

richard isaacs md kaiser

Company wants employees to serve as [role models in community](#)

Carman stopped exercising after leaving the military in 1991, and the pounds began piling on. But after his father died at age 54, and at the urging of his daughter, a nursing student, Carman decided in 2012 to start making a change.

He credits Kaiser's Live Well, Be Well program for his improved fitness. Carman dropped 40 pounds since starting the program and trimmed 6 inches from his waist. And in September, he was able to stop taking the blood pressure [medication](#) he'd been on for 10 years.

Carman ran in the December marathon as part of a four-member relay team with his daughter and friends. His goal is to run half the marathon this year, and the entire course in 2015. He's also working on losing another 20 pounds.

The constant encouragement Carman receives through Kaiser has helped him overcome his biggest obstacle: sticking with his exercise program consistently. "I'm just very grateful for everything my employer does," Carman said.

While many employers encourage a healthy workforce, Kaiser, which employs 66,000 in its Northern California region, including 12,000 in the Sacramento area, has an additional motivation as a health-care provider.

"We want all of our staff and physicians to be role models for our community," said [Dr. Richard Isaacs](#), physician-in-chief of Kaiser Permanente South Sacramento Medical Center.

Kaiser's program offers more than 250 wellness options that focus on six categories: physical activity, healthy eating, emotional health, prevention, healthy workplace and healthy community.

Issacs, a head and neck surgeon, said the program has caused a cultural transformation at the company, reducing absenteeism and making employees happier and more engaged.

"I'm watching our employees actually transform their lives," Isaacs said. "They look different. They just exude [health](#)."

Employees encourage colleagues to get involved, take lunch-time walks or train for competitions. There are free exercise classes, with yoga, Zumba and boot camp among the popular options.

Employees can track their health improvements online and enroll in a wellness university, where they earn credits and even graduate.

To encourage healthy eating, there are on-site farmers markets and employee gardens at Kaiser's South Sacramento Medical Center, as well as at offices in Davis and Rancho Cordova.

There, workers grow vegetables and chefs demonstrate healthy cooking techniques.

The program's emotional health component encourages employees to pursue creative outlets. Toward that end, the South Sacramento Medical Center held its third annual art show March 28, where physicians and employees displayed paintings, photographs, sculptures, quilts, beadwork and floral arrangements.