Edward Baddour, MD, Chief of Emergency Medicine for KP South San Francisco since 2017, served previously as Chief of Education for 10 years and Assistant Chief for 7 years. Since he became chief, emergency department visits increased over 35% within the existing clinical space. With adept management of the complexities inherent in emergency medicine, Dr. Baddour steered his team toward exceptional results, leading the region in throughput and efficiency while ensuring the highest standards of quality care and care experience for KP patients.

Through enhanced hospital-census forecasting and better patient placements, Dr. Baddour reduced lengths of stay in the KP South San Francisco emergency departments to region-leading levels, with three-quarters of hospital admissions occurring in under an hour.

By establishing strong working partnerships, he achieved the fastest regional turnaround times for imaging, laboratory tests, and consultations. This efficiency directly translated into faster diagnoses and treatments for acutely ill patients, markedly improving outcomes. Furthermore, the KP South San Francisco emergency department leads the region in patient care experience scores.

Dr. Baddour excels in fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment, resulting in strong retention among emergency medicine physicians and nurses. His emphasis on wellness, teamwork, and professionalism has cultivated a culture of camaraderie, as demonstrated by high wellness ratings from KP South San Francisco emergency department physicians, nurses, and staff.

“Dr. Baddour has brilliantly led our emergency department amidst an increasing daily census with a practical, resourceful, and solution-focused approach. His team’s accomplishments in efficiency, quality, and patient care are nothing short of extraordinary.”

Edward Kao, MD
Physician-in-Chief
KP South San Francisco

2024 Cecil Cutting Leadership Award
Margaret Desler, MD
Chief, Continuing Medical Education
KP East Bay

For Margaret “Peggy” Desler, MD, leadership is grounded in humility and a deep respect for the expertise of The Permanente Medical Group physicians and staff. She leads inclusively, valuing every voice and perspective, and maintains an open-door policy that welcomes all members of the care team. A pediatrician at KP Richmond for nearly 3 decades, she has mentored countless physicians and staff members, and as Chief of Continuing Medical Education (CME) at KP East Bay for nearly 20 years, Dr. Desler has fostered a culture of respect, group excellence, and collaboration with well-attended, highly interactive, and inspiring medical center-wide grand rounds.

“The goal of CME is to educate our providers so that they can in turn treat our patients with a fount of up-to-date knowledge and skills,” Dr. Desler says. “Ultimately, patients are getting better care because their providers have more knowledge.”

For KP East Bay, she has served in numerous leadership roles including the nomination committees for physicians-in-chief and elected directors, the latter as chair. Dr. Desler’s legendary dedication to nurturing camaraderie and teamwork among providers is demonstrated by her involvement the Women in Leadership initiative, which hosts educational and much-appreciated offsite conferences (which are now being expanded to include men); and the organization of in-person CME events and classes post-COVID.

“Dr. Desler leads with a spirit of appreciation, recognizing and acknowledging the remarkable dedication and sacrifices made by her peers in educating others and providing high-quality patient care.”

John W. Morehouse, MD, FACEP, CPPS
Physician-in-Chief
KP East Bay

2024 Cecil Cutting Leadership Award
Sherry Fung-Sakita, MD, was a founding faculty member and curriculum director of the first Family Medicine residency program in KP Northern California, at KP Vallejo. Ultimately, as Chief of Adult and Family Medicine (AFM) at KP Vallejo, she led a transformative effort around culture and leadership development that resulted in region-topping physician wellness scores and retention rates. This work translated into a “red-carpet” recruiting program that made KP Vallejo a destination for AFM physician candidates.

In addition, she led a multidisciplinary team that streamlined a lower-back pain management program which originated from KP Southern California, using human-centered design to make it more cost-effective, decrease the clinical burden on AFM physicians, improve the patient care experience, and lower the use of imaging and consultation services.

Most recently, she developed and leads an annual, yearlong professional development curriculum at KP Napa-Solano not only to encourage women physicians into leadership roles, but also to create a community to support them. This work has expanded to weekend retreat sessions, mentoring, and professional development for more women physicians.

Regionally Dr. Fung-Sakita serves as Assistant Chair of AFM Chiefs and spearheads opportunities for AFM leaders to expand their leadership skills, learn the business side of our organization, and maximize the recruitment success of primary care physicians across The Permanente Medical Group.

“Dr. Fung-Sakita’s unwavering commitment to excellence and her exemplary leadership qualities make her a shining example of dedication and innovation in medicine.”

Christopher Walker, MD
Physician-in-Chief
KP Napa-Solano

Sherry Fung-Sakita, MD
Assistant Chair of Chiefs, Adult and Family Medicine
KP Napa-Solano

2024 Cecil Cutting Leadership Award
Within 2 years of joining The Permanente Medical Group (TPMG) as an outpatient psychiatrist, Maria Koshy, MD, was tapped to be Assistant Chief of Psychiatry at KP South Sacramento, then was promoted to chief.

In early 2020, as Associate Chair for Access and Operations, she wrote a regional playbook for transitioning outpatient behavioral health from in-person to virtual care, working collaboratively with regional directors, local chiefs, and directors to ensure a rapid, seamless, and patient-centric transition. A few months later, Dr. Koshy’s peers elected her Chair of Chiefs of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health, and Director of Regional Mental Health Administration for TPMG.

In this role Dr. Koshy shepherded the creation and expansion of several regional, population-based programs, including collaborative care models for severe and persistent mental illness, and mild-to-moderate depression and anxiety, as well as standardized treatment pathways within specialty mental health departments. “At the end of the day if it doesn’t impact the member experience and their journey, then it isn’t something valuable,” she says.

She has fostered a strong, collaborative relationship with the TPMG Division of Research, substantially increasing physician-led Behavioral Health research. Likewise, she led regional teams that developed reporting for follow-up access to Behavioral Health therapists and galvanized a group of chiefs to develop TPMG’s first risk-adjusted panel model for psychiatry.

“Within the complex framework of regional psychiatry, Dr. Koshy leads with authenticity, integrity, and grace, and she places servant leadership at the forefront of everything that she does.”

Maria Ansari, MD, FACC
CEO and Executive Director
The Permanente Medical Group
To ensure that cutting-edge treatments are used every time for each patient with cancer, Raymond Liu, MD, led the transformation of the clinical research program in oncology at The Permanente Medical Group (TPMG). As Regional Director for Cancer Research, TPMG oncologists brought in millions of dollars in research grants and lead Permanente regions in publishing and presenting research.

Dr. Liu spearheaded TPMG’s Hematology and Oncology Fellowship, serves as a mentor at the KP Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine and recruitment ambassador while teaching at the University of California, San Francisco. Hundreds apply for the fellowship each year, and 100% of the first two graduating classes joined KP.

As the first Regional Director of Cancer Survivorship, Dr. Liu led a team that brought on advanced practice providers for primary and specialty survivorship care and supported the development of technology tools to ensure appropriate monitoring of cancer recurrence.

He is supporting oncology teams by building a lay navigation program of community health workers. In addition, Dr. Liu is implementing a first-in-nation program for patients with cancers, which will support primary care doctors working side-by-side with oncologists to provide coordinated care from diagnosis, with the ultimate goal of creating a training program for primary care doctors to care for patients with cancer.

“Using his innovative ideas and visionary approach to cancer care, Dr. Liu is transforming critical aspects of The Permanente Medical Group’s cancer care delivery.”

Monica Kendrick, MD
Physician-in-Chief
KP San Francisco

2024 Cecil Cutting Leadership Award
Within a few years of becoming Chief of Emergency Medicine for KP Central Valley, Amanda Perez, MD, greatly expanded the team of emergency physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and licensed vocational nurses. Dr. Perez was a driving force in starting an Emergency Medicine residency program for KP Central Valley, which is the only medical center in KP Northern California with a primary-sponsored program. The residency program attracted fellowship-trained physicians in emergency medicine-related specialties including sports medicine, emergency medical services, medical education, and ultrasound. In the first class of eight residents, five became KP physicians and three stayed in the Central Valley, a historically challenging region for physician recruitment.

While fostering a culture of process improvement where all emergency department staff contribute to improving care and efficiency, she also dramatically improved morale by bringing her teams and their families together outside the workplace for picnics, sporting events, and other fun outings. “When I became chief, I wanted KP Central Valley to be a place that our staff, physicians, and the whole care team could say they’re proud to work,” Dr. Perez says. Likewise, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Perez maintained good spirits among her department members by listening, adjusting, and personally taking on terrific workloads to demonstrate her commitment to patients and colleagues.

“To engender positive energy and enthusiasm about our emergency department, Dr. Perez met with physicians, nurses, and technicians, creating an atmosphere of compassion, camaraderie, and psychological safety.”

Sanjay Marwaha, MD
Physician-in-Chief
KP Central Valley

2024 Cecil Cutting Leadership Award
Described by colleagues as an authentic, humble, and balanced leader, Malika Kheraj, MD, has served as team lead in Adult and Family Medicine and Assistant Chief of Medicine, and presently is Chief of Infectious Disease and Chair of Infection Prevention at KP Redwood City.

But Dr. Kheraj’s leadership skills were particularly evident during the pandemic, when she took charge of COVID operations at KP Redwood City with grace and composure, despite not holding the infectious disease chief position at that time. Dr. Kheraj played a pivotal role in setting up the COVID tent at KP Redwood City; training all physicians, nurses, and staff on swabbing techniques; and providing guidance on evolving protocols for personal protective equipment.

She collaborated with KP Redwood City’s Chief of Medicine to develop a “COVID-19 Therapeutics Cheat-Sheet” newsletter, which was distributed regionally and served as the foundation for The Permanente Medical Group’s enhanced COVID-19 tool bar; and led a COVID-19 SWAT team in her hospital’s command center, developing comprehensive protocols for managing patients, which reduced hospitalizations. Dr. Kheraj’s daily rounds covered all COVID-positive patients, including in the intensive care unit, providing critical support.

“I am a collaborative leader,” Dr. Kheraj says, “and I strongly believe in mutual respect, authenticity, and being a good and active listener.”

Grace Firth, MD
Physician-in-Chief
KP Redwood City

“During the pandemic, Dr. Kheraj rose to the occasion and took primary responsibility for our day-to-day response, providing a calming and stabilizing influence for us all.”

2024 Cecil Cutting Leadership Award
Under the leadership of Richard Ha, MD, the cardiovascular surgery program at KP Santa Clara expanded from providing coronary artery bypass grafts and valve surgeries to include a full program of surgeries that deploy medical devices that improve heart function. The KP Santa Clara Mechanical Circulatory Support (MCS) program now includes left and right ventricular assist devices (VAD) and heart pumps; and the extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) device, which improves blood flow.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Ha led efforts to expand KP Santa Clara’s ECMO capacity, transforming it into one of California’s premier programs. He recruited surgical leaders to join the KP Santa Clara MCS program, which since its inception in 2018 has installed 51 ventricular-assist devices with a two-year survival rate of 87%, far exceeding national averages.

Now, as Chief of Cardiac Surgery for The Permanente Medical Group since 2020, Dr. Ha oversees the cardiovascular mechanical support program regionwide, which he has developed into a nation-leading surgical program. The KP Northern California cardiovascular surgery program earned top quality metrics at three regional cardiac surgical centers, increased case volume by 20%, and recruited early-career cardiac surgeons in a competitive job environment.

Of his leadership style, Dr. Ha says: “Certain things require operational strength and others good knowledge of the financials, while others require inspiring, being humane, and having empathy.”