

DENVER, Sept. 26, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- As community colleges across Colorado grapple with significant enrollment growth, rising tuition costs and declining state funding, the Colorado Community College System has announced a \$1.5 million investment from Kaiser Permanente to its *Campaign for Colorado Community Colleges*. These funds will be awarded as scholarships to students enrolled in health science programs at 13 Colorado community colleges over the next three years. The Colorado Community College System is the largest and most diverse provider of higher education in Colorado, serving 163,000 students on 35 campuses.

Kaiser Permanente's investment is the largest gift received by the *Campaign for Colorado Community Colleges* to-date. This three-year, \$10 million scholarship campaign will double the number of scholarships awarded to students attending schools in the Colorado Community College System. Structured as a challenge gift, Kaiser Permanente's investment will be matched dollar for dollar by donors located in the communities served by the community colleges. In total, \$2.5 million has been donated to the *Campaign for Colorado Community Colleges* in its first year. "We are tremendously grateful for Kaiser Permanente's vision in supporting the *Campaign for Colorado Community Colleges*," said Dr. Nancy McCallin

Colorado Community College System Receives \$1.5 Million Investment From Kaiser Permanente

Written by Australian Business

, president of the Colorado Community College System. "The need has never been greater. Community colleges have not been immune from the pressure of rising tuition costs. Our students in particular require scholarships to enroll and continue in their studies, as two-thirds of them work full-time while attending college."

Almost 50 percent of the 163,000 students attending Colorado community colleges are studying health science. Kaiser Permanente's investment will specifically support students earning physician assistant, dental hygienist, paramedic, addiction counseling and health information technology degrees. Scholarships will be awarded statewide, with a specific focus on reaching students studying or living in communities where there is a shortage of medical professionals.

"The Colorado Community College System is a key player in workforce development," said Donna Lynne, DrPH, president of Kaiser Permanente Colorado. "More than 90 percent of students earning associates degrees at Colorado community colleges remain in the state after graduation. These are educated, skilled workers our business community needs. Kaiser Permanente is thrilled to partner with the Colorado Community College System to ensure more students are able to enter the health care workforce and make a difference in the communities where they live and work."

According to a 2012 study from Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc., Colorado community colleges contribute more than \$3 billion to the state's economy each year. In 2013, 7,332 associates degrees were awarded at the 13 schools in the Colorado Community College System, marking a 66 percent increase over the past 10 years. As tuition at four-year educational institutions continues to rise, community colleges serve as important educational options for students looking to succeed in a competitive workforce. Colorado's community colleges train more than half the state's nurses and 90 percent of its first responders. More than 5.6 million new health care jobs will be located in the U.S. by 2016.

"At Arapahoe Community College, we are training students to have the basic and advanced skills needed to be successful in a 21st century global economy," said Diana Doyle, president of

Arapahoe Community College

. "Studies have shown that

Colorado

community college graduates earn more than

\$502,000

over the course of a working lifetime than someone with a high school diploma. This illuminates the value of a community college education, particularly for the health care industry as educated workers are needed now more than ever."

Kaiser Permanente, the state's largest nonprofit health plan, is committed to strengthening Colorado's

higher education systems through a variety of efforts. The health plan issued a

\$2.4 million

grant in 2009 to establish the Interdisciplinary Rural Training and Service Program (IRTS) at the

University of Colorado Denver

, which trains medical professionals interested in rural health practices. In 2010, Kaiser

Permanente announced a

\$1 million

grant to provide more than 100 scholarships to students pursuing degrees in nursing or allied health at the

University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

,
Pikes Peak Community College

,
Colorado State University Pueblo

and

Pueblo Community College

who commit to working two years in a designated safety net clinic post-graduation.

In addition to Kaiser Permanente, contributors to the *Campaign for Colorado Community Colleges*

include The Anschutz Foundation, the Courtenay C. and Lucy Patten Davis Foundation, the Helen K. and Arthur E. Johnson Foundation and hundreds of donors statewide. Scholarships funded through Kaiser Permanente's investment will be awarded to students attending the 13 colleges within the Colorado Community College System. These schools include:

- Arapahoe Community College
- Colorado Northwestern Community College
- Community College of Aurora
- Community College of Denver

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- Front Range Community College
- Lamar Community College
- Morgan Community College
- Northeastern Junior College
- Otero Junior College
- Pikes Peak Community College
- Pueblo Community College
- Red Rocks Community College
- Trinidad State Junior College

To learn more about the *Campaign for Colorado Community Colleges*, please visit cccs.edu or call

[720.858.2802](tel:720.858.2802)

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About Kaiser Permanente Colorado Kaiser Permanente Colorado is the state's largest nonprofit health plan, proudly working to improve the lives and health of Colorado

residents for more than 40 years. Kaiser Permanente Colorado provides comprehensive health care services to more than 540,000 members through 26 medical offices and a network of affiliated hospitals and physicians. The health plan was named "

[Highest in Member Satisfaction](#)

" among Commercial Health Plans by J.D. Power and Associates for the sixth straight year. Kaiser Permanente was recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) as the

[top-ranked commercial health plan in Colorado and the top four Medicare plan in the nation,.](#)

Kaiser Permanente was also recently recognized as a

[2012 Hypertension Champion](#)

by Million Hearts™. In 2012, Kaiser Permanente proudly directed more than \$92 million

to community benefit programs to improve the health of all Coloradans. For more Kaiser Permanente news, visit

kp.org/newscenter

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About the Colorado Community College System:

With 163,000 students enrolled at 13 colleges, the Colorado Community College System is the largest and most diverse provider of higher education in the state. The community college movement in

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Colorado

began in 1925 when

Trinidad State Junior College

opened to local young people so they would have the option of beginning their college careers close to home. In 1967, the state legislature created the

Colorado Community College System

, and the emphasis of the 13 colleges in the System now includes both workforce development and university preparation. The colleges are required by the legislature to accomplish six objectives: 1. provide open access for all who are college-ready; 2. provide career and technical training; 3. create transfer opportunities; 4. provide workforce development; 5. provide concurrent enrollment for high school students, and 6. provide remedial education. Visit

coloradocommunitycolleges.com/go

to learn more.

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