



## **New virtual primary care program in Skagit County**

### **Frequently asked questions**

#### **What is my experience going to be when I try this?**

When you sign up, our care team will reach out to you to welcome you and help you get started. We'll offer to help make sure you have the equipment you need and get you set up with an online account and our mobile app. Then we'll introduce you to the care and services you can expect. For most visits, you'll call or send us a secure message to request care, and your provider will connect to you by a secure video or phone call. Your Kaiser Permanente team will coordinate your care and a health care guide will help you plan any next steps.

Just like any primary care office, we'll help make sure you are getting the treatment and tests you need. Most care will be virtual and in some cases we may advise you to see a doctor or other clinician in person. In Skagit County, when you need in-person care, we'll set it up at the primary care medical office of David Benson, MD, in Mount Vernon. We've made special arrangements for Dr. Benson to provide care for program participants.

#### **Does this program exclude any services?**

Yes, please be aware we cannot provide new prescriptions or refills for narcotic pain medications through this program. The program is also not recommended for members who are actively being treated for cancer or renal disease, or who are enrolled in hospice.

#### **Will my benefits change?**

No, we are not changing your health plan or benefits. We are giving you care with a stronger emphasis on virtual primary care, which has no copay. You may also be able to see Kaiser Permanente specialists.

#### **Will this program save me money?**

It could. Since there are no copays for virtual care, you may save money by not having an in-person visit that would normally have a copay.

#### **If my plan has a deductible, will the deductible apply to virtual visits?**

No, unless you have a high-deductible plan. If you have a high-deductible plan with a qualified HSA, you'll be charged for virtual care that's not preventive or COVID-19 related.

#### **Will I have to leave my current primary care provider? All my medical records are there.**

Yes, for this program, you will discontinue care with your current primary care provider starting on June 1, 2021, and we'll assign you to Erin Richardson, MD, and the Ballard Medical Center care team in Seattle. They'll request your records from your provider. After the first year, you may continue seeing Dr. Richardson as your personal doctor, return to your previous doctor, or select a new one.

#### **Will I have to leave my current specialists?**

No. You'll have the choice to get outstanding specialty care virtually through Kaiser Permanente, and you may also keep your existing specialists. Either way, our primary care team will coordinate with your specialists to get the care you need.

**Can I meet the providers before deciding to join the program?**

Yes. You can view the bios of [Dr. Richardson](#) and [Erik Janson, ARNP](#), to learn more about them. You can also request a video visit to meet one of them before deciding.

**What if I need immediate care or emergency care?**

During business hours, you'll work with your team in Dr. Richardson's office to get immediate care, either virtually or in person. Evenings and weekends, you can call our Consulting Nurse Service or use Care Chat for care or advice. We'll help you schedule any care you need. If you have an accident or need care urgently, you may go to any provider or facility included in your plan's network. In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

**What if I need my blood drawn for a lab test?**

In Skagit County, you can go to the primary care medical office of David Benson, MD, in Mount Vernon.

**Can I just show up for in-person care?**

No. We ask you to schedule nonurgent care ahead or request same-day care by reaching out to Dr. Richardson's office. We can set up same-day phone or video visits as well as in-person visits.

**Will I be charged for in-person care?**

For in-person care, you'll be charged the same copays, coinsurance, or deductibles that you're charged now. If you are in Skagit County, you may seek care from any provider included in your health plan's network. But to help make sure your care is coordinated, and so that you we have access to your health records, we encourage you to go to the medical office of David Benson, MD, in Mount Vernon.

**If I need to go for in-person care, what safety measures are in place to help protect me from COVID-19?**

Dr. Benson's medical office is using safety protocols to continue to help protect patients, staff, and communities, including:

- Limiting the number of visitors
- Asking everyone to wear a mask when they enter
- Rearranging spaces, including waiting areas, to help ensure safe environments and physical distancing
- Doing temperature checks and screenings.

**What equipment and technology do I need to participate, and are my visits secure?**

You'll need a tablet, mobile device, or computer that has a video camera already set up. And you need a Wi-Fi connection for your visit. If you can do a Skype or Zoom video call, you probably already have what you need. Our online services are secure, so your information is kept private.

**What's in it for me?**

By joining this program you'll get:

- Access to 24/7 virtual primary care, which can save you time
- Access to virtual care with Kaiser Permanente specialists, who aren't available in every community
- A high-quality team at one of Kaiser Permanente's newest facilities. Our staff will help make sure your care is easy to navigate.
- Fewer hassles because our doctors are connected to your health plan. We know about your coverage and can provide care in ways that help you avoid unexpected costs and bills.
- Virtual care that's integrated with your own primary care team — all in one place.

This is a great opportunity for members who don't have a primary doctor right now or who want to try

something different. It's convenient if you prefer to stay at home generally or during COVID-19. And for people who enjoy technology, it's a great chance to try some of the latest ways to experience health care!

**Do I get paid for participating?**

No.

**I am pregnant and already have a local ob-gyn and hospital that I like. Can I still join your program for primary care?**

Yes, you can keep your ob-gyn for maternity care and sign up with us for other types of care. Dr. Richardson can also help with coordinating other maternity needs such as mental health support. We can also help you select a doctor for your new baby.

**Can other family members sign up for this?**

Yes, we welcome entire families with Kaiser Permanente coverage as part of this program.

*All plans offered and underwritten by Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Washington  
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