

June 17, 2020

Commitments in Support of Mayors' Climate Commission Recommendations

Kaiser Permanente is proud to support the Mayors' Commission on Climate Change's recommendations on Achieving Carbon Zero in Sacramento and West Sacramento by 2045.

As the largest nonprofit, integrated health system in the U.S., Kaiser Permanente understands the link between climate health and human health. Our mission to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve requires us to take bold steps to reduce our climate impact while advocating for broader recognition of the climate-health connection.

The U.S. health care industry contributes roughly 10% of the country's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; by reducing emissions through climate-smart programs, and by advancing environmental stewardship within our supply chains, health care organizations can be catalysts for decarbonization across the economy.

In 2020, we became carbon neutral as an organization, completing the "last mile" toward this milestone through the investment in carefully chosen carbon offset projects. By eliminating our carbon footprint, we have taken measurable action to improve the conditions that lead to poor health:

- Increased rates of asthma and other respiratory ailments
- Spread of infectious diseases such as Zika, malaria and others
- Heat-related illnesses
- Physical and psychological injuries from severe weather events and wildfires

Earlier this year, Kaiser Permanente met our long-stated goal of becoming carbon neutral across our operations, in accordance with [The Carbon Neutral Protocol](#). By financing emission reduction projects, we are supporting the transition to a low-carbon global economy, which will enable us all to have a healthier planet and healthier lives. We approached carbon neutrality from several directions:

- Purchasing our utility-scale electricity from renewable sources (more than 360 MW).
- Installing 44MW of on-site solar arrays – enough to power 9,600 homes for a year – and improving the energy efficiency of our buildings.
- Purchasing carefully selected carbon offsets to mitigate the greenhouse gas emissions that we cannot avoid (such as on-site boiler systems, etc.).

We have installed solar panels in parking lots at all of our major medical offices and hospitals in the Greater Sacramento area and they are providing a significant amount of energy to power our needs. The installation of solar panels in our facilities will have a direct impact locally, including generating a portion of the facility's total electricity demands and reducing greenhouse gases. Shade from solar panel canopies will also provide welcome shade in the parking lots that will help keep cars cool on hot days.

After taking as many steps as possible to reduce our carbon footprint within our operations, we are using carbon offsets to go the “final mile” toward carbon neutrality – purchasing approximately 380,000 tons of offsets annually.

While some of our sustainable practices require up-front investments, we project that over time they will be cost-saving or cost-neutral for Kaiser Permanente. This includes our long-term contracts to purchase renewable energy. We are proud to have been the first health care organization in the nation to begin monitoring and publicly reporting our greenhouse gas emissions, beginning in our California regions in 2005.

Mitigating climate change is consistent with Kaiser Permanente’s focus on preventing illness and safeguarding the health of people everywhere. Our work to protect against climate change is embedded in our operations – in how we manage our buildings; purchase food, medical supplies and equipment; serve our members; as well as how we consume energy and process waste.

To this end, we have a responsibility to support health at every opportunity and are committed to building partnerships that work towards community health.

Sincerely,



Trish Rodriguez, RN, MPH
Senior Vice President and Area Manager
South Sacramento Medical Center