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Kaiser eases Richmond crowds with new Pinole office

San Francisco Business Times - by [Chris Rauber](#)

Kaiser Permanente last week opened a \$34 million, 61,800-square-foot medical office building in Pinole, to provide closer-to-home primary care services to local Kaiser enrollees and ease congestion at its nearby Richmond Medical Center, officials said.

The new facility, located at 1301 Pinole Valley Road, includes services such as adult primary care, family practice and pediatrics, ob/gyn, pharmacy, lab and radiology. It is initially staffed by 18 providers (physicians and nurse practitioners) and 52 staffers, according to Shirley Steinback, Kaiser's medical group administrator for the East Bay.

Some of the doctors and staff transferred to the new facility from Kaiser's Richmond Medical Center; others were new hires. Ultimately, the MOB — Kaiser's term for medical offices and clinics — will have 38 doctors and nurse practitioners and a larger support staff to support the additional providers, Steinback said. It should be fully staffed by the end of summer.

Kaiser spent \$23 million to build the new structure, which includes 38 physician offices and 76 examination rooms — two for each physician — and from three to six procedure rooms for minor procedures. Furnishings and equipment added \$11 million to the total cost.

The new office is intended to serve Kaiser enrollees from Pinole (where roughly 35 percent of the population is enrolled), Richmond, Rodeo, Crockett, El Sobrante, Hercules and some from as far away as Martinez and Vallejo, Steinback said. The contractor and architect were San Francisco's Herrero Contractors Inc. and Mountain View's **Hawley Peterson & Snyder Architects**, respectively.

The new facility boasts a number of "green" features, according to Kaiser, such as water-saving plumbing fixtures, recycled structural steel and carpet backing, and drought-resistant landscaping.

Blue Shield's foundation stops making IT grants

The **Blue Shield of California Foundation** said it has revised its grant-making strategies and decided to stop making health-care technology grants this year, so it can focus on other priorities in tough economic times.

Instead, the foundation, which is affiliated with San Francisco-based Blue Shield of California, will focus on three areas, officials said:

- Achieving universal coverage for all Californians "using a shared responsibility approach."
- Building a high-quality safety net to meet the needs of families in crisis.
- Working to end domestic violence in the state.

"While we are proud of our partnerships with a host of exemplary organizations pioneering programs in telemedicine, health information exchanges, electronic health records and e-prescribing, we recognize that our level of resources and staffing are not ideally suited to having an impact in this complex and capital-intensive field," Crystal Hayling, the foundation's president and CEO, said Jan. 13.

Officials said economic pressures and budget cutbacks in California led them to focus on the most urgent needs. Hayling said Blue Shield has committed \$30 million to grants this year, roughly the same level of support as in recent years, and stressed that the foundation will meet all existing grant commitments.

In 2008, it distributed \$37.1 million in grants; 29 percent of that went to IT-related projects.

Hither & Yon: 'Next Generation' CEO program seeks nominations

The California Health Leadership College, a 6-year-old fellowship program for "next generation" CEOs, is seeking nominations for the 2009 program, officials announced recently.

The year-long fellowship program is sponsored by the **California Hospital Association**. It offers six full-tuition scholarships, supported by the California HealthCare Foundation, for fellows from public, safety-net and rural institutions; other participants are sponsored by their own organizations. All fellows must be nominated by their CEOs, and receive training in "soft skills," such as building teams and influencing people.

The deadline for 2009 nominations is Feb. 12. Details are available at www.healthleadershipcollege.com.

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