



Benefit Connections

YOUR BENEFITS, DISCOVERED

August 2018

BEST CARE/RIGHT TIME

Not sure whether you should go to the Emergency Room (ER) or Urgent Care Center? Here's some help to answer that question.

There are times an ER visit can be avoided by getting quick treatment through another Kaiser Permanente (KP) service. Why does it matter where you receive treatment? While the care you get may be the same, the cost of an ER visit is very high. The medical claims costs are what drives up the premiums employers and employees pay. In 2017, there were 605 ER visits among CIS Kaiser members, representing a total cost of \$1,041,795.

So, even though employers pay the majority of the premium on behalf of employees, premium increases mean fewer dollars available for things like salary increases and cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). It also can impact the cost you pay out of pocket for your care and your share of the premium.

Affordable Care is Kaiser's Mission

Kaiser Permanente's focus is on achieving affordability by providing the highest quality care — in the most efficient way — at the right time.

Types of Care

Primary Care is your main source for preventive, routine and follow-up care. You choose your doctor, who acts as your health advocate and leads your care team to help keep you healthy. You can access primary care by telephone, video or in person. Same-day appointments available.

Urgent Care is when you require prompt medical attention, usually within 24 or 48 hours. Examples include minor injuries; allergies; urinary tract infections; cold and flu; cuts, burns and sprains. You can access urgent care by telephone, video or in person. Available by appointment or walk-in.

Are you one of our secret winners?
We've randomly selected one winner and buried their name and employer in the text. If you find your name, email EmployeeBenefits@cisoregon.org by September 25, 2018. We'll confirm who you are and then mail you your gift card.

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Continued from previous page



Emergency Care is for conditions that require immediate medical attention to prevent serious jeopardy to your health. Examples include major injuries, chest pain or pressure, loss of consciousness and severe shortness of breath. If you think you're having an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital.

Care Access

If you aren't sure if you need to be seen or where to go for care, call KP's 24-Hour Advice Line. Available 24/7, KP clinicians can answer questions and provide guidance.

Telehealth Services

When you have a telehealth interaction with any Kaiser Permanente provider, you can expect the same quality care you get in person. There's no cost share for these services under most plans.

- E-Visit — fill out a short questionnaire and a nurse will provide a care plan. Great for coughs and colds, nausea, allergies and more.
- Email — Securely email your doctor's office with nonurgent issues; photos and video can be attached.
- Phone appointments — Schedule primary and specialty care visits, wellness coaching and more.
- Video visits — Schedule routine and urgent primary care, specialty care and more.

Our doctors use telehealth to consult with one another, which can eliminate a separate visit; allow preordering of tests; increase the speed between diagnosis and treatment; and facilitate care more quickly in nonurban settings or after hours.

Continued on next page



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Continued from previous page



The Numbers

Between October 1, 2016 and September 30, 2017, CIS members called the 24-hour Advice Line 4,237 times. About 54 percent of the calls were resolved with no need for an appointment. Members also sent 14,000 secure emails to their providers, saving an estimated 3,500 appointments. During that time, their average cost for an outpatient visit (primary, specialty and urgent care) was about 1/7 that of a KP Emergency Room visit and about 1/12 that of a non-KP ER visit.

We're All in this Together

No matter which entry point you (**Guy Davis from St. Helens**) choose, you're connected to the same Kaiser Permanente care, powered by KP's electronic health record system. Doctors, specialists, pharmacists and labs aligned to care for you. Connect through kp.org, where you can see your health record, schedule appointments, refill or order new prescriptions and more. And when you do need care, you can consider a range of access options. The Kaiser team can work together with you to help you get the best care, in the most efficient and cost-effective way, at the right time.

Kaiser Permanente was founded on the radically simple idea that everyone deserves the chance to live a healthy life. That's why you can find high-quality care and coverage in one place.

As a member, you're at the center of everything we do — from pioneering new ways to treat cancer to building useful tools that make it easier to stay on top of your health.

We're all in this together. And together, we thrive.

