CLIMATE CRISIS

BEYOND HEALING BODIES, HEALTHCARE'S CHOICES CAN HEAL THE EARTH

KAISER PERMANENTE

SAVING LIVES, SUSTAINING EARTH

CLIMATE CRISIS

Climate crisis is one of the most challenging issue that affects everyone on the planet. Climate crisis refers to significant changes in the earth's climate patterns, particularly increase in global temperatures. Global warming cause rising sea levels, extreme weather events, melting polar ice, and threats to biodiversity. Climate crisis is largely caused by human activities like emission of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Addressing the climate crisis requires urgent and collective action. Sustainable future is the key to addressing the root cause of climate crisis. By adopting sustainable practices, we are safeguarding our planet for future generations. Among the organizations taking bold steps towards a sustainable future, Kaiser Permanente stands as a guiding light for environmental responsibility in the health care sector.

The article 'How the U.S. Health Care Systems Contributes to Climate Changes' on website 'commonwealthfund.org' states,

" WORLDWIDE, THE HEALTH CARE SECTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR AS MUCH AS 4.6 PERCENT OF TOTAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, WHICH INCLUDE CARBON DIOXIDE, METHANE, AND OZONE, AMONG OTHER"

I'm really surprised to read that the healthcare sector contributes so much to greenhouse gas emissions. This article underscores the urgent need for awareness and immediate action within the healthcare industry. It emphasizes the importance of adopting sustainable practices, reducing energy consumption, and reevaluating waste management strategies. My research dives into the ways Kaiser Permanente is making a difference in our fight against climate change. It explores how Kaiser Permanente is tackling this problem. By using clean energy, reducing waste, and teaching others, they're showing how everyone can help.

TALWINDER SINGH

Site Director,
Kaiser Permanente

The person I interviewed is Mr. Talwinder Singh, the Site Director at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, Union City. During the interview, Talwinder shared valuable insights on sustainable practices in healthcare. His role at Kaiser involves leading efforts to make healthcare more environmentally friendly. With 15 years of experience at kaiser, he's managing many different departments. He has overseen various programs aimed at reducing the organization's environmental impact. This includes implementing initiatives focused on energy conservation,waste reduction, and water conservation within Kaiser Permanente facilities. Speaking with him gave me a deeper understanding of how Kaiser is trying to balance running hospitals while being kinder to the planet. During our conversation, Talwinder explained the challenges and successes in making hospitals more eco-friendly. He highlighted the importance of these changes, discussing how they not only help the environment but also make healthcare better for patients and the community. His insights revealed the dedication and hard work involved in making these changes happen. Talking to him gave me a real understanding of how they're trying to help the planet by practicing sustainability in hospitals. Mr. Talwinder's perspective offered a good view of Kaiser's efforts to be environmentally responsible. Learning from him showed me the real commitment hospitals like Kaiser have towards being more sustainable. His insights were revealing how healthcare institutions like Kaiser are actively contributing to a healthier planet.

MISSION OF ORGANISATION

When asked about the mission of organizations, Kaiser's Director Talwinder Singh said, "Our mission is pretty clear is how we can make our communities healthier and make it affordable. For everyone to get their health care, and also just provide high quality of care to our members to our patients". I'm amazed by their commitment to making communities healthier and ensuring healthcare is accessible for everyone. They want to help people stay healthy and provide top-quality care to everyone they help. It's nice to see a place that's focused on making sure healthcare is both excellent and something everyone can afford.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Environmental stewardship is a crucial component of preventing the climate crisis. In general, Environmental stewardship means taking responsibility for the well-being of our environment. It plays a major role in raising awareness and encouraging individuals, businesses, and communities to adopt eco friendly practices. By practicing environmental stewardship, we can contribute to reducing our environmental impact and promoting a more sustainable future. Kaiser Permanente is a health care leader in promoting environmental stewardship through a range of initiatives and practices aimed at reducing its environmental impact and fostering a culture of sustainability within the organization.

During my interview with Kaiser director Talwinder Singh, he provided me with a better understanding of the steps Kaiser is taking to be environmentally responsible.

DURING THE INTERVIEW, TALWINDER SAID, " ONE OF THE THINGS I TRY TO DO IS LEAD OUR TEAMS TO BETTER SERVE OUR COMMUNITIES AND ALSO BE INNOVATIVE AND HOW WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR ENVIRONMENT."

This quote reflects a genuine dedication to both people's well- being and the health of our planet. His dedication to enhancing community service and environmental innovation is truly praiseworthy. It also demonstrates the approach Kaiser takes in shaping a better future for us all.

Environmental stewardship section on Kaiser Permanente's official website 'about.Kaiserpermanente.org' states,

The article 'Through environmental stewardship, hospitals can preserve and protect health' by Collen Scanlon states,

" WE KNOW ONE WAY TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF THE MORE THAN 68 MILLION PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE IS BY IMPROVING THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS"

"ENVIRONMENTAL HARM IS AN ISSUE THAT THE HEALTH SECTOR HAS TAKEN GREAT STRIDES TO PREVENT, WORKING TOGETHER TO FIND BETTER OPTIONS THAT HAVE THE LEAST NEGATIVE IMPACT"

This quote makes so much sense to me. It shows they understand how a clean environment is essential for good health. I appreciate Kaiser Permanente's focus on improving both healthcare and the environment for the communities they serve.

I agree with the sentiment in this quote. I think it's good that the healthcare sector is trying hard to avoid harming the environment. They're working together to find better ways of doing things that don't hurt nature as much. It's important because it shows they care about both people's health and the health of the planet.

TRACKING CLIMATE ACTION PROGRESS

IT IS AN IMPORTANT MEASURE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE CLIMATE CRISIS.

By looking at the steps we take to reduce pollution and use energy wisely, we can see what's effective. It helps us know if we're on the right track and encourages others to do the same. When we see good results, it inspires new ideas and innovations. Monitoring our progress also reminds people about the importance of being eco-friendly in their daily lives. Kaiser Permanente keeps a close watch on how they're helping the environment. They use numbers and facts to see if their efforts are working. This approach not only benefits Kaiser Permanente but also contributes significantly to creating a healthier and more sustainable environment for everyone.

During my interview with Director Talwinder Singh, he said, "I think one of the things we're trying to do is that by integrating environmental sustainability into our daily operations we know we're not only trying to meditate, mitigate climate change but also ensured that our healthcare services and our and our environmental changes are the face of our organization".

Kaiser Permanente shares their climate action progress on their website 'about.Kaiserpermanente.org' stating,

> **" In 2020, we achieved our goal of becoming carbon neutral by buying enough clean energy and carbon offsets to remove more greenhouse gases from the atmosphere than we emit. Our hospitals, medical buildings, and offices have eliminated their carbon burden, which is equivalent to taking 175,000 cars off the road."**

I'm truly impressed by Kaiser Permanente's dedication to the environment, as stated on their website. Achieving carbon neutrality by removing more greenhouse gases than they emit is a significant milestone. Taking 175,000 cars off the road is a huge impact. It shows their commitment to making a real difference and sets a remarkable example for others to follow.

The article "Health Care Climate Challenge – Together we are creating better health for people and the planet" states,

> **"Health care can help forge a future with healthy hospitals and healthy people by implementing transformative climate solutions that reduce harmful pollution and strengthen resiliency."**

I find this quote from the article very inspiring. It highlights the powerful role healthcare can play in creating a healthier future, both for people and our planet. This quote also shows how hospitals and healthcare places are finding ways to stop pollution and become stronger in the face of challenges. It makes me happy because it means our world can be healthier, and healthcare is leading the way in making that happen. It's a big step forward, and I'm glad to see it happening.

SETTING A GOAL FOR SAFER PRODUCTS IN HEALTHCARE

Setting a goal for safer products in healthcare is a significant help measure to prevent the climate crisis. Using safer products in healthcare is like choosing things that are kinder to the environment. It means using items that don't have harmful chemicals, which is good for the Earth. By doing this, hospitals and healthcare places can reduce pollution, making the planet healthier. It's a small step that makes a big difference in fighting climate change. Kaiser Permanente is actively helping in using safer products in healthcare. They do this by carefully choosing products that are environmentally friendly and have fewer harmful chemicals. By making these mindful choices, they reduce pollution and create a safer environment for both patients and staff.

Kaiser Permanente shares its progress on the safer products goal, which states,

" RECEIVED ELECTRONIC PRODUCT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT TOOL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE PROCUREMENT OF ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT FOR 4 CONSECUTIVE YEARS."

I'm really impressed by Kaiser Permanente's achievement! I think it's amazing that Kaiser Permanente got awards for using eco-friendly electronic equipment for four years in a row. It shows they're doing a fantastic job in choosing products that are good for the environment. This kind of commitment sets a high standard and encourages others to follow suit, making our world a cleaner and safer place.

Sustainable food in healthcare

From plate to planet: Healthcare's role in fostering wellness through sustainable meals."

Utilizing sustainable food within healthcare systems is another important strategy in fighting the climate crisis. By emphasizing locally sourced, plant–based options and adopting eco–friendly farming practices, healthcare institutions significantly reduce their carbon footprint. These efforts not only decrease transportation emissions but also promote healthier diets, minimizing the environmental impact associated with resource–intensive food production. Kaiser Permanente likes to use food that's grown nearby to reduce pollution from transportation. They focus on meals with lots of plants, which are good for health and better for the environment. They also work with farmers who use eco–friendly ways to grow food.
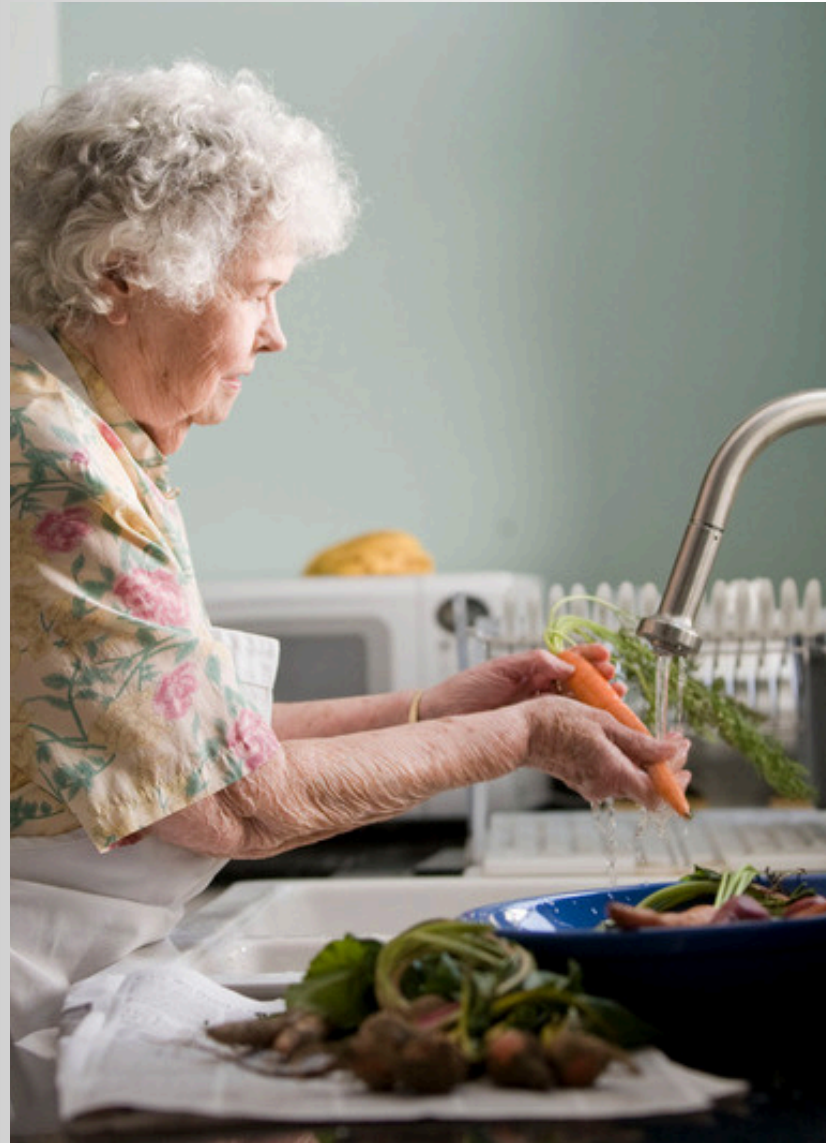
The section 'sustainable food goals' on Kaiser's website "about.kaiserpermanente.org" states, "We were among the first to establish an organic farmers market at the U.S hospital. Today, we host more than 50 seasonal markets and farm stands at our hospitals and facilities across the country."

I think it's really cool that Kaiser Permanente has set up more than 50 markets and farm stands in their hospitals. It means people can get fresh and healthy food easily, and it's great for local farmers too. It's like they're making it simple for everyone to eat better and help the environment at the same time. I wish more places did stuff like this! It's a great example of how healthcare institutions can play a significant role in promoting both health and sustainability within their communities.

The article 'Hospitals Look at Food to Strengthen Patient Health, Support Local Farmers and Tackle Climate Change' by Emma Clippinger on website 'foodprint.org' states,

"In 2018, the global research non-profit World Resources Institute launched the Cool Food Pledge to help large institutions reduce their food-based contributions to climate change. It starts with a simple premise: food production accounts for 25 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions".

The Cool Food Pledge started by the World Resources Institute is about big groups cutting down how much their food contributes to climate change. The idea that a quarter of the world's greenhouse gases come from producing food is surprising to me. It shows how important it is to think about what we eat, not just for our health but also for the planet. It's cool that hospitals and other big groups are trying to make their food choices better for the environment. This article also mentions Heath care without harm program in which John Stoddard, the National Program Director at Health Care Without Harm, stresses the significance of healthcare in community well–being, stating,"Health care can invest in the health of the community by supporting regional food systems that are equitable and resilient." I think John Stoddard's point about healthcare supporting local food systems for the community's health is really smart. It's like saying that hospitals and healthcare can do more than just treat people when they're sick.

Waste Management

Hospitals and healthcare facilities generate a staggering amount of waste each year and reducing this waste in hospitals significantly aids in the fight against the climate crisis. It helps control greenhouse gas emissions, conserve resources, and promote sustainable practices. Hospitals generate substantial waste, and by implementing measures to minimize single-use items and unnecessary packaging, and adopting recycling or composting programs, they significantly decrease their environmental impact. These efforts not only cut down on carbon emissions associated with waste disposal but also conserve energy and natural resources used in manufacturing and disposal processes. During my interview with Kaiser director Talwinder Singh, he said,

At Kaiser Permanente, we are ensuring safe and environmentally sound treatment of our hazardous and medical waste streams while working to reduce the overall amount of waste we generate through reuse, recycling, or composting. We favor the procurement of recyclable products and encourage the market to create new recycling opportunities.

"We are actively engaging in a waste reduction on how to reduce a lot of the waste that we have in our medical centers. And also how can we sustain sourcing initiatives"?

I found it really interesting when I spoke with Kaiser's director, Talwinder Singh. He mentioned that they're working hard on cutting down the waste in their medical centers. And the fact that they're also thinking about how to keep getting their supplies in a way that's good for the environment is pretty smart. It shows they're focused on making a difference beyond just their immediate space.

Kaiser Permanente even shares their waste reduction progress on their website stating,

" In 2020, we reused, recycled, or composted 49% of the non hazardous waste we generated, collected more than 45,900 tons of waste for recycling, reuse, or composting, avoided more than 1,500 tons of plastic waste via our reusable sharps container program, and collected more 400 tons of medical devices for reprocessing".

I'm really impressed by Kaiser Permanente's transparency about their waste reduction efforts. Their progress is really amazing. It's great to see them making such a big effort to cut down on waste and take care of the environment. I find it impressive that Kaiser Permanente is so focused on handling their waste in safe and eco-friendly ways. Instead of just throwing things away, they're finding ways to use stuff again, recycle, or turn it into compost. They're also trying to use things that can be recycled more easily and are asking others to do the same. It's like they're being really careful about their trash to protect the planet.

Water conservation

Every drop saved today creates a sustainable tide for tomorrow.

Water conservation is a powerful tool in the fight against the climate crisis. By using water more efficiently, we reduce the energy needed for treating and distributing it, cutting down on the carbon emissions that contribute to global warming. Conserving water also safeguards ecosystems, ensuring that vital habitats for plants and animals remain healthy. Ultimately, water conservation isn't just about saving water; it's a key strategy in mitigating the effects of climate change and preserving our environment for the future. Hospitals and healthcare facilities are among largest consumers of water in our communities.Kaiser Permanente is taking aggressive steps to reduce their impact on local and regional water systems.

It's interesting how Kaiser Permanente is doing a lot of stuff to save water. Talwinder told me that they're changing their landscaping by swapping out a bunch of grass for bushes because bushes need less water. It sounds like a smart way for them to use less water and be more responsible. It's cool to see how they're making these changes to be more responsible with water resources.

— Save water, sustain life

" During my interview with Talwinder, when I asked him about the organization's accomplishments, he said, " I would say a lot of water conservation. So we basically went to a landscaping project at one of our facilities. We're trying to get rid of you know, all the all the areas where we don't need water. So we have a lot of grass in our landscaping, we're trying to get rid of that. Bringing the bush so we don't have to waste a lot of water".
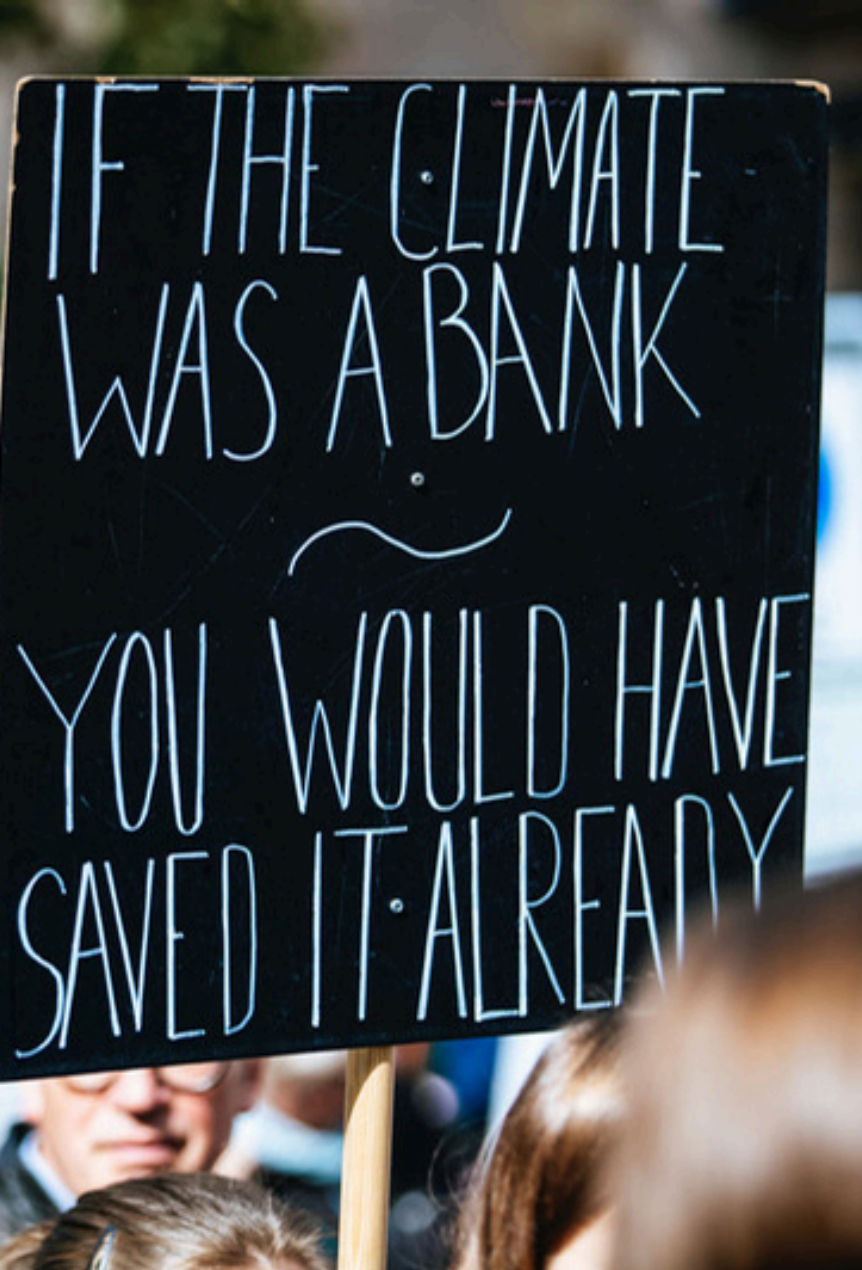
Kaiser Permanente shares their progress on water reductions under section 'Water Conservation' on their officail website 'about.kaiserpermanente.org' stating, " Water intensity declined across our facilities by more than 13% as of mid-2021 compared to 2013. Some of our geographic regions attained greater than 15% reductions. Our shift to renewable energy sources (such as solar and wind) will help reduce our water usage by 100 million gallons of water a year. Our use of digital X-ray processing has enhanced image analysis while also cutting down on large amounts of water and chemicals needed for traditional film processing".

Kaiser Permanente's progress in reducing water use, as mentioned on their website, is impressive. They've made significant reductions in water intensity across their facilities, with some regions achieving over 15% reductions. It's great to see them making such big changes to save water and be more environmentally friendly. The article 'How Healthcare Facilities can help conserve water' by Alex Evans on website, 'goodrx.com' states, " The lack of access to clean, safe water is a core global health issue that is worsening due to increased demand and climate change". I find it concerning, as article highlights that the lack of clean water access is becoming a bigger problem because of higher demand and climate change. It's worrying that this might become a bigger problem in the future. It shows why places like healthcare facilities need to be careful with water and find ways to save it. This way, they're not just helping themselves but also joining in to solve a big global issue.

Changing how we think about the environment is a big deal in tackling climate change.

When we adjust our views to care more about nature, it affects the things we do every day. It's like choosing to support things that are good for the planet. When lots of people start thinking this way, it makes a big difference. It's like a group effort to make changes that help fight climate change and make the world a better place for everyone. During my interview with Talwinder, he said,

Talwinder's point make sense to me. Lots of people have been used to not thinking much about how their actions affect the environment for a long time. But if we can help them see why it's important to care about the planet and think about the future, then maybe we can start making things better. It's about getting everyone to understand that the things we do today can make a big difference for the Earth tomorrow.

" A lot of people have the same mindset from you know, decades where they are not thinking about their environment. So I would say if we can change those mindsets of people on how they think how they are looking or in how they're looking into our future, then maybe we can make a difference".