



PRESS RELEASE

August 15, 2011

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\$1 MILLION GRANT WILL HELP SOUTH SANTA ROSA TACKLE OBESITY

Kaiser Permanente investment funds 3-year effort to help make healthy choices more accessible to community residents

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Santa Rosa, Calif. – The Community Activity and Nutrition Coalition of Sonoma County (CAN-C), an alliance of individuals, professionals and community based organizations focused on improving community health, has received a \$1 million grant from Kaiser Permanente to promote healthy eating and active living in the Kawana Springs and Roseland neighborhoods of south Santa Rosa.

The investment is part of Kaiser Permanente's new three-year, \$10 million HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) Zones initiative across Northern California.

The HEAL Zones are designed to help make healthy choices accessible to more people in underserved communities — and in turn to prevent diseases such as diabetes and hypertension that often result from obesity. The project is supported by Kaiser Permanente through a fund they established at the [East Bay Community Foundation](#).

“We are thrilled to receive this funding from Kaiser Permanente because it will allow us to work with residents to make changes that reflect the specific needs of our community,” said Anthony Taylor, Health Program Manager with the County of Sonoma Department of Health Services, the coordinating agency for the grant. “The partnership with Kaiser Permanente is invaluable in the campaign to fight chronic diseases associated with overweight and obesity here in Sonoma County.”

The South Santa Rosa HEAL Zones project brings together a robust coalition of partners: including Roseland, Sheppard and Kawana Elementary schools; local public agencies; community-based organizations; local businesses; and health care providers. Together, they will work to enhance nutrition education and physical activity opportunities in schools, empower parents to support healthier eating and physical activity habits at home and in the community, and engage restaurants and food outlets to improve access by selling more healthful foods.

In addition to Santa Rosa, Kaiser Permanente selected six other Northern California communities to receive \$1 million HEAL Zones grants: Bayview in San Francisco, Madera in Fresno, Modesto, Monument in Concord, Richmond, and South Sacramento. In addition to the seven HEAL Zones, Kaiser Permanente will dedicate an additional \$3 million to technical and evaluation support as well as other Northern California place-based community investments over the next three years.

Obesity is a national epidemic, and in California, the statistics are stark: half of all California adults, one in every nine California children, and one in three teens is overweight or obese. The highest rates of overweight and obesity, however, occur among groups with the highest poverty rates. In Sonoma County, two in three low-income adults, more than one in three low-income children and almost half of all low-income teens is overweight or obese.

Place matters

A person's neighborhood greatly affects their likelihood of obesity because it determines how easy it is to buy affordable healthy food and have a safe place to be active. Low-income communities tend to have some of the highest obesity rates, which is why the HEAL Zones are focused there.

The vision of the HEAL Zones is that at the end of this three-year initiative, these communities will be measurably transformed so that opportunities for engaging in healthy behaviors – walking and biking on safe routes, buying affordable fresh fruits and vegetables close to home, exercising in parks and participating in active after-school programs — are part of daily life.

The HEAL Zones are a continuation of Kaiser Permanente's Healthy Eating Active Living Community Health Initiative (HEAL-CHI), a five-year initiative started in 2006 that empowered communities to promote healthy eating and active living through policy and environmental change. In south Santa Rosa, these changes included improving school lunches and adding salad bars to seven schools, offering breastfeeding and healthier living counseling and classes to patients at community clinics, empowering residents to create healthy changes in their communities through leadership development, and launching the Healthy Food Outlet Project.

"In the first five years of the HEAL work, we saw increased physical activity, greater availability of healthy food in corner stores, improvement of our local parks and creation of safe walkways. We also learned that going forward, we could make a greater impact by concentrating our efforts in smaller, more targeted areas," said Yvette Radford, Kaiser Permanente's Regional Vice President, External and Community Affairs. "For Kaiser Permanente, the HEAL Zones are much more than just funding. They are an extension of the work in our medical centers, and our commitment to helping create healthy individuals and healthy communities."

Each HEAL Zone will focus on four specific goals over the next three years:

- Decrease calorie consumption, especially sugar-sweetened beverages
- Increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Increase physical activity in community settings, such as parks and safe routes for walking and biking
- Increase physical activity in institutional settings, such as schools and workplaces

"Our children deserve a healthy future. As it stands now the next generation of children will have less of a chance for a healthy life due to obesity. Locally, this important program gives children the opportunity to eat healthy, move their bodies and live healthier longer," said Kirk Pappas, MD, a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation doctor and Physician-in-Chief for Kaiser Permanente Santa Rosa Medical Center. "By investing in our own communities and supporting parents and children to become leaders in 'Healthy Eating and Active Living,' we are all making a difference."

To learn more about the Kawana Springs and Roseland HEAL Zones, visit <http://www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm> or call (707) 565-6680.

Photo opportunities and interviews are available with program staff, physician leaders, and south Santa Rosa residents

About the South Santa Rosa HEAL Zones

South Santa Rosa HEAL Zones is a project of the Community Activity and Nutrition Coalition of Sonoma County (CAN-C), which is a group of individuals, professionals and community based organizations concerned about the nutritional health, activity level and well-being of the residents of our community. The mission of CAN-C is to promote optimal nutritional and physical health for Sonoma County residents with an emphasis on children. The vision of the South Santa Rosa HEAL Zones is that the (10,000) people in Kawana Springs and Roseland will be able to eat better and move more as a part of daily life. A continuation of the South Santa Rosa Community Health Initiative that began in 2006 as part of Kaiser Permanente's Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Initiative, the South Santa Rosa HEAL Zones bring together a robust coalition of community partners to effect community-based change. By working together, schools, local public agencies, community based organizations, employers, local businesses, and health care providers are creating an environment that's making the healthy choice the easy choice for Kawana Springs and Roseland residents. To find out how you or your organization can get involved, contact HEAL staff at (707) 565-6680.

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 8.8 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.

OBESITY FACTS AND FIGURES

Sonoma County's Current Health Status

- In Sonoma County, approximately 60% of adults (ages 18 years and older) and 29% of teens (ages 12-17) are overweight or obese. (CHIS, 2009)
- There is a striking disparity between the proportions of overweight or obese Latino/Hispanic adults (79.3%) compared with adults of all other races (53.2%). (CHIS, 2009)
- The highest rates of overweight and obesity occur among population groups with the highest poverty rates. In 2009, over two-thirds (70%) of low-income (<100 FPL) adults ages 18 and older reported being overweight or obese compared to 59% of non-low-income adults (> 300 FPL). (CHIS)
- In Sonoma County, 38% of low income children (ages 2-11) and 44% of teens (ages 12-19) were overweight or obese. (PEDNSS, 2007-2009)
- In 2006, the healthcare costs and lost productivity associated with overweight, obesity and physical inactive in Sonoma County were estimated to be \$436,724,958. (CCPHA, 2008)

California's Current Health Status

- One in every nine California children, one in three teens, and over half of adults are already overweight or obese.
- More than 30 percent of low-income California children and teens are overweight or obese.
- Between 40-80% of overweight children will become overweight adults.
- Obesity rates are highest among Californians of Latino, American Indian, African American, and Pacific Islander descent.
- Although obesity rates in California have leveled in recent years, they remain alarmingly high. Over the past 30 years, obesity rates have tripled among children and adolescents.
- The costs of obesity-related chronic illness are alarming. A report by the Milken Institute estimated that by 2023 Californians will have 4.2 million avoidable chronic diseases. The treatment costs of these diseases are estimated at \$18.9 billion, and losses in productivity are estimated at \$98 billion.

Health Impacts

- Healthy eating and active living are key to preventing overweight and obesity. Less than 30% of California adults are eating enough fruits and vegetables, and only half get enough physical activity.
- New data suggests that obesity is now responsible for more disability and activity limitations than smoking.
- Poor diet, inactivity, and obesity contribute to the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, arthritis-related disabilities, depression, sleep disorders, and some cancers.
- As a direct result of the obesity epidemic, children's doctors are seeing a significant rise in chronic illness in children. Obese children are more than twice as likely to have type 2 diabetes as children of normal weight.
- If current trends continue, experts warn that one of three American children born in 2000—and half of all children from ethnic/racially diverse populations—will develop type 2 diabetes during their lifetime.

Place Matters

- Lack of access to healthy food is a major contributor to health disparities, resulting in disproportionately high rates of obesity and diabetes in low-income communities.
- California has more than four times as many fast-food restaurants and convenience stores as supermarkets and produce vendors. In many low-income communities, the ratio is even higher.