

Partnering with the Private Sector to Achieve Total Health

RAYMOND J. BAXTER, PH.D.

Senior Vice President, Community Benefit, Research and Health Policy, Kaiser Permanente, and President, Kaiser Permanente International

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” —*Old African proverb*

At Kaiser Permanente, we have a vision that we call “Total Health.” Our perspective is that healthy individuals depend on healthy communities, and thriving communities depend on healthy people. Achieving a vision of total health, however, is just not going to happen by Kaiser Permanente or any other entity or sector doing it alone. Total health for individuals and communities cannot happen without leadership, commitment, and contributions from a mix of stakeholders, including the private sector.

Health philanthropies and the private sector may seem unlikely, even oppositional, partners. The field of philanthropy and the role of the private sector in community investment and social change, however, are both evolving. Businesses have begun to see that social responsibility is a prerequisite for the “license to operate.” Corporations are stepping into new roles, reaching out to new partners and stakeholders, so that each is contributing unique core competencies and assets in a focused and results-oriented way. Many businesses are just beginning to learn to manage this new approach. Philanthropy can accelerate this movement by offering breakthrough collaborations to address complex social challenges.

For Kaiser Permanente, the bottom line is that to achieve total health, we must focus our partnerships with those who can help accomplish our mission with the most reach and the most effective outcomes.

TACKLING THE OBESITY CHALLENGE THROUGH FILM

As Grantmakers In Health Funding Partners know, our nation is facing an unprecedented obesity epidemic. Today, two-thirds of the people in the United States are overweight or obese (National Center for Health Statistics 2008). Obesity costs American businesses an estimated \$73.1 billion a year

(Finkelstein et al. 2010). Kaiser Permanente has been working extensively to address this issue, but we cannot do it alone, nor do we want to. We, as a nation, must address this issue.

In 2010 we learned that Home Box Office (HBO) Documentary Films was in the early stages of partnering with the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to dramatize the challenges subsequently identified in the IOM’s evidence-based report *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention*. The report identifies key prevention strategies to address the nation’s obesity epidemic, which draw in part upon the work Kaiser Permanente has been doing. Kaiser Permanente was eager to support the work of the IOM to reach communities, policymakers, and other key stakeholders with educational resources on the topic, associated with the powerful storytelling abilities of HBO and the power of the Internet and social media. The films were a part of a long-term multimedia public health campaign designed to raise national awareness and engage communities. (National project partners are HBO, the IOM, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, Kaiser Permanente, and the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation.)

The level of engagement and the dynamics of a partnership that included a for-profit company, two governmental organizations, a nonprofit health system, a family foundation, and the IOM were new territory for all of the partners. Some knew each other from previous projects, but none had all worked together on the same thing before. It required building trust, as well as operating agreements. We learned as we went about how decisions were made in different organizational cultures, the need to align assets that each partner was committing to the project, and the importance of regular and open communication on strategic and tactical issues. The result of two years of work has been well worth the effort.

The films made a broadcast and Internet debut in May. The results on people reached were staggering and unprecedented – 6.2 million viewers watched on HBO platforms (HBO channels, HBO.com, and On Demand), the four full episodes were

streamed 2 million times, and 25,438 free screening kits have been distributed thus far. *The Weight of the Nation* was nominated for two Emmy Awards in 2012, the broadcast industry's highest honor.

ADDRESSING CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Kaiser Permanente has long been active in founding and leading major public-private partnerships devoted to the sustainable development of healthy communities. A recent effort includes becoming a founding member of the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA), which supports First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign against childhood obesity.

Led by some of the nation's most respected health and childhood obesity experts, PHA is devoted to partnering and negotiating commitments with the private sector to ensure the health of our nation's youth by solving the childhood obesity crisis. Every organization that works with PHA is required to agree that PHA will monitor and report on progress toward their commitment.

At PHA's inaugural Building a Healthier Future Summit in November 2011, Kaiser Permanente committed to institute new guidelines in all our hospitals to support breastfeeding as a measure of hospital quality and a key strategy in preventing childhood obesity. With more than 96,000 births in 2010, Kaiser Permanente cares for more moms and babies than any other integrated health care system and uses its care delivery model to help mothers understand the benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and child, and to support the decision to breastfeed whenever possible.

More recently, we announced a commitment with PHA to improve food offerings in our 37 hospitals. We committed to offering more fruits and vegetables in cafeterias and on hospital meal trays; providing healthier beverages and meal options with fewer calories, less saturated fat, and a balance of nutritious ingredients; and promoting a wide variety of healthy food and beverages to our workforce.

LEADING COMMUNITIES TO A HEALTHIER FUTURE

The Healthier Hospitals Initiative (HHI) is a call-to-action for an entire industry. It is an invitation for health care organizations across the country to join the shift to a more sustainable business model and a challenge to address the health and environmental impacts of their industry.

In 2011 Kaiser Permanente, along with 10 other influential U.S. health systems (comprising over 475 hospitals with more than \$20 billion in purchasing power), worked with Health Care Without Harm, the Center for Health Design, and Practice Greenhealth to create HHI as a guide for hospitals to reduce energy and waste, choose safer and less toxic products, and purchase and serve healthier foods.

With these sponsoring systems as anchors, the initiative will enroll at least 2,000 hospitals in 50 states and the District of Columbia over the next couple of years to implement sustainable operations, and will measure the impact on improved patient, worker, and community health, and reduced costs.

MAXIMIZE YOUR EFFORTS

These three examples reflect how Kaiser Permanente is working with the private sector to achieve goals that are not only important for us at Kaiser Permanente, but for the nation as whole.

In April 2012 the Council on Foundations (COF) released *Increasing Impact, Enhancing Value – A Practitioner's Guide to Leading Corporate Philanthropy*. Kaiser Permanente joined 10 like-minded corporate funders to sponsor the research and produce the guide and outreach activities. The guide lays out an ambitious-but-doable agenda to redefine the purpose and value of corporate foundations and giving programs so that they can meet the challenges of corporate citizenship. What emerges from COF's research is that visionary leaders in the field have proven that when corporate philanthropy is managed as an investment in society, it can become a powerful catalytic force for change. This presents an enormous opportunity for philanthropy leaders and the learnings from the field apply to all types of funders, not just corporate.

We all have the ability, the opportunity, and the duty to maximize the deployment of our assets. I encourage all of you to step up to this challenge.

SOURCES

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