

Kaiser Permanente NEWS blast

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Kaiser Permanente and Inova business contract to end

Kaiser's 500,000 members not expected to experience any impact

Beginning in 2009, Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States launched a region-wide strategic plan to expand our internal capacity in order to ensure high quality, cost effective treatment for our members and clients. This ongoing initiative is apparent with new, state-of-the-art, full-service medical centers throughout the region that are now capable of addressing most of the recurring health needs of our members.

We take very seriously the need to continue to improve the quality and affordability of our region's healthcare and have chosen to invest in developing close clinical relationships with a core group of hospitals. These hospitals help us to design and deliver, with the help of Kaiser Permanente physicians, a unique care experience for our members. The working relationships with these select hospitals have contributed to our top regional and national quality rankings. We have Permanente physicians working in these core hospitals with access to our patient's' medical records at all times. Within some of these hospitals, Kaiser Permanente occupies entire floors and/or a wing.

These hospitals include:

- Johns Hopkins Affiliates Suburban Hospital and Sibley Memorial Hospital
- Virginia Hospital Center
- Holy Cross Hospital
- Washington Hospital Center
- Children's National Medical Center
- Reston Hospital Center
- Stafford Hospital
- Mary Washington Hospital
- St. Agnes Hospital
- Greater Baltimore Medical Center

With regards to Inova Health Systems, our business contract with them will end September 30. This simply means that Kaiser Permanente will no longer have a contracted rate and will be required to pay more for those limited number of services provided by Inova.

This contract was not renewed as the vast majority of our members *do not* receive non-emergency services at Inova. Please be assured that your employees *will still be able to utilize Inova* for emergency services.

Whenever a member requires critical, in-patient care, Kaiser Permanente physicians, based on the needs of the patient and the ability of the hospital to deliver a positive outcome, determine the best option for that patient. This may include admission to any of the hospitals above – including Inova – as well as many of the highest ranked hospitals in the country, such as Johns Hopkins Hospital and the Cleveland Clinic. When we refer members to Inova, we will pay the claim, just at a different rate. Our goal to provide the highest quality care to your employees has not changed. .

It's because of these efforts to ensure that our members receive the best care available, that we continue to receive nationwide recognition for our quality of care, including:

- #1 quality ranking among plans offered in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C., from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA),
- #1 in customer service satisfaction for five consecutive years, according to J.D. Power and Associates
- NCQA ranks Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States #16 among 484 commercial health plans across the nation, and the 8th ranked Medicare plan out of 405 plans.
- The 2013 Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) measures rated Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States #7 in the nation on the percentage of patients that rated their personal care doctor a 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale
- The latest CAHPS survey also shows Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States leads the region on personal doctor rating and specialist rating.
- According to 2013 HEDIS data, Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States is number 1 in the nation for five measures, including breast cancer screening. Kaiser Permanente Medicare Plus (Cost) is rated an excellent 5 out of 5 Stars overall—the Highest-Rated Medicare Health Plan in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. for 2013.

We respect Inova Health Systems and the work they do in Virginia, we believe that the health services we both offer are complementary and hope to partner with them and other leaders on initiatives that will contribute to the health of our citizens and the growth and economic success of the region.

For your convenience, I have included answers to some of your most frequently asked questions. Please feel free to share this information with your employees. Should you have more specific questions or concerns, please contact me directly.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Kaiser Permanente's agreement with Inova Health System is ending. What specifically does that mean?

The contract between Inova Health System and Kaiser Permanente, which is due to expire on September 30, 2013, will not be renewed. This simply means that Kaiser Permanente will be required to pay more for the limited number of services provided to Kaiser Permanente members by Inova Hospitals and affiliated physicians.

I heard that Kaiser Permanente members will no longer have access to Inova Health System Emergency Rooms. Is that correct?

This is not true. Whenever a Kaiser Permanente member is in need of emergency treatment, they are encouraged to seek help at the closest emergency department, regardless of its relationship with Kaiser Permanente.

What kind of impact do you expect this change to have on your members?

The vast majority of our members do not receive any care at Inova. In fact, with the exception of emergency and trauma services, less than 1 percent of Kaiser members have received care from an Inova facility during the past year, so there will be little to no impact on patient care. Of course, Kaiser Permanente members will still be able to go to Inova hospitals (or any other hospital) for emergency services.

You referred to your "Core" hospitals. What does that mean?

In our integrated model of care, we work very closely with hospitals to ensure that our members receive the timely, appropriate, and responsive care they require and to enable coordinated continuity of care. At our core hospitals, our members' care is guided around the clock by hospitalists, as well as medical and surgical specialists, from the Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group who exclusively care for Kaiser Permanente patients. All Permanente hospitalists have our members' complete electronic health records securely at their fingertips. The excellent work we do together with our core hospitals as an integrated operating team translates into better outcomes and quality not only for Kaiser Permanente patients but for all patients.

Is there a hospital in the region where the majority of your northern Virginia-based members receive care?

While our doctors have the option to admit our members to any hospital they feel is in the best interest of the patient, our flagship hospital in northern Virginia is Virginia Hospital Center. For almost 70 years, Virginia Hospital Center (formerly known as Arlington Hospital) has provided exceptional medical services to the community. The hospital offers multiple Centers of Excellence including: Cardiology, Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery, Oncology, Neuroscience, Urology, and Women & Infant Health. Virginia Hospital Center is a teaching hospital associated with Georgetown University's School of Medicine, accredited by The Joint Commission, and licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Health.

Virginia Hospital Center was named one of America's Top 100 Hospitals by Truven Health Analytic, and in 2012 was recognized as the top hospital in the Commonwealth of Virginia for patient satisfaction, as measured by the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey. VHC was ranked the number 1 hospital in the Commonwealth in both overall patient satisfaction and how likely patients were to definitely recommend the hospital to others.

What communication outreach are you doing to my employees who are currently receiving care at an Inova hospital?

Physicians and other caregivers are reaching out directly to current patients to ensure continuity of care. In addition, Northern Virginia members will receive a written communication, which will be available next week.