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## **Providence and Kaiser Permanente join to build new hospital in San Bernardino County**

***Facility expected to open in 2026; will expand high-quality health care in the High Desert***

**VICTORVILLE, Calif. (June 3, 2021)** – Two of Southern California’s most prominent health care organizations are coming together to build and operate a new hospital in the High Desert region of San Bernardino County, pending regulatory review and approval. With approximately 260 beds, the new hospital will be built in Victorville and will replace the existing Providence St. Mary Medical Center in the nearby community of Apple Valley.

The High Desert community, including its Kaiser Permanente members, will be able to access the new hospital, which is expected to open in 2026. Both Providence St. Mary medical staff, including St. Mary High Desert Medical Group, and Kaiser Permanente physicians will deliver care at the new facility. Providence will serve as the employer and operating manager of the hospital.

“Health care delivery has become very complex and Providence has found that affiliations truly benefit the communities we serve, particularly areas with significant rates of serious health risks,” said Erik G. Wexler, President of Operations and Strategy, Providence – South. “We are impressed by Kaiser Permanente’s integrated model of high-quality care and see this affiliation as an opportunity that will advance care for all residents of the High Desert community.”

Both organizations are committed to meeting the needs of this underserved region by expanding access to quality and affordable care. The city of Victorville, the largest in the High Desert, has a 22.8 percent poverty rate, which is high compared to state and national averages and includes vulnerable populations that experience health disparities.

The hospital will be built on acreage purchased in 2007 for a new St. Mary Medical Center campus and will create new construction jobs in the High Desert. The existing hospital in Apple Valley does not meet the more stringent state seismic requirements that take effect in 2030 and it would be neither financially nor operationally feasible to bring it into compliance. Providence will work with the community to determine the future of the existing Apple Valley site.

“The High Desert community is growing, and we must advance how we deliver health care to meet the changing needs of our community,” said Bill Caswell, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Kaiser Permanente Southern California. Dr. Gregory Kelman, Regional Medical Director, Operations, for Southern California Permanente Medical Group said, “This partnership will combine the resources and care networks of both our organizations to provide high quality, affordable health care in the High Desert for years to come.”

The new hospital will retain its Catholic identity and continue to follow the Ethical and Religious Directives (ERDs) for Catholic health care. Kaiser Permanente will continue to arrange for the provision of all the health services for its patients. Both organizations respect one another's philosophy of health care practices.

Providence St. Mary Chief Executive Randy Castillo will maintain his leadership position. Providence will continue to have primary responsibility for operational oversight, with input from Kaiser Permanente.

"The COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit our community so hard, highlighted the need for a new hospital that will meet our area's growing health care needs," Castillo said. "We sought a partner that shares our goals and our vision to increase access to care, especially in under-served communities."

Providence and Kaiser Permanente continue to work with state and local officials to address any concerns and to obtain the necessary approvals for the hospital campus.

#### **About Providence Southern California**

Providence Southern California is a not-for-profit Catholic health network with 11 hospitals, outpatient surgical centers, provider clinics, TrinityCare Hospice and its TrinityKids Care pediatric hospice, Providence High School, home health care services, wellness centers and numerous physician groups in its Southern California Region. Together these ministries, including secular affiliates and some representing other faiths, have approximately 31,000 employees – called caregivers – and nearly 5,200 physicians on staff.

[Providence Southern California](#) is part of Providence, formerly Providence St. Joseph Health, a health system of 111,000 caregivers serving in 52 hospitals, 829 clinics and a comprehensive range of services across Alaska, California, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas and Washington. PSJH strives to increase access to health care and bring quality, compassionate care to those we serve, with a focus on those most in need.

#### **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 12.4 million members in 8 states and the District of Columbia. Care for members and patients is focused on their total health and guided by their personal Permanente Medical Group 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.