

The CEO Profile!

Introduction

David Ameen is the newly appointed Executive Director of Kaiser Permanente Kern County. David is an accomplished healthcare executive with a history of success in leading free standing hospitals as well as multi-hospital systems. Due to David's leadership in each environment, financial performance and market share significantly improved. His achievement in clinical and service quality and in partnership with physicians has been a hallmark.

He was most recently the President and CEO of Paradise Valley Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona. His prior positions include President and CEO of St. Charles Mercy Hospital (Ohio) and President and CEO of St. Joseph's Health System of Greater Sonoma County (California).

David has a Bachelor of Science degree in Pharmacy from the University of Michigan and a Bachelors of Science degree in Psychology from Northern Michigan University. He obtained his Master's of Science degree in Health Services Administration from the University of Michigan.

Interview

Can you tell us a brief history of Kaiser Permanente?

Since its establishment Kaiser Permanente has been committed to wellness and community health. The Kaiser Permanente Medical Care Program began in 1933 when a young surgeon named Dr. Sidney Garfield established a prepaid medical and hospital services plan for construction workers building an aqueduct in the desert outside of Los Angeles. Our organization's uniqueness is evident in the prepaid services, which eliminated workers not getting care because they couldn't afford it. This remains solid today as the organization continues to provide affordable and effective healthcare. Together, we are creating communities that will continue to thrive.

What kind of services does Kaiser Permanente provide?

The Kaiser Permanente organization is divided in to separate yet intertwined sections:

Kaiser Foundation Health Plans:

Nonprofit, public benefit corporations that contract with individuals and groups to arrange comprehensive medical and hospital services. Health Plans contract with Kaiser Foundation Hospitals and medical groups to provide services.

Kaiser Foundation Hospitals:

A nonprofit, public benefit corporation that owns and operates community hospitals in California, Oregon and Hawaii; owns outpatient facilities in several states; provides or arranges hospital services; and sponsors charitable, educational, and research activities.

Permanente Medical Groups:

Partnerships or professional corporations of physicians - one or more in each Kaiser Permanente

region. The full responsibility for providing and arranging necessary medical care is assumed in each Division by the Permanente Medical Groups. The Medical Groups formed The Permanente Federation to provide governance and policy direction on a national level.

How has Kaiser Permanente grown in Kern County over the past 10 years?

In just 20 short years, we have grown in membership from nearly 3,000 members to more than 98,000, making us a strong presence in the health care community and the community at large. The Stockdale Medical Offices and the first Kaiser Permanente-built facility in Bakersfield opened in 1989. In 2007, total expense for KFH/HP and SCPMG was \$291,936,010.

How does Kaiser Permanente contribute to the economy of Kern County?

Most importantly we provide excellent care. In fact, we just received an award for The Best Doctor/Medical Group in Kern County through the *Bakersfield Californian's* Best of Kern County Reader's Poll. We employ a staff of more than 800 along with 175 physicians. In 2007 our payroll expenses were \$90,457,404. To ensure our members have access to all the care they need, we established and have maintained partnerships with more than 275 community contracted providers. In order to provide the best emergency and hospitalization services to our members, we contract with local hospitals. In 2007, our total outside medical expenses for KFH/HP and SCPMG was \$134,491,505.

How does Kaiser Permanente contribute to the community of Kern County?

Since 1987, we have contributed more than 2 million dollars in direct grants to community service organizations, including Community Action Partnership of Kern and Clinica Sierra Vista (nonprofit health clinics); Boys and Girls Club; Youth Connection: Bakersfield AIDS Foundation; United Way of Kern County; and the Bakersfield Homeless Shelter. We also contribute surplus medical and office equipment to local nonprofit programs. In addition, many Kaiser Permanente employees and physicians freely volunteer their time and talent to those in need.

Do you think universal health coverage is socially desirable and financially feasible?

I do. I think society can be measured by how we take care of those who are the most vulnerable. There are 48 million uninsured citizens in the United States. It's crucial we find a solution to this continuously growing problem. There has to be a plan that enables 100 percent of healthcare patients to receive care and the providers be compensated for the work and care they provide. Do I have the solution? No. This needs to be a national debate in order to find the answer. But, I do think the first step comes from taking care of ourselves in order to thrive as a collective group.