

## \$1 Million Grant Supports COVID-19 Response for Nation's Homeless Population

**The National Health Care for the Homeless Council collaboration will direct funds to programs supporting homeless individuals in locations most affected by COVID-19.**

Kaiser Permanente is providing \$1 million to increase capacity for preventing and treating cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, within the nation's homeless population in a collaboration with the [National Health Care for the Homeless Council](#).

People experiencing homelessness are more vulnerable to infectious diseases due to crowded living conditions, challenges to hygiene and sanitation, and underlying chronic conditions. Despite these risk factors, they are often overlooked during times of emergency, such as the current pandemic, when assistance is most urgent. Homeless service providers are in dire need of financial support, guidance, and protocols so they can safely and directly connect with unhoused people while taking necessary steps to prevent the virus' spread.

[Destination Home](#) in Santa Clara County; [Homeless Health Care Los Angeles](#); [Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness](#); and [Central City Concern](#) in Portland, Oregon, have already been named as initial funding recipients for core support, as these locations have some of the largest homeless populations in the country and have been among the communities hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. These organizations are leading coordinated response efforts and are already closely connected to the homeless communities in their areas. They are ready to deploy resources immediately and this funding support will allow them to move quickly.

"The spread of COVID-19 is putting tremendous stress on our national, state, and local public health departments. As a leading health care system, we must do our part to care for our members as well as our most vulnerable populations," said [Bechara Choucair, MD](#), chief health officer with Kaiser Permanente. "Given the elevated risk faced by people living on the streets or in shelters at this time, we are making it a priority to support outreach, prevention, and treatment for this community."

NHCHC and Kaiser Permanente will continue to monitor the evolving pandemic and work together to identify specific regional programs across the country to receive the remaining funds.

"At a time when more than a half million Americans live in shelters and on the streets of the richest nation on earth, Kaiser Permanente has stepped up to help fund front-line groups serving people experiencing homelessness whose lives are further imperiled by the novel coronavirus. Kaiser Permanente's commitment ensures an immediate impact on the dual epidemics of homelessness and the novel coronavirus during this moment of crisis," said Bobby Watts, CEO of NHCHC.

For 30 years the NHCHC has been working at the nexus of homelessness and health care, providing training and assistance for health care and service providers, research, and advocacy around solutions to homelessness. NHCHC is working to disseminate rapidly emerging [protocols and information](#) related to COVID-19 to its more than 300 partner organizations working with homeless people in communities across the United States.

"This commitment is core to our mission to improve the health of our members and communities, and it remains a priority during the most trying of times," said [Cynthia Telles, PhD](#), Community Health Committee chair for the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and Hospitals Boards of Directors.

Additionally, as millions of Americans face the prospect of losing wages during the COVID-19 pandemic, Kaiser Permanente is joining other organizations to advocate for emergency housing funding from the federal government in the form of rental and mortgage assistance, as well as supplemental funding to housing authorities, housing assistance providers, and homeless navigation services.

### **About the National Health Care for the Homeless Council**

Grounded in human rights and social justice, the National Health Care for the Homeless Council works on behalf of 300 health care for the homeless centers and 90 medical respite care programs to build an equitable, high-quality health care system through training, research, and advocacy in the movement to end homelessness. Regarded as the national authority for implementing health care and housing as basic human rights, the Council is guided by people with lived expertise of homelessness and the professionals who serve them.

### **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 12.2 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 Medical Group 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.