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**MEDIA CONTACT: Jerry Thomas**  
[Jthomas430@gmail.com](mailto:Jthomas430@gmail.com)  
**312-285-5166**

## **Kaiser Permanente Leads the Way in Diversity Hiring During Struggling Economy**

**CHICAGO, IL (Oct. 14, 2010)** – At a time when the nation is struggling with a high unemployment rate, which has largely affected people of color, some companies have figured out a way to diversify their ranks.

One such company is Kaiser Permanente of Oakland, Calif. George Halvorson, chairman and chief executive officer, was on hand in Chicago in September to receive an award from *Diversity MBA Magazine* for the second consecutive year for being the No. 1 company in the nation for diversity leadership.

The good news about diversity in the workplace comes even as the unemployment rate for people of color is at an all time high, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Black unemployment reached 16.1 percent this month, nearly twice the national average, while Hispanic joblessness

stands at 12.1 percent.

“Our values and our performance are based on and grounded in our diversity,” said Halvorson, the keynote speaker at the magazine’s 4<sup>th</sup> Diversity Leadership Awards Gala at the Westin Chicago River North.

“Most organizations are very diverse at the ground level and fall off as you go up the organizational ladder,” Halvorson said. “We are very different than that. Our board of directors, which is our most senior level, is probably the most diverse of any \$40 billion company in the world. It is made up of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Chinese Americans and many other minority groups.”

Fifty-seven percent of Kaiser Permanente’s 160,000 employees are comprised of minorities. And its corporate board is just 40 percent white male. The company, founded in 1945, is dedicated to providing high-quality, affordable health care services to its clients and to improving the health of its members. The company has 8.6 million members in nine states and the District of Columbia with expert and medical teams supported by industry-leading technology for health promotion, disease prevention, state-of-the-art care delivery and world-class chronic disease management.

The award was part of the magazine’s *50 Out Front Company Awards for Diversity Leadership*. The theme of the event, which drew over 100 attendees, was “Powering Your Presence—Leading Through The Fog.” Motivational lecturer, Les Brown was among the list of speakers. He explored strategies on how to increase the power of communication skills, which is an indispensable part of leadership. The event featured a host of plenary sessions, including a symposium on corporate board diversity.

The event also recognized the *Top 100 under 50*. The magazine doled out awards to the top 100 leaders of the year, including Phyllis Harris, vice president of environment, health and safety compliance at Wal-Mart, and Francisca Brown, of multicultural marketing at American Family Insurance.

Devin Oten, president of *Diversity MBA Magazine*, highlighted the selection process for the winners during a brief speech at the ceremony. “With the help of the list of ‘the best places to work,’ we expanded our reach to be inclusive of all people of color and women.

“We are not interested in comparing what we do to any other list,” he continued. “Our sole purpose is to help you understand what makes our list so valuable. We looked at six categories: representation, board diversity, succession planning, accountability, retention and recruitment. We believe not much will happen if organizations are not recruiting people of color and women into their management programs. Those companies that have made progress definitely have been doing this for a long time.”

Pam McElvane, publisher and CEO of *Diversity MBA Magazine*, said both lists were culled from Fortune 500 Companies that focus on developing talent, women and people of color into the management ranks.

“There was a discussion at an executive roundtable where retention was discussed,” McElvane said. “In the environment today, retention is just not that important, depending on the industry you’re in. We’re concerned.”

*Diversity MBA Magazine* is the leading source of information in diversity in corporate America. The magazine aims to serve the needs of multicultural professionals in corporate

America, business students and entrepreneurs. The magazine also provides research reports on diversity benchmarks for talent retention, industry diversity programs, and performance in the diversity arena through its partnership with DePaul University. The magazine is distributed at newsstands, top business schools, professional and business associations domestically, and 30 countries worldwide through QS Top MBA World Tour.

Published quarterly, *Diversity MBA Magazine* reaches more than 200,000 subscribers. For more information, please visit [www.diversitymbamagazine.com](http://www.diversitymbamagazine.com). For more information about Kaiser Permanente, visit [www.kaiserpermanente.org](http://www.kaiserpermanente.org). To arrange an interview with one of the key speakers, please call or email the contact on the page.