

A New “Center of Health”: Kaiser Permanente’s San Leandro Medical

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Alameda County residents are watching a 60-acre site near the freeway in San Leandro that’s busy with construction crews and equipment. Soon, they’ll have something to see: steel girders, the

first visual evidence of the area’s new, six-story, 434,000 sf medical center, slated to open in 2014. Hollis Harris, vice president of capital projects for Kaiser Permanente, is responsible for implementing the company’s capital projects in Northern California. She says that the need to replace the Kaiser

Hayward hospital arose due to SB 1953 (dictates seismic retrofitting or replacement for acute care hospitals). “Hayward fell into the replacement category,” she explains. “Given increase in membership over the years and the site size needed, we had to leave the city of Hayward to find adequate land.”



Artist’s Rendering Courtesy of Kaiser Permanente

The San Leandro Medical Center is the eighth template hospital for Kaiser Permanente. Rudolph & Sletten Construction are the General Contractors, working with AECOM/Ellerbe Becket architectural firm. Rudolph & Sletten has a history with Kaiser, bringing experience with California building codes and Kaiser Permanente's "Total Health Environment" approach to the project.

The Total Health Environment approach to healthcare facilities extends the traditional definition of design (form, aesthetics, materials) to include the human experience (emotion and behavior). Paying close attention to the patient-member experience means happier members, as well as a better work experience and environment for Kaiser Permanente employees. Template hospitals also cost about \$89 less per square foot to build than non-template hospitals, establish ideal workflows, and are easier for patients and family to navigate.

Building design is template-based, but is also site-specific. The San Leandro site-specific design work happened in tandem with two Southern California template hospitals, which means there were three different architectural teams, three combinations of mechanical, electrical and structural teams, all being moved forward simultaneously with three different Kaiser teams. Quite the feat of project management.

The biggest challenge with the San Leandro site is the "bay mud" which requires a beefier structural system to counteract the soil. But cost-wise, because the contracting

processes began at the bottom of the economic downturn, pricing to-date is very favorable. Additionally, Harris feels, it's a prime location. "The hospital will be right off the freeway, highly visible and accessible," she states. "Plus we're only using about 30 acres for the Center, so can position the facility to take full advantage of the view of rolling green hills."

Using standards of the Green Guide for Healthcare, the construction of the 264-bed acute care hospital will include sustainability design features. In fact, the sustainability factor has already been in evidence pre-construction, during the demolition of an old grocery distribution center on the site. Harris shares, "We've recycled nearly 99% of the waste, diverting it from the landfill. That includes grinding concrete and using it in the soil mixing process on-site."

The southern Alameda County master-planned site allows for future expansion and additional medical office buildings. Currently, the site is to feature the hospital and a medical office building for specialty providers of primary care, which will complement the overall hospital services. The fully integrated facility will give members a one-stop experience, with providers, pharmacy, radiology and outpatient surgery all in the same location. "It's all within our system," says Harris. "We think it's remarkably convenient and a real differentiator for Kaiser."

According to Harris, efficiencies continue to evolve with this template approach, "We took the same building envelope built five times

prior, and increased the number of ED bays by 20% over those. The post-acute care recovery unit, as well as labor and delivery, have even better room layouts and workflow design. And it's all within the same original building footprint." The San Leandro hospital design includes operating rooms, 24-hour emergency services for the community, labor and delivery services, a Level 3 newborn intensive care unit, as well as associated outpatient services.

The San Leandro Medical Center will not only include state-of-the-art medical equipment, it will also feature the HealthConnect® system, Kaiser Permanente's award-winning electronic health record technology. "If you see a neurologist and then a podiatrist, they can both see treatment plans, avoiding over-medication. It takes the integration of our healthcare system another step forward," Harris explains. KP HealthConnect is the largest private-sector EHR in the world, electronically connecting the more than 15,000 Kaiser Permanente physicians to their 8.7 million member-patients' medical records.

Those records will continue to grow, if Northern California is any indication. "We thought (due to the economy) we'd lose membership, but overall Northern California is gaining membership," says Harris. "I like to think it's because our product is competitively priced for area residents, and our quality exceeds what other healthcare organizations provide."

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