

For Immediate Release
April 3, 2020

Media Contact:

Marisa Lavine
301-816-6264
marisa.a.lavine@kp.org

Kaiser Permanente Announces Significant Changes to Prepare for COVID-19 Surge of Patients in the Mid-Atlantic Region

Rockville, MD – As the surge of patients with COVID-19 approaches the mid-Atlantic region, Kaiser Permanente is making significant changes to help the health system and the community prepare. The health system today announced several changes to how it will provide health care services to the increasing number of people with COVID-19 as well as to people with other health conditions that require care during the pandemic.

“As we face this pandemic head-on, we want our members, doctors, staff and the broader community to know that we are meeting this challenge and will make the changes necessary to deliver quality care,” said Kim Horn, group president, Kaiser Permanente. “These changes allow us to ensure that our resources remain focused on keeping people healthy and providing care to those who are ill.”

The outbreak of COVID-19 has already led Kaiser Permanente to vastly expand its virtual care services across the region. The health system is converting all possible in-person appointments to virtual (phone or video). Over the past several weeks, Kaiser Permanente’s mid-Atlantic region has increased virtual appointments from 19% at the beginning of March to more than 85% at the end of the month. The health system is currently providing more than 9,000 virtual visits daily, allowing its nearly 770,000 members in the region to access physicians and care team members from the safety of their homes. Additionally, non-urgent surgeries and procedures have been postponed for several weeks in another effort to dramatically decrease visits to its facilities.

“We are at a critical moment in our fight against COVID-19 here in the mid-Atlantic region. At this time, we are focusing our resources on providing video and telephone access to physicians, continuing to provide urgent, in-person care to patients and expanding care for our most vulnerable members, including those with confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19,” said Richard McCarthy, MD, Medical Director for the Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group.

To most effectively focus these vital resources and to prepare for the surge of patients anticipated in the region, Kaiser Permanente is making some important, temporary changes to its operations throughout the region. First, the health system will temporarily consolidate its medical offices in the Mid-Atlantic region on April 6. This temporary change will position the health system to support the growing number of members who are in need of care, meet the critical need to conserve Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) necessary for its providers to care for these patients, consolidate staff to protect against potential staffing shortages and limit exposure to the virus for members, employees, and physicians.

Kaiser Permanente is also working to prepare for the region’s surge of patients by planning space in several facilities to care for patients requiring medical observation. Separate space will be created for COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients.

Fourteen Kaiser Permanente medical office buildings will remain open in these locations, several with 24/7 access:

- In Virginia: Tysons Corner (24/7), Woodbridge (24/7), Reston, Manassas (no urgent care), Fredericksburg (no urgent care), Burke and Falls Church
- In Maryland and DC: Capitol Hill (24/7), Largo (24/7), Gaithersburg (24/7) and Kensington (no urgent care), and Kaiser Permanente’s physician offices at Holy Cross Hospital

- In Baltimore: South Baltimore (24/7), Woodlawn (no urgent care) and White Marsh

Kaiser Permanente will maintain only lab, pharmacy and imaging services at the following locations beginning on Monday, April 6. All other departments in these buildings will be temporarily closed:

- In Virginia: Colonial Forge, Springfield, Alexandria, Ashburn, Haymarket Crossroads and Fair Oaks
- In Maryland and DC: Camp Springs, Frederick, Marlow Heights, Northwest, Prince George's, Silver Spring and Shady Grove
- In Baltimore: Abingdon, Annapolis, Baltimore Harbor, North Arundel, Towson, Columbia Gateway. Kaiser Permanente's Nottingham physical therapy and the physician offices at the Greater Baltimore Medical Center will also temporarily close.

Kaiser Permanente closed all optical departments across the region on Thursday, April 2. Urgent Care will close at the end of the shift on Friday, April 3, at its Manassas and Fredericksburg facilities in Virginia; and Kensington, Camp Springs, Baltimore Harbor, and Woodlawn facilities in Maryland. The changes are expected to be in effect for the next few weeks. However, the consolidation will be evaluated on a weekly basis and updates will be provided to members and customers in the region.

"We recognize these temporary measures may cause some short-term inconveniences for our members and for that we apologize," said Horn. "However, we believe these necessary actions will ensure we provide our members with outstanding care during this pandemic. Thank you to our members, our staff and our physicians for their patience and support as we make these necessary and temporary changes."

In March, Kaiser Permanente set up six drive-up/walk-up COVID-19 testing and triage sites in the region. These Surge Triage Assessment Areas will screen and evaluate patients to get them to the right location, whether it be home, a testing area, or a physician for further assessment. These Assessment Areas at Gaithersburg, Largo, Tyson's Corner, Capitol Hill, South Baltimore, and Woodbridge Medical Centers also will test Kaiser Permanente members for COVID-19 if they have a doctor's order and appointment for the test.

Kaiser Permanente members can continue to access virtual care on the health system's website, kp.org or through the member app. Members can also call the Kaiser Permanente advice line at 703-359-7878 for urgent needs that require an in-person appointment. Also, members with appointments at any of the Kaiser Permanente temporarily closed facilities will be contacted to reschedule a virtual appointment or an in-person appointment at a different location.

Kaiser Permanente has a mail-order prescription program that delivers medications to members in less than 7 days. The health system also has added same-day home delivery for critical medications. In addition, it has added curb-side pharmacy pick-up at all pharmacy locations.

###

About Kaiser Permanente

Kaiser Permanente is committed to helping shape the future of health care. We are recognized as one of America's leading health care providers and not-for-profit health plans. Founded in 1945, Kaiser Permanente has a mission to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We currently serve 12.3 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia. Care for members and patients is focused on their total health and guided by their personal Permanente physicians, specialists and team of caregivers. Our expert and caring medical teams are empowered and supported by industry-leading technology advances and tools for health promotion, disease prevention, state-of-the-art care delivery and world-class chronic disease management. Kaiser Permanente is dedicated to care innovations, clinical research, health education, and the support of community health. For more information, please go to kp.org.