

# On-site Farmers' Markets

## Kaiser Permanente Medical Facilities

Health care providers increasingly are taking note of connections between food and health. A few providers, including industry leader Kaiser Permanente (KP), are rethinking their overall approach to providing food for patients, staff and the communities they serve, emphasizing issues of freshness, nutritional value, reduced chemical inputs, and sustainability. Ultimate goals include enhanced staff morale, and meeting their health mission by improving the food and eating of staff, patients and the surrounding community.



One great example of the changing food landscape in healthcare facilities are the eight farmers' markets/farm stands started over the last year and a half at various KP medical facilities in California and Hawaii.

**Background.** Dr. Preston Maring, a physician at Kaiser's Oakland Medical Center in California with an interest in food, thought his hospital should provide an alternative to the usual hospital lobby vendors, one more consistent with its health care mission. Momentum took over. And within a short time Dr. Maring had formed a committee that eventually led to the launching of Kaiser's first on-site farmers' market in May 2003. Since then several more markets and farm stands have started at KP facilities.

Mild climates in California and Hawaii permit KP's farmers' markets/stands to provide fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables on a weekly basis all year long. Some of them feature local organic producers approved by the California Certified Organic Farmers Association. This allows KP to meet dual goals of protecting the environment by supporting sustainable agriculture while improving access to healthy, affordable food in and around KP facilities. Each facility also offers an opportunity to further educate KP members, staff, and the local community about the benefits of healthful eating, often tying in with an existing, in-hospital program.

**Logistics.** Farmers' markets at KP facilities vary in their unique setups, in particular with respect to their hours of operation, costs, and stated focus. But their establishment and successful operation have had many shared features, including:

- **Minimal out-of-pocket costs**, such as for permits, although staff time invested can be significant.
- **Buy-in secured from key KP leaders**, such as the leaders in the food service area, operations, community and government relations, public affairs and legal departments, as well as from any cafeteria and/or coffee cart that operates on-site.
- **Effective community partners.** Successful operations benefit from a community intermediary who manages and coordinates the market's operation, including securing permits, getting produce from farms to site, setting up the

market, garbage disposal, etc.

- **Support from internal partners** including legal review, promotion of the market—internally to staff and KP members through newsletters and website, and externally to the community via press releases, meetings, articles, etc. Typical markets also have an important health/nutritional education component, developed by KP experts.
- **Cooperation and buy-in** from neighborhood restaurants and associations, grocery stores, and civic leaders.

**Benefits.** Before KP's first farmers' market opened at Oakland Medical Center, one concern was about there being enough staff, patients, and visitors to support it, especially during vacations. A separate concern was over fairness and possible competition with on-site cafeterias and coffee carts. In fact, experience has demonstrated significant (although not always quantifiable) benefits to producers, KP staff, and surrounding communities. While varying between facilities, general benefits include:

#### *Health*

- Increases access to healthy foods
- Encourages incorporation of healthy foods into diet

#### *Community*

- Supports local growers by providing non-weekend market opportunities
- Generates goodwill
- Creates new community partnerships

#### *Other*

- Promotes association between KP, health, and nutrition
- Educational component piggy backs on other KP programs
- Saves staff time on weekends, enhancing morale and perhaps avoiding absenteeism on Fridays

**Costs.** Operating costs for the markets have been minimal for the most part, depending on permit costs and the scope of the effort. Permits are mostly free, although one facility paid \$1,300. Other costs include banners and other marketing, educational materials, and tables.

**Conclusion.** The existing markets are generating interest within the KP system for markets in other states including Oregon, Colorado, and Michigan. In addition, KP is currently developing a comprehensive food policy that not only encourages the expansion of farm stands and farmers' markets to other facilities, but also broadens the scope of sustainable agriculture to include food served to patients and staff within KP facilities.

**Additional Information.** "Produce to the People" by Preston Maring, MD, KP doctor and the organizer of the first market. <http://xnet.kp.org/permanentejournal/spring04/produce.html>.

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## Features of Select KP Farmers' Markets and Farm Stands

	<b>Oakland Medical Ctr.</b>	<b>Santa Teresa Medical Ctr.</b>	<b>San Fran. Medical Ctr.</b>	<b>Richmond Medical Ctr.</b>	<b>Nanaikeola Clinic</b>
<i>Location</i>	Oakland, CA	San Jose, CA	San Francisco, CA	Richmond, CA	Leeward Coast, Oahu, HI
<i>Produce Provider (PP)</i>	Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association	Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association	Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association	EcoVillage Farm Learning Center	Ma'O Organic Farm
<i>Role of PP</i>	Obtained permit; provides staff and tables and performs clean-up	Obtained permit; provides staff and tables and performs clean-up	Obtained permit; provides staff and tables and performs clean-up	Operates farm stands and transports produce from farms to the stands	Just brings the produce; KP staff take care of setup, take down and clean-up
<i>Type</i>	Farmers' Market	Farmers' Market	Farmers' Market	Farm Stand	Farm Stand
<i>Make-up</i>	8 farm stands, 1 health education table			Multiple farms, one stand at two locations, one on-site, one off-site	One farm, one stand
<i>Focus</i>	Encouraging healthy living primarily among staff, but attracts KP members and local community	Support KP's Employer of Choice Program, promoting healthy lifestyles and freeing up staff time on weekend	Same as Oakland	Enjoy eating fruits and vegetables for taste and health, 5-a-day recommendation	Increase access to healthy foods and to use clinical/dietary knowledge to influence food prep and the incorporation of healthy food into a healthy lifestyle
<i>Day/Time</i>	Friday, 10 am to 2 pm	Friday, 11 am to 4 pm		11 am to 2 pm; 3 pm to 5:30 pm	Wednesday, Noon to 1 pm
<i>Frequency</i>	Weekly; Year-round	Weekly; Year-round	Weekly; Year-round	Weekly; Year-round	Weekly; Year-round
<i>Unique Features</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> First hospital-based farmers' market w/ organic produce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Allow community interest tables, contract with PCFMA allows KP final say in selection</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Time slot includes all three shifts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Location ADA accessible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Registered Dieticians from Nutrition Clinic conduct noon hour talks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adding healthy cooking demos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Multi-partner collaboration between KP, NGOs, and County</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> KP provided \$10,000 to start project, mtg. space, and admin; County obtained permit, purchased a van to transport produce from farms to stands, and solicited applications for a group to operate stands; NGO helped to set-up an ordering system and chose farms to provide produce</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Farmers themselves do not sell produce, saving their time and staff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eco-Village has at-risk kids working for them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ma'O is a nonprofit farm that teaches agricultural skills to young people who have dropped out of school</li> </ul>
<i>Education Components</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Table w/ pamphlets on blood pressure, cholesterol, and healthy nutrition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Table w/ health education materials</li> <li>- Blood pressure screenings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Registered Dieticians from Nutrition Clinic conduct noon hour talks</li> <li>- Adding healthy cooking demos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distribute 5-A-Day education materials</li> <li>- Healthy cooking class started as a spin-off</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cooking demonstrations once a month</li> </ul>
<i>Internal PR</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff newsletter</li> <li>- Weekly recipe using in-season produce</li> <li>- Concierge markets to staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff newsletter</li> <li>- Weekly recipes using in-season produce</li> <li>- "Carrot cash" good at market is issued for employee recognition</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Posters and flyers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recipe cards containing storing, preparing and nutritional value of produce are handed out at the KP farm stand and elsewhere by Ma'O throughout the community</li> </ul>
<i>External PR</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Press release</li> <li>- Article in local paper</li> <li>- Mr. Carrot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mr. Carrot</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Radio show feature</li> <li>- Posters and flyers</li> <li>- County promotes at clinics and childcare programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cooking demonstrations hosted by guest chefs</li> </ul>