



Workplace Safety Initiative

(L+M)^P

The Power of Partnership

Through our Labor Management Partnership, union members and managers are sharing information, responsibility, and decision-making—so we can make Kaiser Permanente the best place to receive care and the best place to work.

Did you know that:

- More than 20,000 employee injuries are reported at Kaiser Permanente each year. That's an average of two injuries an hour — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- With our current injury rates, as many as 1,000 injured workers are off the job on any given day.
- Workers' compensation and related costs to the organization total \$400 million each year.

Just think of the impact that number of injuries has on our patients, colleagues, and co-workers. Those injured face absences from work, sometimes long-term, with a loss of income. Their co-workers face increased workloads and the loss of team members. And as far as the dollar costs—we can all think of better ways to spend that money.

These are some of the reasons workplace safety is a priority.

**OUR GOAL IS TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE
WORKPLACE INJURIES, WITH THE
ULTIMATE GOAL OF AN INJURY-FREE
WORKPLACE.**

1 Systems of Safety & Breakthrough Strategies

Often the best solutions to safety problems can be found among members of our own work groups. The people who do the frontline work know what the problems are and often can design immediate solutions.

SYSTEMS OF SAFETY (SOS) provides training and interventions that employees, supervisors, managers, and physicians can use in local work groups to begin working together in Partnership to identify and resolve safety hazards in a short period of time.

Employees and supervisors are testing these approaches first in high-risk work units in Northern and Southern California. They then will be replicated as appropriate throughout Kaiser Permanente.

The SOS training is designed to help develop work group-level, LMP Teams to identify and resolve safety problems. It includes one of the fundamental elements of the LMP, and a key to injury prevention, which is using consensus-based decision-making in labor-management teams to identify and eliminate workplace injuries. WPS programs must be based on Partnership principles.



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ENDING WORKPLACE INJURIES . . .

. . . is a long-term vision shared by labor leaders and Kaiser Permanente leaders. It also is the vision of frontline employees and supervisors, managers, and physicians—the 90,000 people who are the Labor Management Partnership.

WE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN.

WORKING TOGETHER IN NEW WAYS

Employees, supervisors, managers, and physicians are working together to bring the Labor Management Partnership (LMP) to every Kaiser Permanente unit and department nationwide in 2002.

Why? Because working together in Partnership changes everyone's job—for the better.

In 1997, employees from 26 union locals and managers at Kaiser Permanente decided to adopt the Partnership as a way to work together more effectively for better results. In part, working in Partnership means employees and managers work together as equals to jointly define problems and find solutions in areas like workplace safety, staffing, and budgets.

Partnership also means employees work with managers to structure their work in ways that bring more meaning, fulfillment, and flexibility to their jobs. In addition, both employees and managers are rewarded for performance improvements.

During collective bargaining in 2000, unions and management negotiated four programs that begin in 2002: Workplace Safety (WPS), Performance Sharing, Issue Resolution and Corrective Action, and Joint Staffing.

Throughout Kaiser Permanente, when employees and managers openly share information and engage in joint planning, decision-making and problem-solving, they report they are able to make more improvements, more quickly, than ever before.

WORKPLACE SAFETY INITIATIVE:

A GOOD PLACE TO FOCUS

As a way to encourage work groups throughout Kaiser Permanente to work in Partnership, employees, supervisors, managers, and physicians have agreed to participate in the Labor Management Partnership Workplace Safety Initiative.

Every department is concerned about safety—for our patients, our co-workers and ourselves. By bringing a Partnership approach to the goal of ending workplace injuries, employees and managers can work together to identify problems, set priorities, and find solutions. These efforts will give employees and managers a chance to learn how to work together more fully in Partnership at the same time we are making our workplaces safer.

Employees, supervisors, managers, and physicians will also work together on other Partnership programs, including Joint Staffing in 2002 and 2003.

TIMELINE

2002 Employees, supervisors, managers, and physicians begin Partnership safety work with injury-reducing interventions at selected sites.

2002 Employees, supervisors, managers, and physicians throughout Kaiser Permanente begin working together in work group- and department-level LMP Teams to identify and solve safety hazards.

2003 [+ beyond] Work group LMP Teams add new interventions as necessary, ensure that successful interventions remain in place, and continue to develop their abilities to work in Partnership.

BREAKTHROUGH STRATEGIES are another tool work group-level LMP Teams can use to identify and solve safety problems. Using a fast-paced process, employees and supervisors in areas including a chart room, environmental services, and inpatient Ob/Gyn are finding effective workplace safety solutions.

Solutions to workplace safety hazards often are simple and can easily be found when employees and supervisors meet together to openly discuss problems and remedies.

- **In one chart room**, for example, the work group LMP Team noticed that a large number of the department's injuries occurred in the early morning when day shift employees were rushing to pull charts for use that day. They shifted workload and staffing to allow for more of the charts to be pulled the evening before.
- **In an Ob/Gyn inpatient setting**, the work group-level LMP Team identified the time of transferring patients from the clinic to the hospital as a key time when injuries occurred. Team members studied the route by which patients were transported from clinic to hospital and found it was an uphill route that employees had used because they assumed it was shorter and quicker than an alternate, downhill route. When the two routes actually were measured, however, it turned out that the easier, downhill route was also shorter and quicker, and the transport route was changed.
- **In one Medical/Surgical unit**, before patient-handling lift teams were implemented, compliance with physicians' orders to ambulate patients was sometimes as low as 30%. Once lift teams were implemented, compliance rose to 100%—directly supporting patient care.

2 Ongoing Interventions

These include:

- Interventions that began before or outside of the LMP teams. Members of the WPS Leadership Team are helping make sure these projects become full Partnership efforts. In California, for example, lift teams are being implemented in medical centers to reduce patient-handling injuries.
- Other interventions that are approved and funded by the local or Regional LMP teams and then implemented by a local LMP Team.

3 Broad Engagement

Half of all Kaiser Permanente workplace injuries occur in about 30 departments known to be high-risk, such as inpatient care. The other half, however, occur throughout 500 other departments. The only way to eliminate workplace injuries in these departments is to engage frontline employees and supervisors. The people who do the work have the most information about how we are injured, and can best evaluate potential interventions.

Various methods of outreach, communication, and support will help get everyone involved. You will be receiving more information about how you personally can join these efforts.

4 Integrated Disability Management (Post-Injury)

Labor and management are exploring ways to improve the retention of injured employees and physicians, regardless of the cause of the injury or illness.

Measuring success

How will employees and managers know when our work group Labor Management Partnership workplace safety efforts are successful? That will be measured in two ways:

- *Labor and management will work together at the department level to reduce injuries, and*
- *We will see the number of injuries decreasing, without discouraging injury reporting.*

For the purpose of establishing baseline numbers and measuring subsequent progress toward injury reduction goals, members of the WPS Leadership Team have agreed to use the number of injuries per 100 Full Time Employees (FTEs). We are defining "injuries" as workers' compensation claims, and FTEs are counted as "productive FTEs," which excludes vacation and sick time. Our long-term goal is to eventually track all injuries, not just workers' compensation data.

WPS LEADERSHIP TEAM

Labor and management leaders chartered the Workplace Safety Leadership Team, which includes members from partner unions and management, with broad Regional representation. Together we lead, coordinate, and support Partnership safety efforts throughout Kaiser Permanente.

Team members help others in Regions, service areas, and facilities build LMP Teams focused on workplace safety. We encourage involvement of labor, management and physicians; have a prevention focus; facilitate the delivery of tools, resources, and assistance to LMP Teams at the work group-level; and ensure that frontline teams are vitally linked to the larger Partnership structure.

National Team Co-Leads:

Kathy Gerwig, *Director, National Environmental, Health & Safety Operations*
Kathy Schmidt, RN, *Coordinator, Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions*

Northern California:

Christine Chan, OD, *President of Optometry Unit, ESC, L20, IFPTE*
Mike Green, *Regional Director, Employee Risk Management, Human Resources, The Permanente Medical Group, Inc.*

Southern California:

Carol Cranfill, RN, *UNAC/UHCP, Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions*
Dale Thompson, *Director, Environmental Health & Safety, San Diego Service Area*

Colorado, Mid-Atlantic States, Ohio, and Northwest:

Alana Bissonnette, *Environmental Health & Safety Manager, Colorado*
Steve Francy, *Coordinator, Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions, AFL-CIO*
Penny Hutt, *Labor Co-Lead*



WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE
LMP WORKPLACE SAFETY INITIATIVE?

Contact your steward, supervisor, local union, work group,
local or Regional LMP Workplace Safety Team,
or visit the Partnership Web site (beginning in September) at
www.LMPartnership.org.

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The Power of Partnership

COALITION OF KAISER PERMANENTE UNIONS AFL-CIO
& KAISER PERMANENTE

