

Translating Research into Innovative Practices



Debbie Postlethwaite, RNP, MPH, Women's Health Director of Projects and member of the Ob/Gyn Department at Daly City medical office in the Northern California Region

In 1998, the President's Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry reported that improving the quality of health care "requires a commitment to delivering health care based on sound scientific evidence and continuously innovating new, effective health care practices and preventive approaches."¹ Kaiser Permanente (KP) has a longstanding reputation for doing just that. Whether based on sound research conducted externally or internally, KP has the capacity and infrastructure to effectively transition research into innovative approaches to health care delivery and to health promotion and prevention.

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Many theories are cited in the literature about how research is effectively translated in innovative and evolving practices. Most of them include several common themes. First, there must be strong evidence for the need for change and appropriate identification of the problem. Assembling a team of stakeholders or

supportive opinion leaders to review internal and external data is the next step in forming comprehensive strategies and in participating in the diffusion process. Strong organizational commitment is also essential to ensure that adequate resources are available. A multidisciplinary approach is needed to ensure that a variety of effective strategies will be employed to effect change. Finally, diffusion of change and innovation takes time and involves conflict. To quote from the *Harvard Business Review*, it takes about 17 years on average for new research to become standard practice.²

I believe that KP is ahead of the curve. The award-winning Women's Health programs included in this issue are excellent examples of our ability to effectively translate research into innovative health practices. ♦

References

1. President's Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry. Quality first: better health care for all Americans [monograph on the Internet]. 1998 [updated 1998 Jul 18; cited 2005 Jan 17]. Available from: www.hcqualitycommission.gov.
2. Porter ME, Teisberg EO. Redefining competition in health care. *Harv Bus Rev* 2004 June;82(6):64-76, 136.

Intelligence

Intelligence in a system emerges when it connects to itself in diverse ways.

— Margaret Wheatley, author and leadership trainer