

2025 | SIDNEY R GARFIELD, MD

EXCEPTIONAL CONTRIBUTION AWARD



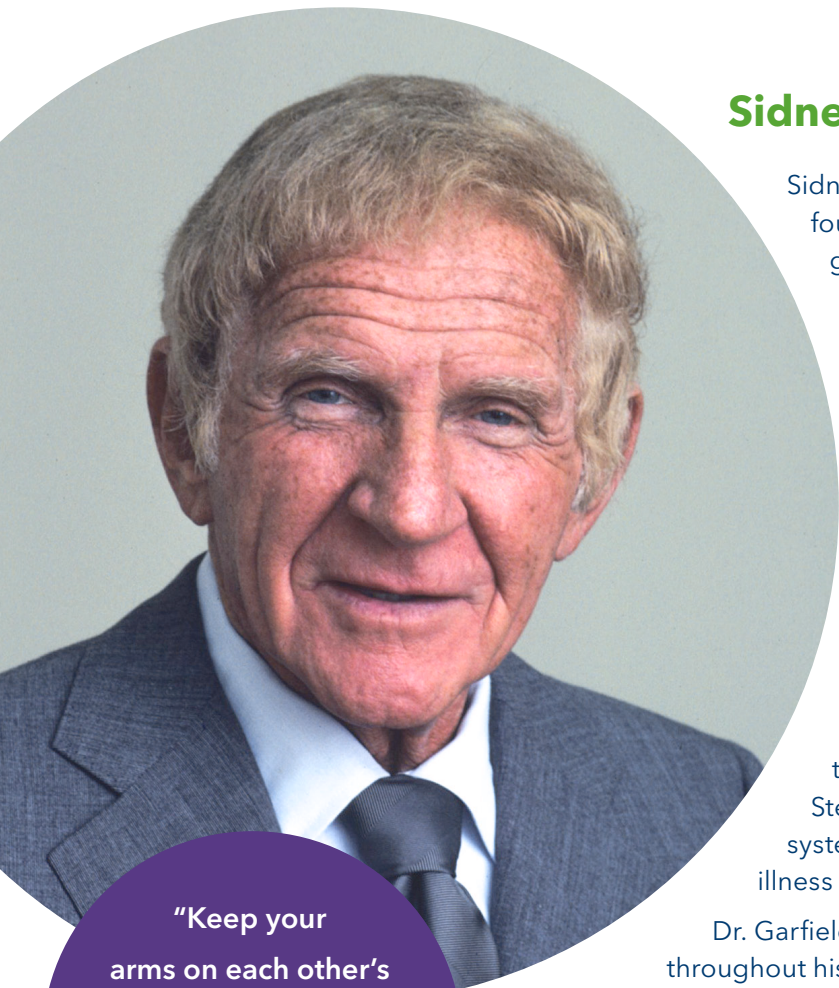
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About the Sidney R. Garfield, MD **Exceptional Contribution Award**

The Exceptional Contribution Award was established by the Board of Directors of The Permanente Medical Group in 2000 to recognize physicians who are instrumental in the development and dissemination of ideas and programs that have a significant impact on patients, colleagues, and the broader community.



Sidney R. Garfield, MD

Sidney R. Garfield, MD was the physician founder of Kaiser Permanente and one of the great innovators of 20th century American health care delivery.

Dr. Garfield was a surgeon and visionary. He first applied the novel principles of prepayment, prevention, and group medical practice in the 1930s, while he was providing medical and hospital services for construction workers building the Colorado River Aqueduct in the Mojave Desert.

Then, during World War II, he developed a medical care program for hundreds of thousands of workers and family members at Kaiser shipyards in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Vancouver/Portland area, and at the Kaiser Steel Mill in Southern California. His health care system focused as much on the prevention of illness as on caring for the sick.

Dr. Garfield looked for innovations in health care throughout his career. In the 1950s, his revolutionary hospital designs drew international praise. In 1960, he was in the vanguard of physicians who embraced the computer as a tool that could radically improve the delivery of medical care.

Historians writing about events of the 1900s see the work of Dr. Garfield in co-founding Kaiser Permanente as one of the major social contributions of the century.

"Keep your arms on each other's shoulders and your eyes on the stars for innovation and change in the future."

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"I tend to lead by example, being a role model for my colleagues to treat every patient like they're a family member and give them the most empathetic and compassionate consultation and care."

Ravi S. Bains, MD

Spine Surgery, KP East Bay

Spine Surgery Excellence

As chief of KP East Bay's Spine Surgery department for nearly 2 decades, Ravi S. Bains, MD, has been a transformative force in the field of spine surgery, demonstrating innovative leadership, unparalleled dedication to patient care, and a profound commitment to global health.

Under Dr. Bains's leadership, KP Northern California Spine Surgery has grown into a premier spine treatment and surgical group, nationally known for its technical expertise, highly skilled surgeons, and evidence based, patient-centered outcomes.

"When patients develop a spine problem it needs to be treated conservatively first, so we collaborate with physical therapists, rehabilitation specialists, and pain interventionists," says Dr. Bains, spine surgeon at KP Oakland. "We implemented pathways for patients so they can get to the right person at the right time for their spinal problem."

While ensuring that patients are referred for spine surgery only after less-invasive treatments have been exhausted, the spine surgery department focuses on the most up-to-date technology coupled with minimally invasive procedures for spine conditions ranging from scoliosis to fusion surgery.

To elevate the quality of spine care across the region, Dr. Bains initiated the prestigious Spine Surgery Fellowship at KP Oakland, which has trained more than 20 surgeons, and he launched a monthly Continuing Medical Education (CME) webinar in spine surgery. In addition to enrolling patients in clinical trials, he has published numerous peer-reviewed research articles advancing the science of spine surgery.

As founder of the nonprofit organization Standing Straight, Dr. Bains leads biannual surgical missions to Southeast Asia to offer spine surgery for impoverished children, leveraging technology to provide pre- and post-operative care coordination from Northern California.

"In the developing world, especially countries like India, spine surgery can cost 10 years of a family's wages," Dr. Bains says. "We partner with local surgeons, and hospitals donate their facilities. We're able to work in a collaborative fashion, training local surgeons but also learning a lot from their practices and how resourceful they are. It's a two-way street."



"The med-psych unit is renowned across the KP Northern California region as the go-to facility for treating patients with severe psychiatric illnesses who also have medical conditions, consistently delivering excellent outcomes."

Louai Bilal, MD

Inpatient Psychiatry, KP Greater Southern Alameda Area

Inpatient Med-Psych Unit

Under the pioneering, visionary leadership of Louai Bilal, MD, the inpatient med-psych unit at KP Fremont Medical Center developed an integrated path of care for patients from across KP Northern California with severe psychiatric illness who also require treatment for medical conditions such as diabetes, wound care, and heart disease.

As founding medical director of the KP Northern California inpatient med-psych unit, Dr. Bilal assembled a team that includes psychiatrists, hospitalists, nurses, social workers, therapists, pharmacists, dieticians, and discharge specialists. "The secret sauce that makes this care exceptional is the multidisciplinary team that provides comprehensive, integrated psychiatric and medical treatment," Dr. Bilal says.

The inpatient med-psych unit serves patients with severe psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia, major depression, and anorexia nervosa; advanced neuropsychiatric diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's; and those at risk of suicide or in need of court-ordered electroconvulsive therapy. Prior to its establishment, medically ill psychiatric patients

who landed in KP hospitals, intensive care units, or emergency departments needed to be referred to facilities outside of KP for inpatient treatment.

"Many people with mental health disorders have physical health problems as well," says Stuart Buttlare, PhD, TPMG's recently retired director for behavioral health and addiction medicine, who partnered with Dr. Bilal to establish the inpatient med-psych unit. "It's rare to find a psychiatric hospital that will accept and have the ability to treat people with both."

The only inpatient med-psych facility in Kaiser Permanente (and among only a handful nationally), the unit has 18 dedicated beds handling about 5,000 patient-days annually. The unit prioritizes stepping patients down to appropriate after-care facilities, and as a result hospital readmission rates are less than half of national averages for patients with psychiatric and medical conditions. At the same time, the unit's patients routinely give it high satisfaction scores of 85% to 90%.

Says Dr. Bilal: "People often tell us, 'I have not felt like this in a very long time' or 'I have my life back.'"

A portrait of Stacy Fletcher, MD, FAAFP, a woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a tan blazer over a dark blue top and gold hoop earrings. She is smiling and looking slightly to the right. The background is a blurred indoor setting with large windows.

"RESET rewards what works and puts passion back into practice. When you design it right and build it on trust, your people won't just meet the moment – they'll knock your socks off!"

Stacy Fletcher, MD, FAAFP

Adult and Family Medicine, KP Napa-Solano

Reward Efficiency. Set Priorities. Empower Teams. (RESET)

In the face of rising burnout, overwhelming metrics, and the creeping sense that primary care had become an assembly line, Stacy Fletcher, MD, saw a need for change – not just in process, but in philosophy. Alongside strategic partner Andrew Muck, KP Napa-Solano director of strategic initiatives, she developed RESET, a physician-led, trust-based transformation of primary care.

RESET – **R**eward **E**fficiency, **S**et priorities, **E**mpower **T**eams – is both a framework and a mindset. "RESET offers physicians and medical assistants a clear path: transparent goals, simplified metrics, practical tools, and performance-based rewards," says Dr. Fletcher, Adult and Family Medicine (AFM) physician at KP Napa-Solano. "But its true foundation is trust in frontline teams to own their practice with accountability and pride, and trust in leaders to respond with increased flexibility, autonomy, and support."

Launched in KP Napa-Solano, RESET began as a grassroots experiment. It has now scaled across every KP Northern California service area, with more than 2,400 physicians and medical assistants participating. The results include marked improvement in quality,

access, affordability, and patient experience, alongside significantly reduced physician burnout scores and increased engagement among care teams.

"RESET didn't come from a top-down directive," Muck says. "It came from the ground up, shaped by our teams and strengthened by the leaders who believed in them."

The program is grounded in behavioral psychology and neuroscience, using joy, recognition, and team culture as strategic levers for change. In addition to providing countless hours of onsite RESET training, Dr. Fletcher created the Grassroots Roadshow, a fun, four-session workshop to teach efficiency tools that can immediately be put to use in AFM clinics. From energizing trainings to glitter-filled celebrations, RESET was designed to lower cognitive barriers, activate learning centers in the brain, and bring emotion and meaning back into improvement work, "turning change from something teams fear into something they run toward," Dr. Fletcher says.

"RESET isn't about doing more – it's about doing what matters most, with clarity and heart. It removes noise, realigns purpose, and honors the people closest to the work."



"Super SmartPhrases provide patients with excellent care and physicians with an efficient way to deliver that care. Most importantly, they ensure that everyone sends the same information to provide standard and equitable care across the board."

"This work is the missing piece in information dissemination. It's the bridge between expert developed guidance that is at the heart of our integrated approach to patient care and its systematic distribution to frontline clinicians."

Kirtan Patel, MD

Internal Medicine, KP Diablo Service Area

Alicia McCarthy, MD

Maternal-Fetal Medicine, KP Diablo Service Area

Super SmartPhrases: Enhancing Efficiency and Integrated Patient Care

Alicia McCarthy, MD, and Kirtan Patel, MD, set out to solve an age-old problem that KP clinicians experience every day: How to quickly access a wealth of up-to-date, evidence-based clinical information from myriad sources, including e-consult pages, patient information documents, KP Clinical Library guidelines, and My Doctor Online.

"When a clinician is caring for a patient with a certain diagnosis or symptom, they need to sift through all these different resources to find the best guidance," says Dr. McCarthy, Maternal-Fetal Medicine physician at KP Walnut Creek.

Drs. McCarthy and Patel came up with a simple, elegant solution to this complex problem: Super SmartPhrases. SmartPhrases, also known as dot-phrases, are shortcuts in KP Health Connect that allow users to type a period followed by a short phrase to insert longer text into a patient chart. *Super SmartPhrases* give clinicians a quick way to share an entire course of care with colleagues or patients in just a few keystrokes.

"A great example is flu season sinusitis. Why aren't antibiotics needed? How do you do a sinus rinse? What over-the-counter medications can you use?," says Dr. Patel, Internal Medicine physician at KP Livermore.

"The Super SmartPhrase allows clinicians to send the patient all of our resources in one place, equipping them with a clear understanding of their treatment plan and meaningful guidance. What used to take minutes now takes seconds."

Dr. McCarthy focuses on Super SmartPhrases for consultations and clinician-facing management guidance, while Dr. Patel develops them for easy insertion into patient-facing emails. Together they have created a library of more than 600 Super SmartPhrases that are used by clinicians across KP Northern California. Both coordinate with local and regional work groups to continually review and update existing phrases and create new ones.

"I used a Super SmartPhrase and saw the patient on her return visit. She told me it was life-changing to receive all of that information to help with her symptoms," Dr. McCarthy says. "And my colleagues share all the time how valuable these SmartPhrase tools are to their practice."



"The POST program breaks down barriers and helps our physicians access essential support after the difficult, traumatic experiences that they may encounter every day in their work."

Molly Tolins, MD

Emergency Medicine, KP East Bay

Peer Outreach Support Team (POST)

When Molly Tolins, MD, created the Peer Outreach Support Team (POST) program in 2019, she couldn't have known how critical "healing the healer" would be for her colleagues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Talking about challenging experiences and processing them in community helps us move through them and come out the other side more whole and able to hold onto our humanity and express empathy for our patients," says Dr. Tolins, Emergency Medicine physician with KP East Bay.

Dr. Tolins is passionate about supporting her colleagues through adverse and difficult work experiences, by offering them the "emotional first-aid" that they may need.

"When you're a physician and you're suffering after a really difficult experience, you don't necessarily pick up the phone or find time to call someone," Dr. Tolins says. "We take the onus off of the suffering provider and put it on their colleagues and leadership, to make sure we're taking care of each other."

The regionwide, voluntary peer-support network supports staff through potentially traumatic work experiences such as unexpected patient deaths and

difficult interactions with patients or family members, to help prevent burnout, secondary trauma, and compassion fatigue.

POST is now available in 15 medical centers, with more than 400 physician and staff trained to offer peer-to-peer support. The rigorous, 4-hour POST training includes active listening, coping and resilience coaching, risk management, and ensuring confidentiality, as well as how to conduct red-flag assessments to identify those who may benefit from a higher level of care.

In its first 5 years, POST had more than 550 successful physician interactions in the East Bay alone. Virtually all (98%) participants said their interaction with POST was helpful and 84% reported improvements in well-being.

Physicians who benefit from POST routinely offer powerful testimonials, demonstrating the profound individual and systemic impacts of the program. As one POST peer support recipient summarized, "POST has been instrumental in creating a culture shift towards emotional awareness, honoring and caring for each other around the trauma that we incur in our daily work."

Sidney R. Garfield, MD

Exceptional Contribution Awardees

Please visit tpmgawards.kp.org for a complete list of award recipients

2024

- Gregg Gayre, MD**
Ophthalmology, KP San Rafael
Enterprise Eye Care Imaging
Modernization
- Gregory Marelich, MD**
Critical Care Medicine, KP South
Sacramento
TeleCritical Care
- Bonnie Quiroz, MD**
Ophthalmology, KP North Valley
Enterprise Eye Care Imaging
Modernization
- Jitesh Vasadia, MD**
Cardiology, KP Santa Rosa
Amiodarone Monitoring Program

2023

- Douglas Balster, MD, PhD**
Pediatrics, KP Redwood City
Gender Expression Care
- James Click, MD**
Dermatology, KP Diablo Service Area
Home Phototherapy for Psoriasis
- Katherine Clyman, MD**
Dermatology, KP Diablo Service Area
Home Phototherapy for Psoriasis
- Maisha Draves, MD**
Family Medicine, KP Napa-Solano
Home Phototherapy for Psoriasis
- Daniel Greninger, MD**
Pediatric Ophthalmology
KP Diablo Service Area
Pediatric Vision Screening

- Ngoc Pham, MD**
Dermatology, KP Santa Clara
Home Phototherapy for Psoriasis
- Priya Rao, MD**
Hospital Medicine, KP San Jose
Subcutaneous Diabetic Ketoacidosis
Treatment
- Charles Shih, MD**
Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
KP East Bay
Gender Expression Care
- Jennifer Slovis, MD**
Family Medicine, KP East Bay
Gender Expression Care

2022

- Simon Ashiku, MD**
Thoracic Surgery, KP East Bay
Gastric-Esophageal Cancer Program
- Subhendra Banerjee, MD**
General Surgery, KP Fresno
Senior Surgical Program
- I-Yeh Gong, MD**
Medical Oncology
KP South Sacramento
Gastric-Esophageal Cancer Program
- Yan Li, MD**
Medical Oncology, KP East Bay
Gastric-Esophageal Cancer Program
- Betty Suh-Burgmann, MD**
Gynecologic Oncology
KP Walnut Creek
Standardized Ultrasonography-Based
Ovarian Cancer Risk Assessment
- Swee Teh, MD**
Gastrointestinal Surgery
KP South San Francisco
Gastric-Esophageal Cancer Program

2021

- Allen Fischer, MD**
Neonatology, KP Walnut Creek
Early Onset Sepsis Calculator
- Mark Gasparini, MD**
Urology, KP South San Francisco
Kidney Stone Prevention Program
- Tatjana Kolevska, MD**
Oncology, KP Vallejo
Transforming Oncology
& Hematology Care
- Michael Kuzniewicz, MD**
Neonatology, KP San Francisco
Early Onset Sepsis Calculator
- Charulata Ramaprasad, MD**
Infectious Diseases, KP San Jose
Covid-19 Pandemic Response

2020

- Gabriel J. Escobar, MD**
Hospital Operations Research
KP Division of Research
Advance Alert Monitor
- James Jang, MD**
Cardiology, KP San Jose
Helping Low-Income and
Homeless Populations
- Leonid Pravoverov, MD**
Nephrology, KP Oakland
Optimal Renal Replacement
Therapy
- David Witt, MD**
Infectious Diseases, KP Oakland
Preventing Hospital-Acquired Pneumonia