

## Pediatric Residents Reach Out to KP Communities

**KP Oakland's Pediatric Residency program supports community health by embedding physicians at school-based health centers.**

By Dolores Radding

It's been 15 years since Sam Siegel, MD, walked the halls of Skyline High School in Oakland.



Sam Siegel, MD, at Skyline High School

He graduated from Skyline in 1998; now he's back as part of Kaiser Permanente's Pediatric REACH Program based out of KP Oakland. REACH stands for Resident Education in Advocacy and Community Health. For pediatricians in training such as [Dr. Siegel](#), the program is a chance to better understand the health needs of today's teenagers and the communities where they live and go to school.

"It's nice to be back," he said. "I feel at home here, and I feel a special connection with the community."

Dr. Siegel and 7 other KP Oakland first-year pediatric residents have each been paired with either a high school or middle school health clinic

in Oakland, Alameda, or Berkeley, but their work extends beyond the clinic. Over the course of their 3-year residency program, they will spend an afternoon at the school or in the school's neighborhood 1 to 4 times a month, depending on their clinical training schedule.

The program was created by [Abhay Dandekar, MD](#), who is director of the Pediatric Residency Training Program at KP Oakland.

"We don't want our physicians to be limited by the walls of the hospital," he said. "We are embedding them into a neighborhood and into a community because we want them to understand what the needs are, and empower them with the tools to make impactful contributions."

### Making a Space for Male Health

At Skyline High School, most of the students who visit the school-based health center are female, so Dr. Siegel says one of his contributions will be creating a space for males; perhaps a male sexual health group, or special clinic times dedicated to young men.

"You're not going to get to the root of teen pregnancy, drug use, sexually transmitted infection, and partner abuse in teenage relationships—which I think is more prevalent than people realize—unless you see both the men and the women," he said.

Other KP pediatric residents are planning projects around nutrition for teens, obesity prevention, and emergency preparedness.

### Lessons Learned from Young Moms

At Alameda's Island High School, a continuation school, KP pediatric resident [Julie Tea, MD](#), has been talking to students about their everyday struggles, and visiting young mothers and their babies at the school's onsite daycare. Mother to a 13-month-old girl herself, Dr. Tea described her experience at Island so far as "eye opening."

"In medical school you memorize enzymes and mechanisms, but you don't learn much about how health insurance works, or the kinds of hoops people have to jump through to get health care when they don't have insurance," she said. "I'm realizing how difficult things can be for young moms without money, a car, or an involved father—how difficult it can be to come to school every day and graduate high school."

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Those young moms will be the focus of Dr. Tea's work in the community. She plans to do home visits to check in with mothers who have recently given birth, and she hopes to offer workshops on keeping babies and toddlers healthy.

### Collaborating in the Community

KP's Pediatric REACH program is possible because of community partnerships with public health departments in the East Bay, and nonprofit organizations such as Native American Health Services, which operates school-based health clinics at several schools including Skyline and Island high schools.

Bonnie Triniclisti, FNP, the nonprofit's director of School Based Health, says she hopes the residents develop an interest in and an understanding of community health care for adolescents, and the significant ways it integrates with general pediatrics.

"The people who serve adolescents need to deal with all the issues adolescents deal with, which might be very different from what their own life experience is.

When they go back to Kaiser, it should open their eyes to a broader reality."

As for students, she says they're already benefitting from the experience of meeting doctors who are approachable and interested in their lives.

05/16/13



Julie Tea, MD, talks with Mariah Spencer about her son Tayveon at Island High School.



Julie Tea, MD, at the Island High's school-based health center.

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