

HMO fined \$3 million by state regulators

by UPI

LOS ANGELES -- California's largest HMO received a record \$3 million fine from state regulators for its handling of patient complaints. It is the second time in a year that Kaiser Permanente has been fined for breakdowns in oversight, the Los Angeles Times said Thursday. The California Department of Managed Health Care said it would forgive \$1 million of the fine if Kaiser fixes its oversight problems. Kaiser, which is both a health plan and a hospital system, works exclusively with an affiliated group of physicians called the Permanente Medical Group. The newspaper said inspectors examined 246 files involving complaints, quality-of-care concerns and other issues at four hospitals in Kaiser's Northern California region and four in its Southern California region. State regulators did not examine whether individual patients had been harmed, only on how well Kaiser monitored the quality of patient care, the newspaper said.

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