal government to provide financial means and incentives to invest in electronic medical systems by increasing Medicare and Medicaid payments to providers.

Former TPMG Physician Leader Morris Collen, MD, Receives Honorary Doctor of Science

Morris Collen, MD, a founding partner in The Permanente Medical Group, recently received an honorary Doctor of Science degree from the University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, Canada. Dr Collen received the degree "in recognition of devotion in the service of others and of contribution to the advancement of knowledge."



At the awards ceremony, Dr Collen was described as a "rare combination of scientist, humanist, politician, and family man" and was also honored for his role as one of the early pioneers of medical informatics. It was noted that Dr Collen's early training and degree in electrical engineering gave him the insight to recognize that the computer would be a revolutionary new tool of medicine. In fact, Dr Collen predicted that "the computer will probably have the greatest impact on medical science since the invention of the microscope."

By Barbara Caruso, BA



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Dr Collen joined KP in 1942 as Chief of Medicine at the Oakland Medical Center and worked closely with Sidney Garfield, MD, and Cecil Cutting, MD. He was also the first director of KP's Division of Research. Despite the cumbersome technology in the 1950s and 1960s, Dr Collen used computers to track his members' health status, screening more than a million patients, sick and healthy, which provided the foundation of hospital information systems.

In 1993, the American Medical Informatics Association and the American College of Medical Informatics established the Morris F Collen Award, which is presented to individuals whose personal commitment and dedication have made a lasting impression on the field of medical informatics and whose work best exemplifies the teachings and practices of Dr Collen, who was the award's first recipient. He retired from TPMG in 1983. Over his 60-year career as a physician and educator, Dr Collen has become respected worldwide for his work in the field of medical informatics, his ability as a physician, and his link to the very beginnings of KP. The research and projects Dr Collen completed throughout his career can also be seen as early recognition of the need for automated medical records and modern clinical information systems, such as KP HealthConnect.

Colorado Permanente Medical Group (CPMG)

Colorado Physicians Named "Denver's Top Docs"

Seven CPMG physicians were named "Denver's Top Docs" by the Denver magazine *5280*. The physicians are: **Royal Gerow, MD, Nora Morgenstern, MD, Sally Berga, MD, William Warmath, MD, William Bentley, MD, Chris Lang, MD, and Allan Graham, MD.**

Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group (MAPMG)

KP Mid-Atlantic States Achieves NCQA's Highest Rating

The National Committee for Quality Assurance has awarded its highest accreditation status of "Excellent" to the Mid-Atlantic States Region for its commercial and Medicare products.

The region now joins all of the other KP regions in achieving "Excellent" accreditation status in those categories. When it was previously surveyed in 2001, the region was awarded the next highest accreditation status of "Commendable."

NCQA is an independent, nonprofit organization dedi-

cated to measuring the quality of America's health care. Its "Excellent" accreditation status is granted only to health plans that meet or exceed NCQA's rigorous requirements for consumer protection and quality improvement and whose HEDIS (Health Plan Employer Data Information Set) results are in the highest range of national performance.

The Permanente Medical Group (TPMG)

National Recognition for KP Medical Research

The lead article in the June 3, 2004 issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)* is a study entitled "Bevacizumab plus Irinotecan, Fluorouracil, and Leucovorin for Metastatic Colorectal Cancer." The second author of the study was **Lou Fehrenbacher, MD**, head of the Oncology Clinic research trials.

The study indicates that, in combination with chemotherapy, use of bevacizumab has shown promising results in treating patients with metastatic colorectal cancer.

Northern California Nursing Research Awards

The recipients of the 2004 Northern California Nursing Research Awards were announced, with the following honorees: Staff Nurse Award: **Chris Kowlaski**, Hayward, for her dedication and commitment to research through involvement in the nursing research committee and promoting research at her facility; Manager Award: **Deborah Zachau**, Hayward, for her support and leadership in moving projects beyond the "idea" stage into reality; and Research Award: **Carol Evans**, Walnut Creek, for her research study titled, "Effect of Megestrol Acetate on the Control of Weight Loss in the Nursing Home Patient who has not Responded to Nutritional Supplementation."

Assistant Physician-in-Chief Honored by Society of Hospital Medicine

Congratulations to **Diane Craig, MD**, Assistant Physician-in-Chief, Santa Clara, who was honored by the Society of Hospital Medicine, as one of four hospitalists whose work and research have contributed significantly to hospital medicine and to the betterment of hospital care across America.

Division of Research Geneticist to Head New UCSF Center for Human Genetics

Neil Risch, PhD, Adjunct Investigator at the Division of Research, was recently named Director of the



new Center for Human Genetics at University of California San Francisco (UCSF). Dr Risch will also serve as the first Lamond Distinguished Professor in Human Genetics at UCSF.

Dr Risch is recognized internationally for his innovative genetics research on a range of diseases. He collaborates as an adjunct investigator at the Division of Research on population-based genetic epidemiology studies. He is also a professor of genetics, statistics, and health research and policy at Stanford University.

The Center for Human Genetics brings together scientists from a very broad spectrum of human genetic studies—from basic and behavioral researchers to physician scientists, and from psychiatry to cardiovascular research—to identify genes that contribute to human diseases and variation in response to drugs. Pharmacogenomics research, which determines the genetic basis of variation in drug response, will be a strong component of the Center, which is a unique dimension among human genetics programs nationally.

Retired TPMG Physician Wins National Honors

Adjunct Investigator for the Division of Research and former TPMG physician **Jim Allison, MD, FACP**, received the Distinguished Clinician Award of the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) in a recent ceremony in New Orleans. He is the first KP physician to receive the national honor.

The Distinguished Clinician Awards were established in 1995 to recognize members of the practicing community who, by example, combine the art of medicine with research efforts in service to their patients. Eight awards were given this year, four to clinicians in private practice and four to academic clinicians.

Dr Allison is a former TPMG physician who retired in June 1998 after 24 years of service. He was a full-time gastroenterologist and educator at the Oakland Medical Center, where he devoted the majority of his time to patient care, clinical research, and teaching. He credits his success to his talented and supportive TPMG colleagues and to the wonderful academic atmosphere at the Oakland Medical Center and at KP's Division of Research. Since his retirement from TPMG, he has been a member of the University of California San Francisco faculty, an Adjunct Investigator at the Division of Research, and a consultant to the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry.

Northwest Permanente (NWP)

NCQA Rates KP Northwest "Excellent"

KP Northwest has once again received "Excellent" accreditation status from the National Committee on Quality Assurance for both its commercial and Medicare lines of business.

Some of the major strengths identified by the NCQA team that reviewed the Northwest Region's performance were:

- Strong top-down leadership and knowledgeable staff
- A high level of integration among all divisions of the organization
- Sophisticated information technology systems
- Active practitioner involvement in the quality improvement program
- Innovative approaches to health care delivery
- An extensive patient safety program

Southern California Permanente Medical Group (SCPMG)

Kudos for Riverside Physician's Innovative CME Program

Doug Tang, MD, Director of Medical Education at the Riverside Medical Center, in working with the Physician Education team, developed an innovative solution to help physicians receive practice updates as part of their Continuing Medical Education (CME). Noting that many physicians worked in outlying clinics and with busy workloads, regular attendance at KP Riverside's lunchtime CME lectures had become a real challenge.

Dr Tang developed Mobile ET, a series of audio CDs featuring interviews with local physician leaders and experts on key topics requested by Riverside physicians. Mobile ET was initially launched in the Family Medicine Department and generated a 100% participation rate and received a 88% "good to very good" satisfaction rate.

Last Spring, the California Medical Association's Institute for Medical Quality awarded its 2004 Samuel R Sherman, MD, Award to KP Riverside for Meritorious Achievement in Continuing Medical Education in the category of Innovative Program Planning. Congratulations to Dr Tang and the entire Physician Education team!

Physicians Honored for Community Service

Three physicians at the Los Angeles Medical Center were recently recognized by LA Metro Medical Director

Tom Godfrey, MD, for their work in the community, providing health care to the uninsured. They are:

- **Ron Rosengart, MD**—On hearing the need of low-income, uninsured children at the Eisner Pediatric and Family Medicine Center in 2001, Dr Rosengart offered to bring these children into the KP system for care. He met with the clinic's Medical Director and set up a system to get the children specialty care appointments at the Los Angeles Medical Center. He acts as the referring physician, and working with one of his nurses, he gets the children KP medical record numbers and specialty appointments. He also does all of the follow-up with the Eisner Clinic physicians.
- **Jimmy Hara, MD**—Dr Hara has been leading residents weekly to both the Venice Family Clinic and the Los Angeles Free Clinic for years, where they have been caring for the poor and uninsured populations of Los Angeles. In addition, Dr Hara treats patients at the Salvation Army medical outreach clinic, has residents going to Clinica Oscar Romero, and also works with the UCLA Mobile Clinic that serves the homeless. Dr Hara averages more than 250 hours every year volunteering.
- **Maureen Spell, MD**—Dr Spell has volunteered her time treating patients at the Hollywood Sunset Free Clinic for 13 years and has served on its board since 1997. In addition to seeing patients, Dr Spell's work on the clinic's board includes fundraising and sharing her clinical expertise on the best delivery of medical care to the medically underserved. Largely due to her influence, the

clinic has expanded its services to include a pediatrics clinic and a women's clinic staffed by volunteer physicians and residents from the Los Angeles Medical Center. KP physicians provide full women's health evaluation, including Pap smear and breast cancer screenings, and also discuss preventive health issues and deal with urgent care issues for female patients.

The Southeast Permanente Medical Group (TSPMG)

TSPMG Director of Continuing Education Given Covey Award

Sandra Gauthier, Director of Continuing Education for TSPMG, was awarded the Franklin Covey 2004 "Award for Excellence in Solution Design" earlier this spring. Recipients of this award are recognized by Franklin Covey for creating transformational change within their company—change that strengthens the company.

Ms Gauthier played a pivotal role in leading a transformation of corporate culture within KP Georgia. Several years ago, she worked hard to become a teacher/facilitator for early Covey programs and offered these programs as part of the CME offerings for TSPMG by the late 1990s. She later brought other Covey programs to TSPMG and Health Plan.

The teachings of these Covey programs have been crucial in enhancing KP Georgia's corporate culture, providing a common language for staff to use in creating self-improvement, and thus, corporate improvement. ❖

Barbara Caruso compiled this material from *California Wire*, *Partner News*, and other PMG newsletters and sources. To submit news of physician or PMG awards and recognitions, contact Ms Caruso at barbara.caruso@kp.org.