

Making Kaiser's Family Violence Prevention Program Accessible to Patients with I/DD

The Family Violence Prevention Program started at Kaiser Permanente in 1998 in Northern California. It now operates at all Kaiser locations throughout the state. Kaiser's website says the program provides a comprehensive and integrated approach to build awareness, provide care, and prevent domestic violence. The program has four components:

(1) Creating a supportive environment

"We place a priority on creating a comfortable atmosphere so a member will feel safe reaching out and seeking help." Question: What does Kaiser do to make the atmosphere comfortable for members with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD)? Since many if not most members with I/DD cannot "reach out" to seek help when they are victims of abuse, what ADA accommodations does Kaiser provide to enable members with I/DD to have full access to all components of the Family Violence Protection Program? *

(2) Inquiry and referral

"Physicians and other health care team members learn about domestic violence so they can ask about it in a caring way. They know what resources are available and how to help identify, assess, and support at-risk members." Question: What training has been provided to Kaiser team members about abuse of people with I/DD, including increased vulnerability, risk reduction, identification of abuse, and effective response to such abuse? Question: Who are members with I/DD referred to for effective diagnosis and treatment when they are victims of abuse?

(3) Providing on-site resources

"We refer members experiencing domestic violence to specially qualified clinicians from Behavioral Medicine, Social Services, or Mental Health Departments. These professionals have received additional training in responding to family violence, and can help with: * Assessing the level of danger * Creating a safety plan * Referring to a specialized domestic violence program in the community." Question: What training have qualified clinicians in these departments received in providing these resources to patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities?

(4) Connecting with community groups

The needs of those experiencing domestic violence often go beyond what can be provided in a health care setting. So we've formed partnerships with community advocacy groups and law enforcement agencies that can provide additional services, like emergency housing, legal support, help with restraining orders, and other advocacy services. Question: What partnerships have Kaiser staff formed with community groups serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities?

* **Americans with Disabilities Act**. The ADA requires that health care providers offer reasonable accommodations to patients with disabilities so they may participate in and benefit from health care services. Question: How can the Family Violence and Prevention Program be modified to ensure that patients with I/DD have meaningful access to all aspects of the program?