



PRESS RELEASE

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Kaiser Permanente Earns National Exceptional Immigrant Integration Award for its Provision of Linguistically and Culturally Appropriate Care

WASHINGTON – The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) announced today that [Kaiser Permanente](#) is the recipient of its 2013 *E Pluribus Unum* Prizes' Corporate Leadership Award for its exceptional dedication to providing linguistically and culturally appropriate health care and its leadership role in encouraging the health-care industry to follow suit.

The [E Pluribus Unum Prizes](#) program, established in 2008 by MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy with generous support from the [J.M. Kaplan Fund](#), seeks to encourage the adoption of effective integration practices and inspire others to take on the important work of integrating immigrants and their children so they can join the mainstream of U.S. society.

Kaiser Permanente and the three other 2013 *E Pluribus Unum* Prize winners will be honored tonight at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., with a keynote address by U.S. Congressman Luis Gutierrez, author of the recent *Still Dreaming: My Journey from the Barrio to Capitol Hill*.

Based in Oakland, CA, Kaiser Permanente is the nation's largest non-profit health plan, serving more than 9.1 million members in eight states (California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Virginia, Oregon and Washington) and the District of Columbia. Through its National Linguistic and Cultural Programs (NLCP), Kaiser Permanente focuses on advancing health equity and the elimination of racial and ethnic health-care disparities through innovative, replicable and effective language access strategies. By working internally across the enterprise and with the community, NLCP proactively addresses the cultural and linguistic needs of patients, families and communities; it also serves to integrate the principles and practices of linguistically and culturally appropriate care into the Kaiser Permanente health-care delivery system.

More than 25 million U.S. residents, immigrant and U.S.-born alike, are limited English proficient (LEP); federal law requires that health-care providers receiving federal funds provide meaningful health-care access for LEP individuals. With millions of previously uninsured Americans, including many immigrants, eligible for health coverage as the Affordable Care Act takes fuller effect, provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate care will become a growing issue for U.S. providers.

“Effective communications between patients and their health-care providers is an essential determinant of access, quality, cost and safety,” said MPI Senior Vice President Michael Fix, who is co-director of the National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy. “Kaiser Permanente’s commitment to providing linguistically and culturally competent care, as well as its leadership in the health-care industry more broadly in this area, is tremendously important because access to quality health care is a vital element of successful immigrant integration.”

Kaiser Permanente has developed the Qualified Bilingual Staff (QBS) model and program, an industry-leading training, testing and certification process for its multilingual staff who serve as health-care interpreters, as well as for the physicians who speak with patients in languages other than English. The QBS program capitalizes on the organization's diverse workforce and ensures that qualified linguistic services and culturally appropriate care are delivered in ways that optimize the experience for patients, families and providers.

"Employers have an important role to play in ensuring that immigrants are fully integrated into the nation's worksites and communities," said Margie McHugh, co-director of MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy. "Kaiser Permanente is testament to the innovative and tremendously important integration work that is taking place in communities across the nation led by non-profits, schools, government agencies, faith-based organizations and employers. As Washington debates reform of the U.S. immigration system, measures to scale up effective integration policies and programs and encourage employer-led integration efforts need to be taken into account."

Gayle Tang, senior director of national diversity and inclusion at Kaiser Permanente, said: "Kaiser Permanente has worked since the 1990s to identify, train, test and certify thousands of our physicians, nurses and other staff to interact with our clients in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways, and to provide key communications in multiple languages. Recognition of our many years of work by the *E Pluribus Unum* Prizes is very meaningful to us. Moreover, this award emphasizes the vital role that organizations play in developing patient-member-family-centered care for full integration in our systems and society, as well as achieving total health for all."

The other 2013 winners of the *E Pluribus Unum* Prize are the **Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School**, a Washington, D.C.-based adult-focused charter that provides adult basic education and workforce training to more than 3,000 immigrants and refugees annually; the **Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition** (MIRA), whose Integration Institute has become a national model for bringing together stakeholders from government, immigrant and refugee communities and the private and non-profit sectors to improve integration research, policy analysis, advocacy and system capacity; and **Neighborhood Development Center**, a St. Paul, MN community development organization that connects immigrant and native-born ethnic communities to revitalize inner-city neighborhoods in the Twin Cities. All three will receive a \$50,000 award.

Winner highlights can be found at www.integrationawards.org. For more information or to set up interviews, contact Michelle Mittelstadt at 202-266-1910, mmittelstadt@migrationpolicy.org.

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The **Migration Policy Institute** is an independent, non-partisan think tank in Washington, D.C. dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide. MPI provides analysis, development and evaluation of migration and refugee policies at the local, national and international levels. For more, visit www.migrationpolicy.org.

MPI's **National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy** is a crossroads for elected officials, researchers, state and local agency managers, grassroots leaders and activists, local service providers and others who seek to understand and respond to the challenges and opportunities today's high rates of immigration create in local communities. For more on the center's work, visit www.migrationpolicy.org/integration.