Kaiser Permanente Moves Toward Greener Future with New Southern California Solar Plant

Nation's largest integrated health care system will purchase 110 megawatts from new solar energy plant in Riverside County, Calif.

OAKLAND, Calif., Nov. 10, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- Taking another step toward achieving its goal of using 100 percent renewable energy by 2025 to help improve the health of communities it serves, Kaiser Permanente today celebrated the opening of the Blythe Solar Energy Center in Riverside County, Calif., which will generate enough renewable energy to reduce Kaiser Permanente's greenhouse gas emissions by more than 15 percent.

Kaiser Permanente enabled the construction of the energy center through a 20-year agreement with Blythe owner and operator NextEra Energy Resources to purchase 110 megawatts of the green energy generated at the site, the equivalent of powering more than 50,000 homes.

This commitment to bring more clean energy generation online is part of Kaiser Permanente's long-term environmental stewardship goals, which align with its purpose of helping people and communities thrive. Among these goals is to become "carbon net positive" by 2025.

"Climate change is inextricably linked to the health of our communities," said Kathy Gerwig, Kaiser Permanente's environmental stewardship officer. "Increased rates of asthma and other lung ailments, economically crippling droughts and the trauma of extreme weather events are some examples of the impacts we're already seeing. As a health care provider, we must be a leader in eliminating practices that can negatively impact environmental and human health."

The 110 megawatts of renewable energy Kaiser Permanente is purchasing from the Blythe Solar Energy Center will prevent more than 140,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions from being released into the atmosphere each year that would have been created by burning fossil fuel.

"This solar energy project is a tangible example of our commitment to the total health of the communities we serve," said Ramé Hemstreet, chief sustainable resources officer.
for Kaiser Permanente. "Climate change is already impacting the health of our members. By greening our energy supply, we reduce our contribution to the greenhouse gases that cause climate change."

This project is a central part of Kaiser Permanente's strategy to lower the carbon emissions associated with our operations. Kaiser Permanente's goal of going carbon net positive by 2025 – by buying enough clean energy and carbon offsets to remove more carbon emissions from the atmosphere than the organization emits – is one component of the health care system's ambitious long-term sustainability goals. Kaiser Permanente is also taking steps to purchase only sustainably produced food, sell zero waste to landfills, and reduce the amount of water it uses by 25 percent per square foot of buildings.

The Blythe project also supports Kaiser Permanente's commitment to providing access to affordable health care by locking in a set price for the power generated there, reducing the organization's exposure to rising energy prices.

Hundreds of construction jobs were created in Riverside County since work began on the solar energy facility in 2014.

About Kaiser Permanente

Kaiser Permanente is committed to helping shape the future of health care. We are recognized as one of America's leading health care providers and not-for-profit health plans. Founded in 1945, Kaiser Permanente has a mission to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We currently serve more than 10.6 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia. Care for members and patients is focused on their total health and guided by their personal physicians, specialists and team of caregivers. Our expert and caring medical teams are empowered and supported by industry-leading technology advances and tools for health promotion, disease prevention, state-of-the-art care delivery and world-class chronic disease management. Kaiser Permanente is dedicated to care innovations, clinical research, health education and the support of community health. For more information, go to: kp.org/share.

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