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## Kaiser Permanente Expands its Commitment to Improving the Health and Wellness of School Children, Staff and Parents

*Announces Broader Partnership with Safe Routes to School National Partnership, a multiyear program for engaging students, staff, teachers and families in building healthier communities through more walking and physical activity*

Sept. 27, 2012 (**OAKLAND, Calif.**) – With the childhood obesity epidemic a continued threat to the nation’s health, cuts to physical education programs in schools on the rise, and a growing body of evidence supporting walking and increased activity to improve overall health, Kaiser Permanente and Safe Routes to School National Partnership will expand their existing partnership to bring walking and greater physical activity to school communities across the country.

Kaiser Permanente, the nation’s largest integrated health care system, and the National Partnership share goals around the importance of children, staff and parents improving health with walking and activity. The National Partnership will develop a walking-based program, and make it available to the more than 10,000 elementary and middle schools in the Kaiser Permanente service areas and throughout the country. Key components of the program will include a partnership with the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA<sup>®</sup>), and focus on a biannual walking competition targeting staff, students and their families. This new program will complement Kaiser Permanente’s existing [Every Body Walk!](#) campaign.

“Kaiser Permanente has been a long-standing champion of health and wellness in schools and school communities, and we are thrilled to be partnering with them as we expand our programming to children, staff and parents through schools throughout the country,” says Deb Hubsmith, founder and director of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership. “With this commitment we aim to make a big impact on the crisis of physical inactivity by getting more kids walking and engaging in regular physical activity.”

For the past 25 years, Kaiser Permanente has supported health and wellness in schools through several efforts, including its [Educational Theatre Program](#) for students and communities, [support for school-based health centers](#), [workplace wellness offerings for school teachers](#) and its Community Health Initiatives focusing on Healthy Eating, Active Living. Currently, more than 2 million Kaiser Permanente members spend the majority of their day on a school campus.

“Schools, school districts and the health of the students, teachers, staff and families are of critical importance to Kaiser Permanente,” says Raymond J. Baxter, PhD, senior vice president for Community Benefit, Research and Health Policy at Kaiser Permanente. “Safe Routes to School National Partnership and Kaiser Permanente share a vision for creating safe, healthy and walkable

communities in and around our nation's schools. By joining forces, we hope that vision can become a reality.”

To raise awareness about the important role that parents, school districts, local governments, police and community partners play in ensuring the safety of children on the trip to and from school, Kaiser Permanente and Safe Routes to School National Partnership are supporting a series of events in conjunction with International Walk-to-School Day on Wednesday, Oct. 3.

#### **About the Safe Routes to School National Partnership**

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership is a fast growing network of more than 600 organizations, schools and professional groups working to set goals, share best practices, leverage infrastructure and program funding and advance policy change to help agencies that implement Safe Routes to School programs across the nation. The National Partnership's mission is to advocate for safe walking and bicycling to and from schools and in daily life, to improve the health and well-being of America's children and to foster the creation of livable, sustainable communities. For more information, go to: [www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org).

#### **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, our mission is to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We currently serve more than 9 million members in nine states and the District of Columbia. Care for members and patients is focused on their total health and guided by their personal 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. For more information, go to: [kp.org/newscenter](http://kp.org/newscenter).

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