



FRONTLINE NEWS FOR KP WORKERS,  
MANAGERS AND PHYSICIANS



# VAX TO THE FUTURE

**P** PARTNERSHIP

IN THIS ISSUE  
VACCINATING IN PARTNERSHIP  
EASING BACK INTO THE OFFICE • HIGH HOPES

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Published by Kaiser Permanente, the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions and the Alliance of Health Care Unions

### COMMUNICATIONS CO-LEADS

Sherry Crosby  
Caroline Lucas  
Brenda Rodriguez

### EDITOR

Alec Rosenberg

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Travis Retter  
Stoller Design Group

### CONTRIBUTORS

Guy Ashley  
Jennifer Bellisario  
Renata Gonzales  
Laureen Lazarovici  
Laurie Lezin-Schmidt  
Tracy Lee Silveria  
Beverly White

Photos contributed by individual team members, except where credited.

### COPY EDITOR

Colleen O'Neill

Email feedback to [hank@kp.org](mailto:hank@kp.org).



## What Is *Hank*?

*Hank* is an award-winning journal named in honor of Kaiser Permanente's visionary co-founder and innovator, Henry J. Kaiser.

**HANK'S MISSION:** Highlight the successes and struggles of the Labor Management Partnership, which is jointly led by Kaiser Permanente and the Partnership unions and recognized as a model operating strategy for health care.

*Hank* is published a few times a year for the Partnership's 160,000+ workers, managers, physicians and dentists. All of them are working to make Kaiser Permanente the best place to receive care and the best place to work — and in the process are making health care history.

For a list of unions belonging to the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions, please visit [UnionCoalition.org](http://UnionCoalition.org). For a list of unions belonging to the Alliance of Health Care Unions, please visit [AHCUnions.org](http://AHCUnions.org).

For information about the management and union co-leads advancing partnership in your region, please visit [LMPartnership.org](http://LMPartnership.org).



# Contents



COVER STORY:

## VACCINATING IN PARTNERSHIP

Workers, managers and physicians team up to combat COVID-19.



### Easing Back Into the Office

Expert offers tips for employees and teams to reduce stress.



### Why I Got Vaccinated

Humans of Partnership tackle vaccine hesitancy.



### Tool Time

Find help at your fingertips on LMPartnership.org.

### OTHER FEATURES

- 4 **Editor's Letter**
- 20 **Video: High Hopes**
- 22 **Puzzles and Games**
- 24 **Back Cover Poster**



# The Power of Partnership

## Partnership helps provide a shot in the arm

**IT'S SUMMERTIME**, and the living has been far from easy.

The past year-plus has seen a global pandemic, social unrest and political turmoil.

But signs of hope are emerging.

Vaccines are helping to turn the tide against COVID-19. As we move forward, the Labor Management Partnership has played a key part in supporting vaccinations. Our cover story highlights how labor-doctor huddles and community collaborations have helped get more shots in arms — and provides tips for boosting vaccine confidence and increasing inoculations.

See our Humans of Partnership, where employees share heartfelt stories of why they got vaccinated. It's OK if you cry.

With conditions improving, many nonclinical employees are preparing to return to the office. Our Q&A with a licensed clinical social worker offers advice about how you and your teams can reduce stress related to the transition.

When it comes to advancing the Partnership, [LMPartnership.org](https://lmpartnership.org) offers more than 700 tools to help you and your teams complete your performance improvement work. See our guide to finding the right tool, along with links to a few of our favorites.

Meanwhile, Washington has become the newest region to join the Labor Management Partnership. Watch a video in which team members share their hopes about working in partnership.

Also, don't miss our puzzles and games for reminders of how to protect you and your family against COVID-19. And check out our back cover for convenient ways to fill and manage your prescriptions.

Lastly, the movie "Back to the Future" — a summertime release — inspired our front cover. As we reflect on the pandemic, we thank you for your partnership. Such collaboration offers hope for a healthier future. **HANK**

---

**Bringing hope:** Medical assistant Luz Rodriguez-Bandala, an SEIU-UHW member, helps out at a vaccination tent at Kaiser Permanente South San Francisco Medical Center in Northern California.

**PHOTO BY:** Laura Morton







# VAXXINATE TO THE FUTURE



**Building immunity:** Licensed vocational nurse Alia Easy, an SEIU-UHW member, administers a COVID-19 vaccine to David Sprecher, RN, a clinical director, at a vaccination tent in Northern California.





COVER STORY

# VACCINATING IN PARTNERSHIP

## Workers, managers and physicians team up to combat COVID-19

---

ARTICLE BY: Laureen Lazarovici | PHOTOS BY: Laura Morton

---

**A** S WE MOVE toward the “next normal,” the Labor Management Partnership has played a key part in supporting COVID-19 vaccinations.

Frontline workers, doctors and managers have come together to get shots in arms. These fruitful collaborations point the way forward as Kaiser Permanente and the Partnership unions work to transform fear into confidence, confusion into clarity, and hesitancy into bold action.

**CONTINUES ON PAGE 8**

## VACCINATING IN PARTNERSHIP (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)



### Look at the data

A joint effort between SEIU-UHW and physicians pushed vaccination rates of the union's members from less than 50% all the way up to 64% within 3 months. It began when union leaders crunched the numbers — and didn't like what they saw.

At the beginning of February, less than half of SEIU-UHW members at Kaiser Permanente were vaccinated against COVID-19. For instance, only 40% of union employees were vaccinated in the Emergency Department at Downey Medical Center in Southern California, where Gabriel Montoya works as an emergency medical technician.

Montoya and his fellow union members — working with physicians and managers — wanted to raise those rates, so they pulled together labor-doctor huddles. Union members were scared, confused and hesitant.

### Building trust

At first, they considered joint physician-labor rounding. But they realized being in patient areas wouldn't support those conversations, so they pivoted to huddles — short, informal team meetings.

Carol Ishimatsu, MD, a pediatrician with the Southern California Permanente Medical Group, was one of the first doctors to join a huddle in Downey.





“Vaccines are our most important intervention,” says Dr. Ishimatsu, who participated in the clinical trials for the shots when they were being tested.

To build trust, Dr. Ishimatsu emphasized her shared experience with SEIU-UHW members as warriors on the front line.

“I told the employees: I do the same thing you do after work,” she says, describing her ritual of removing her clothes in the garage and putting them directly in the washing machine before entering the house. “We are in different professions, doing the same thing.”

**CONTINUES ON PAGE 10**

[LMPARTNERSHIP.ORG/HANK](http://LMPARTNERSHIP.ORG/HANK)

## RISING VACCINATION RATES

**A joint effort between SEIU-UHW and physicians increased vaccinations of the union’s members in 2021.**



**Taking our shots:** Collaborative efforts between labor and management, such as at this Kaiser Permanente vaccination tent in Northern California (above left and above), have helped increase COVID-19 vaccinations.

Joel Valenciano, an Environmental Services manager at Downey, helped organize huddles at outlying clinics.

“I encouraged the staff to be honest, relate their fears and doubts, anything holding them back,” he says. “And they really opened up.”

“We did it in partnership,” says Montoya, the emergency medical technician. “The labor partners led the huddles and introduced the doctors. I can’t imagine that happening in a nonunion hospital, or even a non-Partnership hospital.”

### Mass appeal

Even amid the pandemic, caregivers still had to fight the flu. For years, doctors, union members and managers in the Northwest Region have worked together on flu vaccinations. Because of COVID-19, they set up outdoor mass vaccination sites for the 2020 season. It became clear they would have to do something similar when a vaccine against COVID-19 became available.

“We said, ‘Let’s transform the work we are already doing,’” says Joshua Holt, RN, a member of OFNHP who works at Kaiser Permanente Westside Medical Center in Hillsboro, Oregon. The groups used the Rapid Improvement Model, conducting small tests of change in plan, do, study, act cycles to address the gaps.

“There were daily meetings where we were rapidly assessing and making changes and improvement,” says Holt. The years of practice by unit-based teams using performance improvement processes paid off during the crisis.

Kaiser Permanente joined with 3 other health care organizations — which normally would be considered competitors — to run a mass vaccination site at the Oregon Convention Center from January to June 2021.

“It was all about the community,” says Holt. “It was really impressive. We knew there would be some bumps along the road. But having everyone at the table all treated as equals, working together, enabled us to stay focused on our goal: vaccinations for everyone.”

### Come together

Angela Glasper loved the idea of joining forces with doctors. The chief shop steward for SEIU-UHW at Antioch Medical Center in Northern California got frustrated when she talked to fellow union members who were conflicted about getting vaccinated.

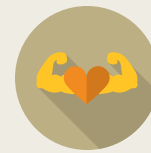
“I listened, but I couldn’t address their concerns,” says Glasper, who works in optical sales and needed someone with clinical expertise to answer their questions. “People would say to the doctors, ‘Labor has been telling us about it, but you answered our questions.’”

One of the most popular doctors at the huddles at Antioch was Jeffrey Ghassemi, MD, an anesthesiologist with The Permanente Medical Group and chief of staff at the hospital. He shared his harrowing stories about working on the COVID-19 units and was, in Glasper’s words, “patient and gentle.” With a newfound confidence, employees signed up for vaccine appointments during huddles.



Dr. Ghassemi says the effort was built on a strong foundation of Labor Management Partnership principles and practices. In his role as an anesthesiologist, he has taken part in performance improvement projects with surgery unit-based teams. “What I learned is that people are people,” he says. “You leave your titles at the door and try to solve a problem.”

That insight was his touchstone during the pandemic. “We all play our roles at the hospital, and they are all important,” says Dr. Ghassemi. “Your value is not determined by your title. It’s your objective that matters. And that objective is making lives better.” **HANK**



## TAKE ACTION: GET SHOTS IN ARMS

Here are 3 ways to build confidence in the COVID-19 vaccines and increase vaccinations:



Want to replicate the labor-doctor huddle strategy?

[Download this tip sheet.](#)



Share the latest information about vaccines with unit-based teams: [Download this flier.](#)



Help organizations build vaccine confidence among their members and the public:

[Download this comprehensive toolkit.](#)

“I encouraged the staff to be honest, relate their fears and doubts, anything holding them back. And they really opened up.”

— **JOEL VALENCIANO**, manager,  
Environmental Services, Downey Medical  
Center (Southern California)







**Supporting success:**

Showing empathy can help teams adjust to returning to the office, says Caretia Silva, a licensed clinical social worker and member of OFNHP.





# EASING BACK INTO THE OFFICE

Expert offers tips for employees and teams to reduce stress

ARTICLE BY: Jennifer Bellisario | PHOTO BY: Caretia Silva

**C**ARETIA SILVA, a licensed clinical social worker, is a labor improvement adviser with the Alliance of Health Care Unions in Portland, Oregon, and a member of OFNHP. As many nonclinical employees prepare to return to the office, she offered advice about ways to reduce stress related to the latest challenges of COVID-19.

## **Many employees will soon return to the office. What feelings might they experience?**

For some folks, working from home has been wonderful; for others, it's been very stressful. Many people were managing a lot of competing priorities with children at home, online schooling, sharing "office" space with partners at home and extended family concerns.

Some people may experience anxiety, grief, excitement, anticipation — and many other feelings as they encounter unknowns — with returning to the office. For folks who have already returned to the clinics, they've had a gradual reintroduction and the process has been slightly more paced, although it hasn't been without stress.

## **What tips do you have for staff preparing to return to the office and send their children back into the classroom?**

There are bound to be challenges as we work out new routines. Anything you can do the night before to prepare for the next day is a good idea — set out clothes, load backpacks, make lunches. It can also be beneficial to have a consistent and routine bedtime, not just for your children, but also for yourself. If you have trouble settling down at night, try the [Calm app](#).

In the morning, set yourself up for success for the day by building in "transition time" — this is time to get people from the house to the car, including all the needed gear for the day. Building in transition time allows for any last-minute items and reduces the stress of being late. If you arrive early at school with the kids, take advantage of the one-on-one time with encouraging words to pump them up for their day. It only takes a few minutes to make a meaningful connection with your kids.

**CONTINUES ON PAGE 14**

### How can team members set each other up for success in the workplace?

Coming back to the office or clinic is a major change compared to working from home. And some folks never left the clinic. Everyone had their own unique experience over the last year and a half. This transition will take some adjusting. Fatigue among workers may be common due to the increased social interaction. In the beginning, people may feel some nervous energy bouncing off each other as they acclimate to the new environment. It's important to give people the time and space they may need to reacclimate to an in-person work environment.

### How can unit-based team co-leads support their teams?

People will acclimate to the office environment at different times. When people seem fatigued, be aware that they might need some space. Sometimes people need to take a break and disengage from the group. It's a process that allows them to realign and center themselves. Have empathy for staff adjusting to this change.

### How can unit-based teams use LMP tools to help them through this time?

The [Partnership behaviors](#) are a solid foundation for teams to ground themselves, and the [Free to Speak](#) tools are also good to foster a culture of trust and engagement. This might be a good time for a UBT to take another look at its ground rules and see if the rules need updating. [Interest-based problem solving](#) can also be useful for teams struggling with processes that have been adapted or need to change.

### What advice do you have for managers during this transition?

The success I've seen with managers is when they are authentic with their staff and allow themselves to be seen. They don't have to reveal personal secrets, but when anyone is sincere and approachable, there is more trust and engagement.

### What else is important to consider?

The world has changed in ways we never saw coming. The pandemic was catastrophic and, on top of that, we also dealt with social justice issues and political unrest. It's important to acknowledge how these and other challenges — such as financial insecurity and housing insecurity — have contributed to stress and anxiety for many people. [Self-care](#) is crucial now more than ever.

### How do I recognize signs of stress?

If close friends, family or loved ones have mentioned that you seem different, consider what they are saying. Are you more emotional — quick to cry, jump to anger or experiencing mood swings? Have your eating or sleeping habits changed? Changes and impacts to your daily living habits are signs that stress may be affecting you. Reach out to the [Employee Assistance Program](#), find exercise you enjoy, or check out [emotional wellness apps](#) like Calm or myStrength. [HANK](#)

---

**Coming back:** As vaccinations increase, more employees will be returning to the office. It's important to give people time and space to reacclimate to an in-person work environment.

**PHOTO BY:** Laura Morton





## TAKE ACTION: BE WELL

COVID-19 has impacted all of us in some way, and we find ourselves in different places mentally and emotionally. Try these 3 steps to improve wellness:



Visit [Rise&Renew](#) on HRconnect to find crisis resources and wellness support for yourself and your teams — everything from the Employee Assistance Program to the Calm and myStrength self-care apps.



View this [Health and Safety Champions flier](#) for activities to reduce stress for yourself and your team.



Listen to this [Ask an Expert podcast](#) for tips on managing your emotions at work.





## WHY I GOT VACCINATED

“ **IN THE BEGINNING**, I was totally against getting the vaccine, but I was hearing how dangerous the virus was and I was concerned about my disabled parents and my children. I talked with my daughter, who is a nurse, and she helped me understand why it’s so important to be vaccinated. When I received the first dose, the nurse was really nice but I was nervous. She told me to relax and take a breath. I want to be safe and healthy for myself and my parents. My advice to others is do your research so you can protect your family and yourself. ”

— **JACINTA “JJ” RATCLIFF-HUNTER**,  
assistant, Patient Care Surgery, SEIU Local 49  
(Northwest)

“ **I WAS HESITANT** at first because it was a brand-new vaccine, and I didn’t know how I would react. Then I started working in the COVID-19 vaccination clinic, and I learned a lot. I ended up getting my first vaccination so a dose wouldn’t go to waste. My grandmother is living with me, and she’s high risk, so getting the vaccine was essential to keeping her safe. I also want to go to sports games again. I’ve met many different people at the clinic. I’ve seen them being nervous and skeptical to shedding tears of joy. In the end, they’re all happy to get the vaccine. Don’t fear the vaccine. It’s not that bad. ”

— **MIGUEL CEJA**, medical assistant,  
SEIU-UHW (Northern California)





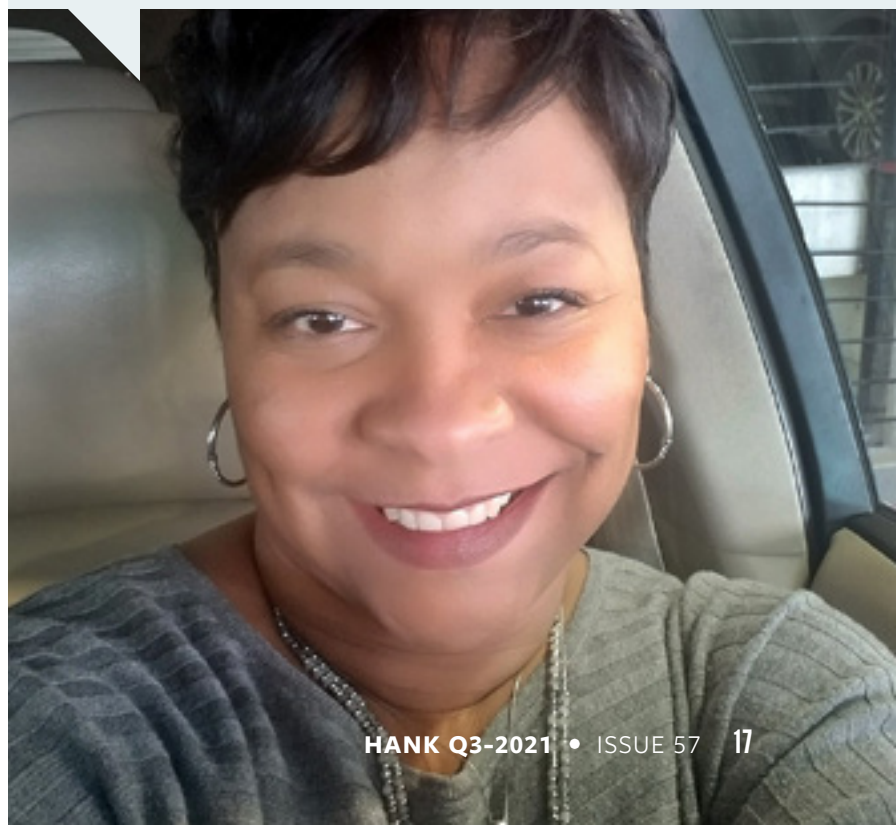


“ I’VE HAD MULTIPLE family members and patients acquire COVID-19, and I feel getting the vaccine will help keep me healthy and those around me healthy, too. I was anxiously awaiting my turn to get vaccinated and was thrilled to find out I could get it the first day it was offered in Colorado Springs, on December 23. That was the best Christmas present! The good news is, the vaccines currently available do an excellent job at preventing serious COVID-19 illness and death. Go ahead and get whichever vaccine is available to you! ”

— **JENA REICHEL**T, MD, Family Medicine (Colorado)

“ I WAS SLIGHTLY hesitant in getting the vaccine, because it was developed so quickly — but I knew that this was the only way we could move forward to protect ourselves and others from getting infected. I need to be healthy so I can continue to help others in the operating room, and keep elderly family members, who I love, healthy. The COVID-19 virus is so much more contagious than expected. When people become infected, sometimes it causes a dire and deadly ripple effect in their families and communities. My hope is that others will eventually feel more comfortable about getting the vaccine. If we all do what’s best, not only for ourselves but our family members and community, the sooner we will be able to get back to spending time with the ones we love! ”

— **WENDY WILLIAMS**, RN, Operating Room, UFCW Local 27 (Mid-Atlantic States)



# TOOL TIME

## Find help at your fingertips on LMPartnership.org

ARTICLE BY: Jennifer Bellisario

Does your team need a tuneup on performance improvement tools? Dust off the old tool belt and dig into all the Labor Management Partnership resources at your fingertips. LMPartnership.org offers more than 700 tools. Don't panic. Finding the right tools is easy if you follow these simple steps:



Log on to LMPartnership.org.



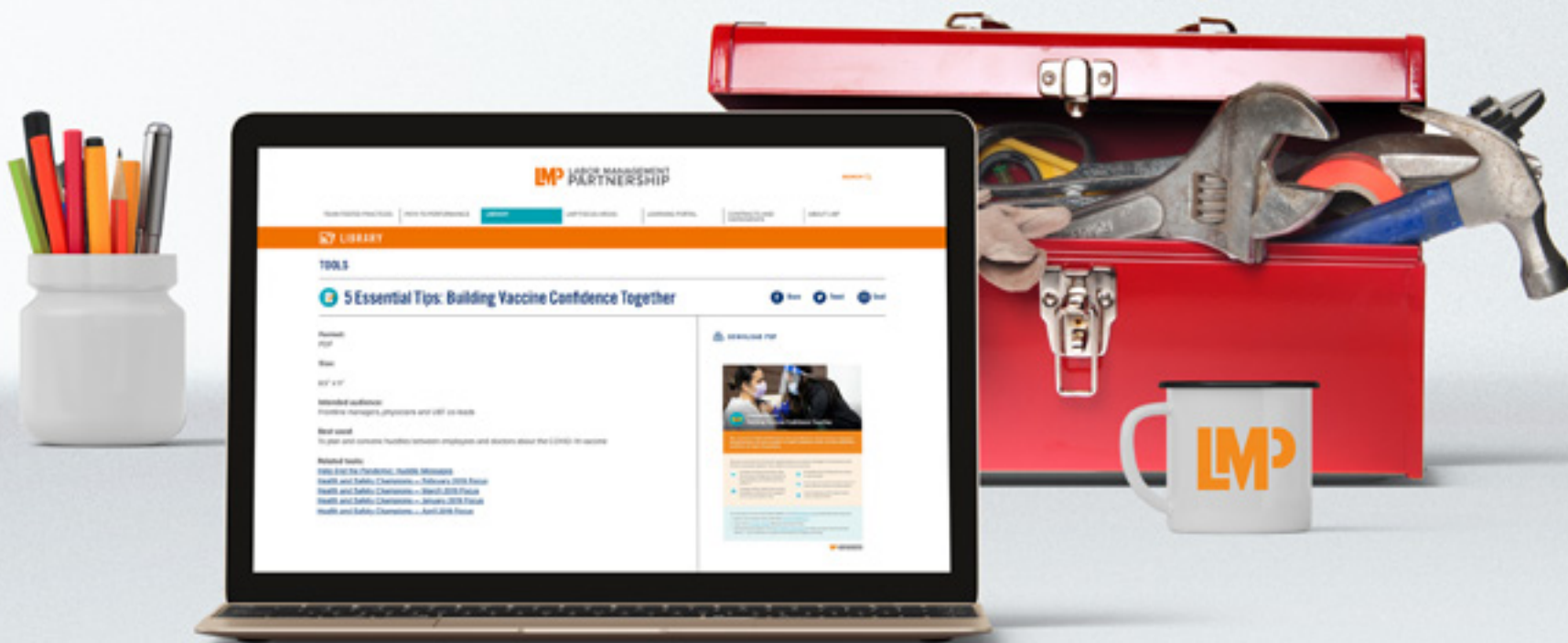
Go to the Library tab and select Tools.



Use the filter option on the left to narrow your focus.

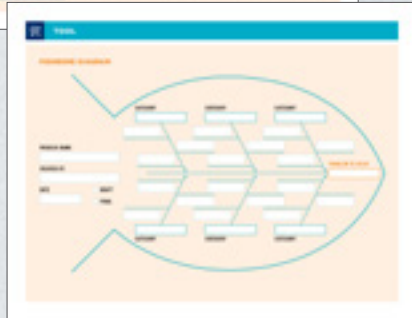
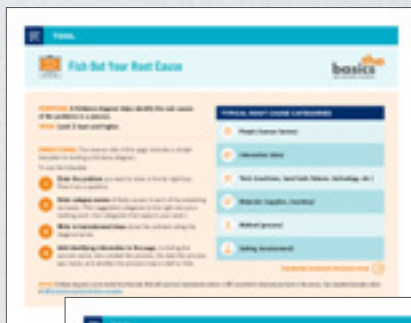


Want more options? Use the Reset button to change your filters.





# HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE TOOLS:



## The basics

Is your team scratching its head trying to drill down to the root cause of a problem? Try a fishbone diagram to get to the heart of the matter and find real solutions.

[Download PDF](#)

## Free to Speak

Now's a good time to review your team's ground rules and make sure everyone feels they can speak up. Open communication leads to better patient outcomes and higher employee satisfaction. Check out the Free to Speak Zone poster and add your ground rules to the list.

[Download PDF](#)

## Building joy

As more employees return to the clinic and office, the transition can spark stress. Take time to check your emotions and get tips for taking a proactive approach with this Joy in Work tool.

[Download PDF](#)



Look for newly redesigned tools and tips for teams to work on attendance issues. From engagement to time off requests, this toolkit will allow team members to select a specific need and find tools to help. This deliverable of the 2019 Kaiser Permanente–Coalition National Agreement will be designed for all represented employees supported by the Labor Management Partnership.

# HIGH HOPES

Team members from Washington, the newest region to join the Labor Management Partnership, share their hopes about working together.



[Click to watch video.](#)







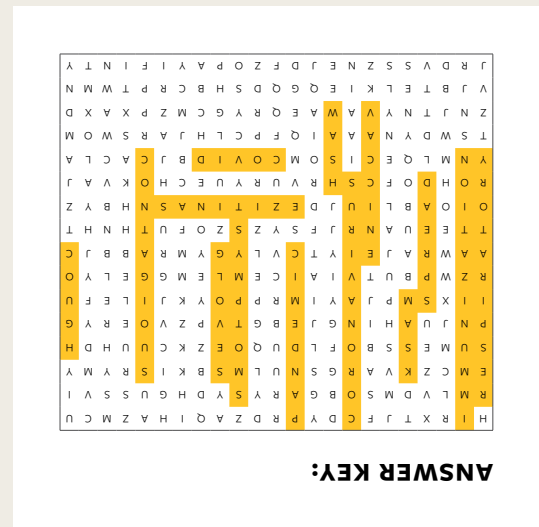
# PUZZLES AND GAMES

## WORD SEARCH: COVID-19

**DIRECTIONS:** Find the hidden words related to COVID-19. Words may appear vertically or horizontally and may be read from either direction.



- Contagious**
- Coronavirus**
- Cough**
- COVID**
- Gloves**
- Immunization**
- Mask**
- Pandemic**
- Respiratory**
- Sanitize**
- Spread**
- Symptoms**
- Vaccine**
- Wash**



[Download PDF version](#)

## ICEBREAKER: Getting vaccinated

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a big step toward safely returning to activities we've avoided for much of the pandemic. But many Americans are still hesitant to get their shots.



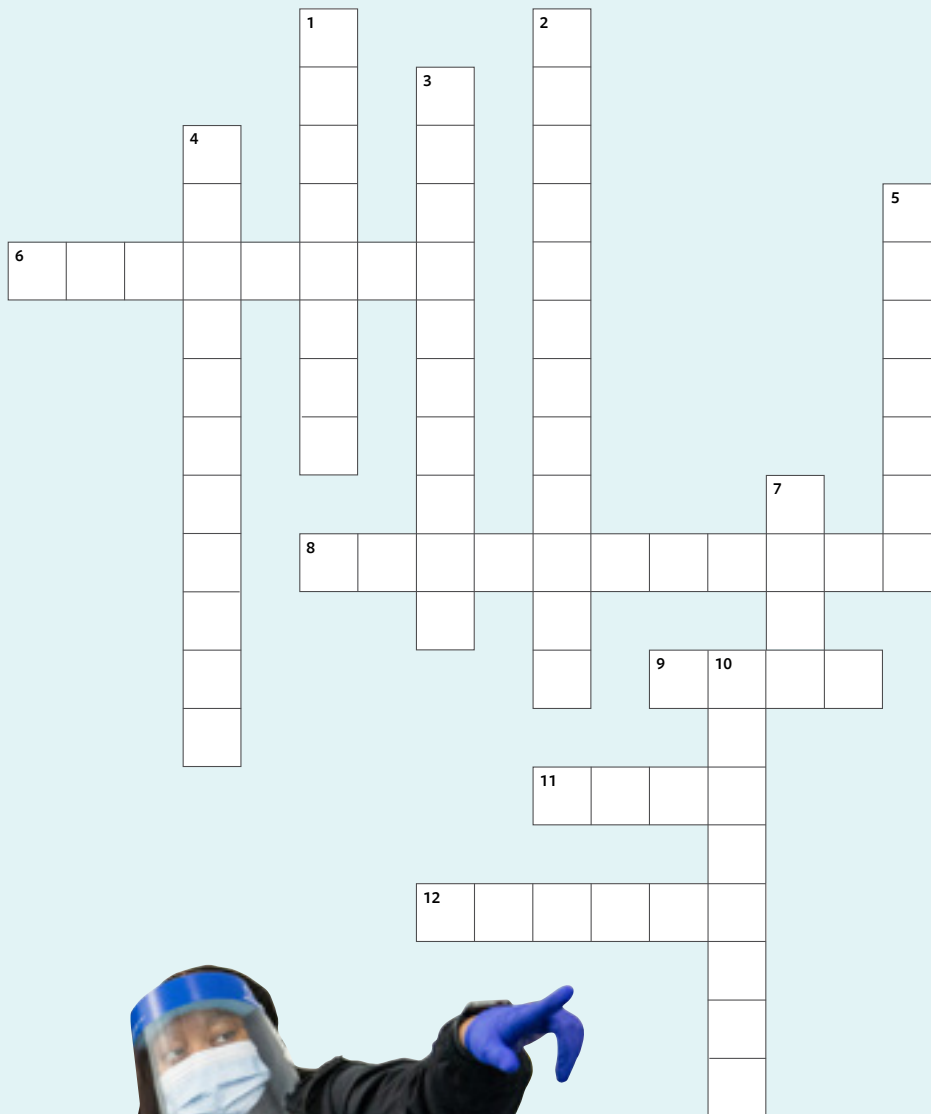
**Activity:** Discuss as a team how you'd support family members, friends or colleagues in making their decision about getting vaccinated.

[Download PDF version](#)



## CROSSWORD: Staying safe

**DIRECTIONS:** This COVID-19 crossword will remind you of ways you can protect yourself and your family from the spread of this disease.



### DOWN

1. A disease that spreads across several countries and affects many people
2. Types of wipes you're encouraged to use to clean commonly touched surfaces
3. If you're \_\_\_\_\_, don't leave your home; have essentials delivered
4. A type of virus that can cause COVID-19
5. A preventive inoculation to confer immunity against a specific disease
7. Don't touch your \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who's affected by COVID-19?

### ACROSS

6. If you might have been exposed to COVID-19, the CDC recommends you quarantine for \_\_\_\_\_ days
8. When you have any symptoms of COVID-19, you're asked to \_\_\_\_\_
9. For much of the pandemic, social distancing meant staying 6 \_\_\_\_\_ away from people outside your household
11. When you feel sick, you should stay at \_\_\_\_\_
12. How many seconds you should wash your hands

#### ANSWER KEY:

1. Pandemic, 2. Disinfecting, 3. Vulnerable, 4. Coronavirus, 5. Vaccine, 6. Fourteen, 7. Face, 8. Self-isolate, 9. Feet, 10. Everyone, 11. Home, 12. Twenty

[Download PDF version](#)

## Prescriptions Made Easy

FOR MOST PRESCRIPTIONS, YOU CAN SKIP THE TRIP TO THE PHARMACY AND GET:

-  A 3-month supply for the cost of 2 months.\*
-  Fast and free delivery. Most orders arrive within 3 to 5 days.
-  Refill reminders and status updates by text, mobile app notification or email.

Sign in to [kp.org/pharmacy](https://kp.org/pharmacy) or the Kaiser Permanente app to manage your prescriptions online.

\*Some coverages apply different copays, so please refer to your coverage documents for more details on copays specific to your prescriptions.

**LMP** LABOR MANAGEMENT  
PARTNERSHIP



“ When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, I jumped on board and signed up for prescription delivery. It was so easy and saved me time. I can even save money by getting more months on my refills.”

— **MONICA GARCIA-ALBERT**, union partnership representative, OPEIU Local 29 (Northern California)