

Kaiser Permanente

### **Specialty Care Referral Update - Effective 1/7/25**

To help members get the right care as quickly, conveniently, and affordably as possible, we are changing how some specialty care is accessed.

As of January 7, 2025, a referral is needed to be seen in the Kaiser Permanente Allergy, Dermatology, and Urology departments. For most other specialists, a referral is not needed. Members will need to work with their PCP (or other primary care provider) to determine if a referral is needed to one of these specialties. Many health conditions can be effectively treated in primary care.

#### **Why is this change happening?**

This change in specialty care scheduling will help reduce inappropriate specialty care demand, improving access for those who need specialized care.

Variability in Kaiser Permanente Colorado's Specialty Care access has been driven by resourcing constraints and increasing patient demand.

- Some members are being seen by specialists when they could be treated by primary care providers more efficiently and cost effectively.
- In some cases, specialties require initial work-up/testing.
- When members self-refer, they may bypass requested recommendations which creates follow-up appointment inefficiencies.

#### **Exceptions:**

- This change does not apply to members who are already existing patients in Allergy, Dermatology, and Urology. There will be no interruptions in care if you are already working with a Kaiser Permanente specialist.
- Members on a PPO, POS, or Choice PPO plan do not need a referral to access specialty care when using the participating provider tiers.