Kaiser Permanente adds iPhone app to its suite of mobile offerings

The Associated Press

Kaiser Permanente announced today the launch of its iOS health management app, available free of charge in the Apple iTunes store.

The app offers members access to all of the same time-saving and convenient tools they can use through My Health Manager on kp.org.

Members can email their providers, check lab test results, order prescription refills, and manage appointments - all from their Apple handheld devices, where and when they choose.

Patients like Melissa Marote, 40, of Canoga Park, Calif. are finding it easier to manage their health online with Kaiser Permanente's mobile device apps and mobile-optimized website, kp.org. A busy mom of two small girls: Amelia, age 2, and Scarlett, 3 months, Melissa tries to make every minute count.

"I have to take advantage of every moment in my day to maintain a balanced life," said Marote. "The kp.org mobile app helps me to multi-task, taking care of my family while I am nursing, waiting in line or running errands, so I can spend more time doing the things I love, like playing with my kids, spending time with my husband, and writing notes to my friends and family." This year, Kaiser Permanente made the largest electronic health record system in the world accessible by smartphone with the launch of its mobile-optimized website, m.kp.org, as well as an app for Android phones. Nearly 9 million Kaiser Permanente members now have 24/7 access to their medical information anywhere in the world from their mobile devices.

The app on the Android platform already has more than 95,000 downloads. There have also been more than 4.8 million visits to the mobile-optimized kp.org since its launch in late January, accounting for more than 15 percent of total visits to kp.org in the month of April.

"Accessing health information and care from mobile devices is quickly becoming a new norm for care. We are probably the most electronically connected health care delivery system in the country, and we are using that connectivity and database to give our patients and members the connectivity they clearly want," said George Halvorson, chairman and chief executive officer of Kaiser Permanente. "We are constantly looking for ways to take connectivity to new levels. The mobile health toolkit gives us great opportunities to satisfy that demand." Providers also believe that the mobile apps can make care and information more accessible to their patients, improving their overall health care experience. "The mobile capabilities we offer allow members to securely access their health information when and where

it's convenient for them," said Mark Groshek, MD, a Kaiser Permanente pediatrician in Colorado. "My patients or their parents can send me a message, refill a prescription, or check test results right from the palm of their hand. It's really all about making it easy for our members to play an active role in their health care." Allowing members access to their health information and providers is more than just convenient -it also can improve health outcomes.

According to Kaiser Permanente research, secure patient-physician email messaging improves the effectiveness of care for patients with diabetes and hypertension. The study, published in Health Affairs in 2010, showed that health information technology improves quality of care scores. The study observed 35,423 Kaiser Permanente patients in Southern California who had diabetes, hypertension, or both. It found that use of secure patient-physician messaging in any two-month period was associated with statistically significant improvements in Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) care measurements. Results included 2 percent to 6.5 percent improvements in glycemic, cholesterol, and blood pressure screening and control.

"I have a heart condition and have to get my Coumadin checked regularly," said Kaiser Permanente patient Richard Miller, 76, of Vallejo, Calif. "I get an alert that I have new test results, and they email me if I need to change my dosage. I also go to the encyclopedia to tell me what my lab results mean, and I can make and change appointments." Kaiser Permanente launched its first mobile application, KP Locator, in July 2011. The facility locator app is now integrated into the new iOS app launched today, making the various functionalities even more convenient to access for users. The locator function has a simple and intuitive interface; users can input a city name or ZIP code to find Kaiser Permanente facilities in their area. Since its launch, the facility-finder app has been used 1 million times.

These increased mobile health capabilities are a natural extension of Kaiser Permanente's leadership in health IT. Kaiser Permanente HealthConnect@ is Kaiser Permanente's comprehensive health information system, which includes one of the largest, most advanced electronic health records available in the United States. The member tool My Health Manager securely connects 8.9 million people to their health care teams, their personal information, and the latest medical knowledge, leveraging the integrated approaches to health care available only at Kaiser Permanente. In 2011, more than 68 million lab test results were made available online and members made more than 12 million e-visits. These numbers are expected to increase significantly as more people have access to their doctors and their health information at the touch of a button.

"The new mobile-optimized site is set up very well. It's easy to use, the functionality is improved. I'm very happy with it," said Miller.

"I have a pretty basic phone. I think people would be amazed to see what I can do on it." To learn more about Kaiser Permanente's plans and driving factors in the mobile space, please visit: http://centerfortotalhealth.org/2012/michael-cross-talks-mobile-health-at-himss12/ and http://centerfortotalhealth.org/tag/brian-gardner/ 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 serve approximately 8.9 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: www.kp.org/newscenter.

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