

For Immediate ReleaseContact: Beverlie Brinson, 301-816-6264
beverlie.brinson@kp.org***The Kaiser Permanente Friday Fresh Farmers' Market Hosts Grand Opening
Celebration at Hopkins Plaza***Market Open from 10am-2pm with
Grand Opening Event from Noon-1pm

Rockville, MD, (August 5, 2009) - - - With a plethora of delicious, fresh fruits and vegetables at low, affordable prices, The Kaiser Permanente Friday Fresh Farmers' Market is where you will find many members of the Hopkins Plaza community on Friday afternoons.

In collaboration with the Baltimore Downtown Partnership and the City of Baltimore Health Department, Kaiser Permanente's City Plaza Medical Office Building opened a weekly farmers' market for member of the Hopkins Plaza community on July 24, 2009. The market is located on West Baltimore Street at the entrance to Hopkins Plaza (between Hopkins Place and Charles Street) and is open 10 am to 2pm every Friday through the end of October.* The market features freshly baked bread, perennials as well as locally-grown fruits, vegetables and herbs picked by five farmers.

Encouraging healthy eating and active living in the community it serves is at the heart of Kaiser Permanente's mission as a prevention-oriented health care organization. The need to create and support healthy nutrition environments has taken on added urgency with our increased understanding of the extent of the nation's obesity epidemic and its causes.

A survey conducted in 2005 reported that 71 percent of the attendees at Kaiser Permanente farmers' markets were eating more fruits and vegetables as a result of shopping there. By partnering with local growers, Kaiser Permanente hopes to support the development of local and sustainable food systems as a public tool for improving the health of Baltimore City residents.



“A balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables very often leads to improved quality of life. The City Plaza Farmers’ Market provides access to fresh, local produce which leads to improved health in our neighborhoods,” said Dr. Michael Dias, physician in chief of Kaiser Permanente’s Baltimore service area. “Kaiser’s sponsorship of the City Plaza Farmers’ Market is one of the many ways in which we demonstrate our commitment to comprehensive care in our community.”

Kaiser Permanente’s goal is to ensure Baltimore City residents have access to healthy foods in downtown Baltimore while supporting the local farmers and other individuals that deliver this extraordinarily valuable service.

Lack of access to healthy foods is a public health concern. Last year the Baltimore City Health Department and Department of Planning created a Food Policy Task Force to evaluate the current food environment and how it is serving or not serving citizens.

Several meetings have been held and a final report is due out soon. One of the recommendations will almost certainly be to increase the number of farmer’s markets in Baltimore.

“Private-public partnerships are key to implementing these strategies, and it gives me great pleasure to see Kaiser Permanente shares our desired goal of increasing residents’ access to farmer’s markets,” said Interim Health Commissioner Olivia D. Farrow.

In 2003, Dr. Preston Maring, with The Permanente Medical Group, established the first farmers’ market at the Kaiser Permanente Oakland Medical Center as an effort to strengthen and improve the health of members, staff, and the local community by increasing their access to fresh produce. The City Plaza Medical Office Building joins over 30 other Kaiser Permanente facilities around the nation in offering local farmers’ markets.

*Kaiser Permanente will host an official kickoff event for the farmers’ market on Friday, August 7, 2009 from noon to 1pm. The kickoff will feature food samplings, raffle prizes and more!



About Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States

Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States region, headquartered in Rockville, Md., provides and coordinates complete health care services for almost 500,000 members through 30 medical office buildings in Maryland, Virginia and Washington D.C. Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, founded in 1980, is a total health organization composed of Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc., and the Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group, P.C., an independent medical group that features approximately 900 physicians who provide or arrange care for patients throughout the area. The health plan has been named the “Top HMO” in Maryland for the sixth consecutive year by the Maryland Health Care Commission. In addition, it was recently named “Highest in Member Satisfaction” among Commercial Health Plans by J.D. Power and Associates. Visit kp.org/newscenter for more Kaiser Permanente news.