Kaiser Permanente ambient AI scribes

IMPLEMENTED 2023 ONWARDS · HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCES · US · BAND C · CLAIMED ONLY

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Kaiser Permanente made an ambient AI scribe from Abridge available across its 40 hospitals and more than 600 medical offices. Its Northern California medical group reported 2.5 million uses and about 16,000 hours of documentation time saved in the first year; some of its therapists have raised concerns about consent, privacy and caseloads.

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NOTICE WORDING LAST UPDATED 16 NOVEMBER 2026

AT A GLANCE

AI used: Generative AI ambient scribe that transcribes visits and drafts clinical notes (Abridge).

Implemented: 2023 onwards. Grade: band C, Process change, Claimed only.

Headline result, as reported: 7,260 physicians used the AI scribe in 2,576,627 patient encounters in its first year, saving an estimated 15,791 hours of documentation, by The Permanente Medical Group's account

1 · The case

The facts, as reported by the 6 sources listed at the end. Where a source is silent, the field says "Not reported".

Organisation

Kaiser Permanente (The Permanente Medical Group). Integrated not-for-profit health care provider and health plan serving 12.5 million members in eight US states and the District of Columbia. The Permanente Medical Group (TPMG) is its Northern California physician group; 7,260 of its physicians used the AI scribe in the first year. Canvas block: 4. Operations and process. Also 5. People and skills, 6. Data and technology.

Business challenge

The challenge. Documentation burden: time spent on notes, including outside working hours, and attention on the keyboard rather than the patient. Kaiser Permanente offered the scribe to reduce note-taking and let doctors focus on patients.

How it was addressed. The tool records the visit with the patient's consent, produces a transcript and drafts a note, which the clinician reviews and edits before it enters the record. TPMG ran a 10-week pilot and then a rollout, switching vendor between the two. In August 2024 Kaiser Permanente made the Abridge tool available to clinicians at its 40 hospitals and more than 600 medical offices. A quality assurance team gathered ratings, surveys and clinician comments during the national pilot. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6]

Who implemented it

Abridge (Software vendor): Supplies the ambient documentation tool used across Kaiser Permanente from 2024.
In-house (In-house): Kaiser Permanente and The Permanente Medical Group: ran the pilots, quality assurance and evaluation.
TPMG's 2023 pilot used a different vendor's product; that vendor is not named in sources opened.

Technology (SEAM pillar E)

SEAM types: T2 Embedded AI in existing software. Deployment: Not reported. Vendors and products: Abridge, Abridge ambient clinical documentation.

Where it was built in: Records the consultation with consent and produces a transcript and draft note that the clinician edits before it is added to the patient record.

What changed

Before: physicians typed notes during and after visits. After: the AI drafts the note and the physician edits it. TPMG reports less time in notes and less work outside 7am to 7pm for users compared with non-users, with the largest savings among the heaviest users, and a small increase in time spent in the record's in-basket. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6]

What it cost

Not reported

What it saved

About 15,791 hours of documentation time over one year, equal to 1,794 eight-hour workdays, compared with non-users (AMA, citing the NEJM Catalyst study); nearly 16,000 hours by Kaiser Permanente's account. No money figure reported. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6]

Governance and control

Patient consent is required and clinicians review notes before they enter the record, by Kaiser Permanente's account. A quality assurance team of physicians, informaticists, safety officers and quality risk leaders reviewed feedback during the national pilot. Kaiser says Abridge does not use its patient data to train models. Some therapists describe the consent process as coercive and fear higher caseloads, per CalMatters and Proof News.

S2 · Accountable owner · Claimed
A quality assurance team of physicians, administrators, informaticists, safety officers, quality risk leaders and evaluators oversaw the national pilot, by Kaiser Permanente's account. [4]

A1 · Safe use · Claimed
Patient consent is required before recording, and use is voluntary for clinicians, by Kaiser Permanente's account; a union steward told CalMatters the consent approach can feel coercive. [3] [4] [6]

A2 · Human in the loop · Claimed
Clinicians review and edit each AI-drafted note before it enters the record. [1] [3]

A3 · Monitoring and assurance · Claimed
Clinicians rated notes and answered structured surveys; two quality team members read more than 3,600 comments; a 35-transcript sample was scored for accuracy. [1] [4]

A4 · Vendor AI · Claimed
Kaiser says Abridge does not use its patient data to train models; retention periods were not disclosed to Proof News. [5]

A5 · Agent controls · Not reported
No agents described.

A6 · Standards and regulation · Not reported
Not reported.

What worked, what did not, what is unproven

WORKED

– High and sustained use: 2.5 million encounters in the first year, continuing through a change of vendor.

– Less documentation time and less after-hours work among users, by TPMG's account.

– Most surveyed physicians and patients reported better interaction during visits.

DID NOT

– Some physicians found editing AI notes slower than typing, or the tool poorly integrated with their note templates, per the AMA's summary.

– A small increase in time spent on the record's in-basket.

– Kaiser therapists raised concerns about consent, data retention and caseloads, and mental health workers and nurses staged a one-day strike in March over the health system's use of AI, per Proof News.

UNPROVEN

– Accuracy at scale: the published accuracy check covered a sample of 35 transcripts in the pilot.

– Effect on costs, patient outcomes or capacity.

– Whether time saved is used for patients or turned into higher caseloads, a concern raised by therapists.

Timeline

Oct 2023 The Permanente Medical Group begins the AI scribe pilot and evaluation period [1]

Aug 2024 Kaiser Permanente makes the Abridge tool available at 40 hospitals and more than 600 medical offices [3]

Mar 2025 Kaiser Permanente reports its quality assurance approach to the rollout [4]

Apr 2025 One-year results reported: 2.5 million uses and nearly 16,000 hours saved [1]

Jun 2026 Kaiser therapists raise concerns about consent, privacy and caseloads, per Proof News and CalMatters [5]

2 · Grade and SEAM assessment

MarLuc's opinion, made on the evidence above. How cases are graded: marluc.co.uk/case-studies/how-we-rate

Level of change and impact

Claimed: Not applicable. Grade: C, Process change. Proof: Claimed only. Level of change: Process change.

Process change (Level 2, band C). Clinical documentation was redesigned around an AI draft with clinician review, across a very large physician group.

The SEAM view and lessons learnt

The tool fitted the existing workflow, and use continued through a change of vendor, by TPMG's account. The friction now sits with people: how consent is asked and how saved time is used. For larger organisations, agree with staff how the time saved will be used before claiming the benefit.

1. Keep a clinician review step before any AI draft enters the record.
2. Agree with staff and unions how saved time will be used.
3. Check accuracy on a large, ongoing sample, not only in the pilot.

Evidence

Score 2 of 4. Self-reported: the organisation's own researchers' evaluation published in NEJM Catalyst (not opened; the journal site refused access) and relayed by Kaiser Permanente and the AMA; critical reporting from Proof News and CalMatters.

Evaluation method. Before and after comparison of users and non-users using record-system activity data, plus physician and patient surveys; the organisation's own evaluation.

Sources disagree. The AMA gives 15,791 hours saved; Kaiser Permanente's Division of Research says nearly 16,000. The Division of Research reports 88% of physicians saw a positive impact on visit interactions; the AMA reports 84% for communication, a different survey item.

Status. Ongoing: available across Kaiser Permanente; therapists in Northern California are seeking limits on AI use through bargaining, per Proof News (June 2026).

3 · Original sources

Read these in full. To challenge a fact or a grade, use the contact form at marluc.co.uk or the link on https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/kaiser-permanente-ambient-ai-scribes

[1] Kaiser Permanente Division of Research: AI-assisted notetaking gains steady support from Kaiser Permanente physicians (April 2025)
https://divisionofresearch.kaiserpermanente.org/ai-assisted-notetaking-gains-steady-support-from-kaiser-permanente-physicians/

[2] American Medical Association: AI scribes save 15,000 hours and restore the human side of medicine (June 2025)
https://ama-assn.org/practice-management/digital-health/ai-scribes-save-15000-hours-and-restore-human-side-medicine

[3] Kaiser Permanente: Kaiser Permanente improves member experience with AI-enabled clinical technology (August 2024)
https://about.kaiserpermanente.org/news/press-release-archive/kaiser-permanente-improves-member-experience-with-ai-enabled-clinical-technology

[4] Permanente Medicine: Quality assurance informs large-scale use of ambient AI clinical documentation (March 2025)
https://permanente.org/quality-assurance-informs-large-scale-use-of-ambient-ai-clinical-documentation/

[5] Proof News: Why AI scribes, widely embraced by doctors, spook therapists (June 2026)
https://www.proofnews.org/why-ai-scribes-spook-therapists/

[6] CalMatters: Kaiser mental health staff raise concerns about AI recording tool (June 2026)
https://calmatters.org/health/mental-health/2026/06/kaiser-mental-health-artificial-intelligence/

Kaiser Permanente (The Permanente Medical Group) website: https://about.kaiserpermanente.org

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