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**SATURDAY SURGERY: FREE LIFE CHANGING SURGERIES AND MEDICAL CARE GIVEN TO SAN DIEGANS IN NEED**

*Local Doctors Volunteer to Give Hope to 29 Uninsured San Diegans*

**SAN DIEGO – April 10, 2014** – Veronica Renteria has been living with painful infected tonsils for 26 years. This Saturday, she and 28 other San Diegans suffering with pain, injury, and other debilitating conditions will receive life-changing medical treatment for free. Thanks to Super Saturday Surgery Day, a twice-annual event provided by the San Diego County Medical Society Foundation and Kaiser Permanente. This Saturday Surgery Day, an important part of the Foundation's Project Access San Diego, will take place at Kaiser Permanente Garfield Specialty Center, **5893 Copley Dr., San Diego 92111 on Saturday, April 12 at 6:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

About 150 physicians and staff will volunteer their time and expertise to provide medical care including hernia repairs, gallbladder removals, head and neck, and vascular surgeries for 12 patients. Additionally, 17 patients will receive diagnostic gastrointestinal procedures to prevent colorectal cancer. The day will also feature a volunteer kick-off breakfast at 6:30 a.m. and include remarks by leaders from Kaiser Permanente, San Diego County Medical Society Foundation and State Senator Joel Anderson – 36<sup>th</sup> District.

Saturday will mark the 13<sup>th</sup> Saturday Surgery Day at Kaiser Permanente since Project Access' inception in December 2009. Kaiser Permanente provides pro bono care twice each year to low-income and uninsured patients referred through Project Access. To date, Kaiser Permanente has contributed over \$2.4 million in donated services to Project Access San Diego.

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For Veronica Renteria, this is the hope she has been waiting for that started more than two decades ago. Renteria has suffered from recurrent tonsil infections since she was a little girl. The infections and discomfort have prohibited her from getting good quality sleep. Although she is employed, she does not have health insurance or the resources to pay for surgery. Alex Battaglia, MD, Veronica's surgeon, will bring much needed comfort and relief through medical care.

“Project Access San Diego has been laser focused on enhancing the lives of underinsured or uninsured San Diegans,” said Barbara Mandel, executive director of the San Diego County Medical Society Foundation. “To date, more than 2,400 patients have received free specialty care, including both inpatient and outpatient surgeries and procedures since Project Access San Diego's inception in December 2008,” Mandel added.

According to Paul Bernstein, MD, FACS, San Diego-area medical director for Southern California Permanente Medical Group, “Our team of dedicated physicians routinely find Saturday Surgery Day one of the most rewarding programs of the year. Our goal is to do everything in our power to enhance the lives of those who are ill or injured. Saturday Surgery Day provides us with the ability to do just that – to use our talents to give back to San Diegans in need.”

To qualify for Project Access San Diego's Saturday Surgery Day an individual must live in San Diego County, be low-income, ineligible for public health programs, and be referred by their primary care physician.

***Note to Editor:** Patient and physician photos available upon request. Follow-up appointments for each of the patients treated during Saturday Surgery Day will take place between April 12 and 25 if interested in a follow-up feature story. To view a video of past Saturday Surgery Days please visit [www.sdcmsf.org](http://www.sdcmsf.org) and click on the YouTube link.*

**About the San Diego County Medical Society Foundation (SDCMSF)**

Founded by the San Diego County Medical Society (SDCMS) in 2005, the San Diego County Medical Society Foundation (SDCMSF) is designed to address the unmet healthcare needs of low-income San Diego County residents who are uninsured or underinsured. The Foundation focuses on increasing healthcare access, improving health education and prevention, and supporting physicians and medical students to improve the quality of care in our community. Through its flagship program, Project Access San Diego, SDCMSF has assisted over 2,400 patients to access specialty healthcare services. Healthcare partners, including over 625 specialty medical physicians, 25 hospitals and surgery centers, and numerous imaging, laboratory and ancillary providers, have provided patients with more than \$8 million in donated healthcare services. For more information about SDCMSF please visit <http://www.sdcmf.org>.

**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, our mission is 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 9 million members in nine states and the District of Columbia. 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 began serving San Diego in 1967, and currently provides care for more than 515,000 members throughout the county. Over 7,700 staff and more than 1,100 physicians care for our members at 24 medical facilities; Kaiser Permanente's San Diego Medical Center, which has 414 licensed beds and a 78 bed Emergency Department; and Palomar Medical Center, our plan hospital in North County. To learn more, visit [kp.org/sandiego](http://kp.org/sandiego).

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