

## Special Audio Report Transcript

Headline: Kaiser Permanente Center Experiments With  
Incorporating Technology Into Hospital Design

Reported/Produced by: David Gorn  
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### Text:

The recent Health 2.0 conference in San Francisco brought together the latest concepts in social media, information technology and other high-tech innovations in medicine. One of those highlighted innovations embraces something new to health care. Marketing. As part of the 2.0 conference, Kaiser Permanente opened the doors of its Garfield Center, which takes the marketing concepts of focus groups and product testing and applies them to operating rooms and clinic waiting areas.

This is a special report for *iHealthBeat*, a daily news service from the California HealthCare Foundation. I'm David Gorn.

So this place LOOKS like the nurses' station at a hospital. But peer around the back wall, behind that defibrillator, and you'll see the walls are plywood, with nothing behind them. It's like a movie set. You sort of expect to see Gregory House or Dr. Cuddy amble around the corner. Only, this mockup of a hospital wing has a serious purpose.

***(Lieberman): "The changes in technology had a pretty significant impact on the way we were designing our facilities."***

That's Jennifer Lieberman, director of Kaiser Permanente's Garfield Center, a 37,000-square-foot experimental space in a warehouse in San Leandro, California, where ideas about work flow and technology can be tried out in a role-playing way, before they become reality.

***(Lieberman): "What became very clear is that the technology, space and work flow all had an impact on each other, and everything had to be looked at holistically, rather than, what's the technology, what's the space, what's the work flow."***

Lieberman said the idea first sprouted when looking at how packaged goods companies like Clorox or Proctor and Gamble road-tested their products before rolling them out.

***(Lieberman): "We were really surprised to find that a lot of service industries had dedicated innovation centers. So we spent a lot of time at McDonald's, at their innovation center."***

And when you think about providing health care and providing cheeseburgers, Lieberman said, they're really not THAT far apart.

***(Lieberman): "When you think about a franchise, it's actually very similar to health care, because people need to CHOOSE to adopt what you do."***

What Kaiser is doing is simple: Design different platforms -- a patient room, for example, or a medical surgical unit -- to test out how things work. The placement of a TV, for example, is a tiny thing, but it makes a big difference to a patient when that shiny new flat-screen TV is accessible to family members but NOT to the patient. These mockups also helped people realize that the wall behind the patient should have functions mirrored on both sides, so that a nurse doesn't have to run around to the other side of the bed to do something important. And, Lieberman said, if patients can adjust their own lights and room temperature, that frees up nurses to do more ... nursing.

***(Lieberman): "So we're trying to take a look at different technology that might offload what we call non valued added activities, freeing nurses up to spend more time, face to face with patients."***

The mockups at the Garfield Center go beyond inpatient care, as well.

***(Lieberman): "We're going to go to our home environment... Some people say it looks like an IKEA showroom..."***

It's a mockup designed to look like a patient's home -- with self-monitoring devices tied into existing technology, like the television.

***(Lieberman): "We are trying to think about the future of health care, and how we reach out to our members where they live."***

And that's particularly important over the next decade or so, according to Sean Chai, senior information technology manager at the center.

***(Chai): "With our aging baby boomers, and the rapid proliferation of personal communication technologies, the iPhone, iPads, the consumers are now asking for more ways to stay connected with their health care tools and resources when they're away from the hospital."***

When people do go into the hospital for chronic conditions such as diabetes or congestive heart problems, Chai said, they might use up half a day --

driving, parking, sitting in the waiting room, sitting in the exam room -- for a five-minute consultation with a physician and five minutes with a nurse who takes vital signs. But that half a day of time can take a couple of minutes per day, he said.

***(Chai): "Imagine in the future, you have a small setup box at home that will talk to you and remind you to take your medication on a daily basis, to measure your weight, to measure your blood pressure."***

All of those daily monitoring devices can be hooked up to whatever technology exists in people's homes already, Chai said. And that creates a more robust database of information to diagnose and treat patients' problems, he said.

***(Lieberman): "This doesn't feel like your traditional doctor's office..."***

Lieberman has one other mockup to show off -- the latest project at the Kaiser lab.

***(Lieberman): "You have stepped into a very different environment. It is a microclinic, a much smaller clinic, this is new to Kaiser."***

The more traditional small-clinic setting is a shift for Kaiser, but as Lieberman said, this is not exactly traditional. It looks just a bit like the inside of a Curious George book, with brightly colored furniture and walls.

***(Lieberman): "This is a very different feeling, it's young and hip, we have different types of lighting beautiful paint, with very different furniture in the waiting room."***

And some high-tech touches, like the check-in kiosk, which looks very much like the ones you see at airport ticket counters. The idea is to attract young families, and this conceptual mock-up has now become reality. Kaiser recently launched seven microclinics in Georgia, and another five are currently being built in Georgia, Colorado and Hawaii. All try to serve patients in an effective, lower-cost, high-tech way -- and to capture a share of the market.

This has been a special report for *iHealthBeat*, a daily news service from the California HealthCare Foundation. If you have feedback or other issues you'd like to have addressed, please email us at [IHB@CHCF.org](mailto:IHB@CHCF.org). I'm David Gorn. Thanks for listening.