

Progress Notes

SUMMER 2021 • VOLUME 16 • ISSUE 3

Nearly \$2 Million Awarded to Increase COVID-19 Vaccine Equity

L.A. Care Health Plan has awarded \$1,950,000 in grants to increase the number of COVID-19 vaccinations in communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and with the **lowest vaccination rates**. Through the Robert E. Tranquada Safety Net Initiative XII (Tranquada XII), 26 community-based safety net clinics across Los Angeles County will each receive \$75,000 grants to conduct vaccination projects with an expectation that together they can get more than 190,000 doses into arms. The clinics will be operating at more than 70 sites in low-income communities of color.



“With the number of people getting vaccinated now on the decline, it is more important than ever to get the vaccines into the communities where our members live and where these clinics are,” said John Baackes, L.A. Care CEO. *“This funding will support hiring and training of staff needed to ensure we can get as many people vaccinated as possible.”*

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**ELEVATING
HEALTHCARE**
IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SINCE 1997

L.A. Care and Blue Shield Promise Offer Free COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics

L.A. Care Health Plan and Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan, in partnership with USC Pharmacy, recently offered 16 free COVID-19 vaccine clinics in high-need areas near their Community Resource Centers. The drive-thru and walk-up vaccine clinics, which ran from April 7 through May 1 by appointment only, were open to L.A. Care and Blue Shield Promise members, and to the public. The vaccine clinics were held outdoors and followed safety guidelines recommended by public health officials.

The resource centers – located in hard-hit communities such as East Los Angeles, Pacoima, Lynwood and the Antelope Valley, where many of the health plans’ members live – collaborated with local churches, community colleges and community-based organizations to assist in administering up to 1,000 vaccines per clinic.

“Every day we are making more progress to end the pandemic – and the light at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter,” said John Baackes, CEO of L.A. Care Health Plan. *“But we are not quite there yet. We cannot let our guard down, and we must get shots in the arms of those who have been most impacted by this pandemic.”*

The vaccine clinics are among several free events hosted by the Community Resource Centers in 2021. While the resource centers were closed for most of the winter due to a COVID-19 surge, they reopened in May – by appointment only – to once again provide much-needed services to members and the entire community.



To learn more about the Community Resource Centers, visit [activehealthyinformed.org](https://www.activehealthyinformed.org).



COVID-19 “Live Long & Prosper” Campaign Underway



L.A. Care recently teamed up with the Leonard Nimoy family – the actor who played Mr. Spock on the original Star Trek – to promote efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The Nimoy family partnered with L.A. Care as Nimoy was an advocate of respiratory health, and after seeing the company’s COVID-19-related efforts. Nimoy died of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in 2015 at the age of 83.

Nimoy’s image and Mr. Spock’s famous parting phrase, “Live Long & Prosper,” is on one of the billboards being used to promote mask-wearing and getting the COVID-19 vaccination.



L.A. Care will use the Live Long & Prosper message in a social media campaign at least until the end of the year.



Vital Signs

New Report on Blood Lead Screening

Recently the Department of Healthcare Services released **All Plan Letter 20-016**, Blood Lead Screening of Young Children, which requires blood lead screening testing and monitoring of children in Medi-Cal.

Lead exposure can cause damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems, and hearing and speech problems. Prevention and screening are critical to protecting children's health.

L.A. Care aims to support our providers in identifying which members need a blood lead screening and has recently created a report of children who are missing a blood lead test. Participating Provider Groups (PPGs) can now retrieve these reports monthly from L.A. Care's Provider Portal. To access the blood lead data reports, and/or create a login, go to lacare.org/providers/provider-central/la-care-provider-central.

Thank you for providing high quality care to our young members enrolled in Medi-Cal.

Important Lead Screening Reminders

- The lead CPT procedure code is 83655
- A lead screening incentive payment is available through the **DHCS Value Based Program**
- L.A. Care has free member educational materials available for providers to order via our health education portal.



Nurse Advice Line

L.A. Care offers its members a **Nurse Advice Line** (NAL) service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A team of registered nurses is available to answer any health-related questions. L.A. Care members can access this service by phone or chat live with a nurse using their L.A. Care *Connect* online member account.

As a complement to your service, please encourage your patients to call the NAL for free health advice. If your patient is an L.A. Care member or a Medi-Cal member with one of our Plan Partners, they can call the NAL at the numbers listed below:



Anthem Blue Cross

1.800.224.0336 TTY **1.800.368.4424**

Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan

1.800.609.4166 TTY **1.800.735.2929**

Kaiser Permanente

1.888.576.6225

L.A. Care Health Plan

1.800.249.3619 TTY **711**

The NAL phone number is also located on the back of the patient's health plan member ID card. Additionally, the NAL phone numbers can be found on the L.A. Care websites: **lacare.org**, **lacarecovered.org**, and **calmediconnectla.org**.



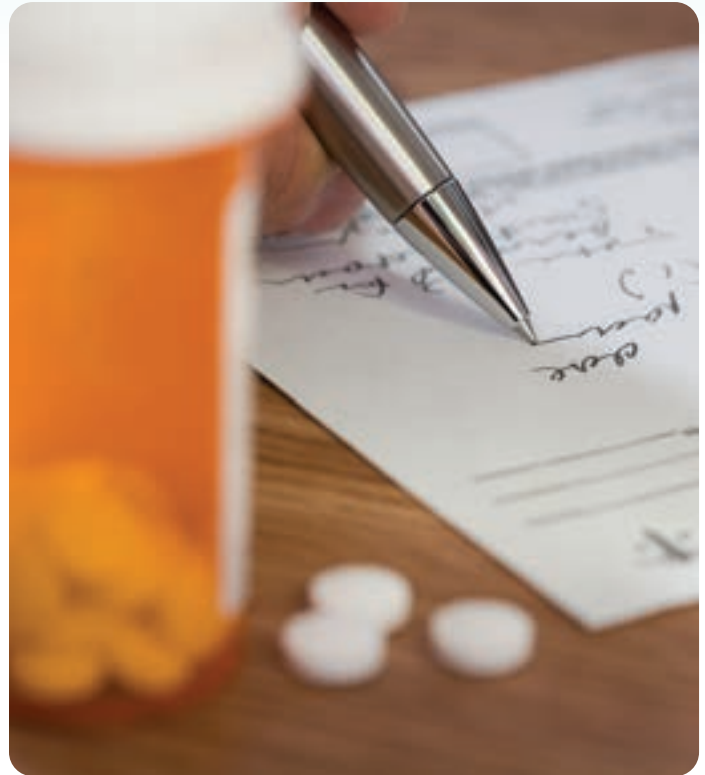
Vital Signs

Medication Adherence Can Save Lives

Among adult patients with chronic illnesses, up to 50% of their medications are not being taken as prescribed by their doctors.¹ Poor medication adherence can lead to increased morbidity and mortality, which accounts for 125,000 deaths and 10% of all hospitalizations annually in the U.S.² Additionally, medication non-adherence contributes significantly to our health care system expenditures. It is estimated that \$100 billion is spent on health care costs directly related to medication non-adherence.³

Providers are in a crucial and pivotal role to change the status quo. Studies have shown that patient education, medication regimen management, clinical pharmacist consultation, cognitive behavior therapies, medication-taking reminders, and incentives to promote adherence can significantly improve a patient's medication adherence, as well as clinical significance to a patient's disease state.⁴ Furthermore, CMS is actively monitoring the adherence of Medicare members taking renin-angiotensin system antagonist (RASA), statins, and non-insulin diabetes medications.

Not only will medication adherence benefit our members, but also the incentives will be passed on to our providers. For our high-performing providers, you may be able to receive financial incentives from our Value Initiative for IPA Performance and Pay-for-Performance (VIIP + P4P). If you have questions about L.A. Care's incentive program, please call our provider line at **1.866.522.2736 (1.866.LACARE6)**.



If you would like to know which of your Cal MediConnect patients are non-adherent based on pharmacy claims data, you can receive a quarterly alert known as the Prescriber Scorecard in the mail that shows a list of members who may benefit from intervention. Together, we can save lives by providing the best possible care for our members and by promoting medication adherence.

¹ Naderi SH, Bestwick JP, Wald DS. Adherence to drugs that prevent cardiovascular disease: meta-analysis on 376,162 patients. *The American Journal of Medicine*. 2012;125(9):882-887.e1.

² McGuire M, Iuga. Adherence and health care costs. *RMHP*. Published online February 2014:35.

³ Senst BL, Achusim LE, Genest RP, et al. Practical approach to determining costs and frequency of adverse drug events in a health care network. *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*. 2001;58(12):1126-1132.

⁴ Kini V, Ho PM. Interventions to improve medication adherence: a review. *JAMA*. 2018;320(23):2461.

No-Cost Doula Services for Your Pregnant Patients

Your perinatal patients might be eligible for no-cost doula services, which provide physical and emotional support before, during, and after birth. Women who enroll are more likely to have a good birth experience and better birth outcomes. As you assess your patient's clinical needs, please consider referring eligible members to the L.A. County AAIMM Doula Program.

Eligibility

- Black and African-American pregnant women
- Must live in South Los Angeles, the South Bay, Antelope Valley or San Fernando Valley
- Clients are welcome at any stage of pregnancy

Referrals

Email program staff at MSanders@ph.lacounty.gov or AWWhite@ph.lacounty.gov or call **1.213.639.6448**. Please include client name, phone number, zip code, and estimated due date.



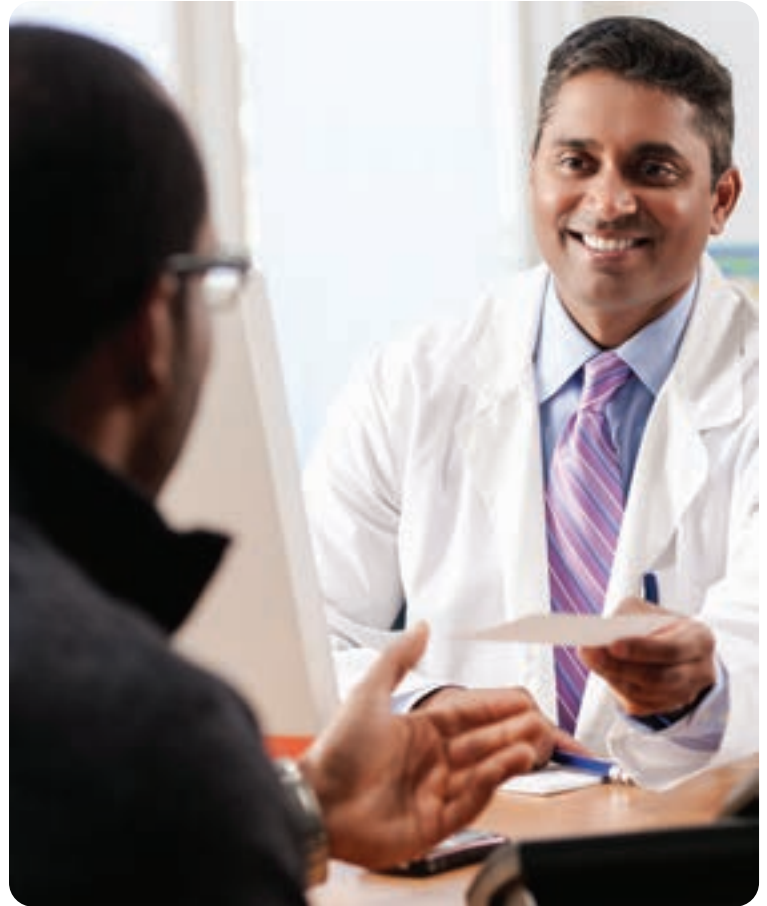
Getting to Know Your Members: IHA and SHA

The past year has been focused on the COVID-19 pandemic and often resulted in patients' postponement of preventive care. Summer is a great time to make sure you have completed the Initial Health Assessment (IHA) with your patients. The IHA must be completed even for patients who enrolled during the public health emergency.

The first visit is an important service providers can offer members and serves as a foundation to help you ensure your patients are up to date on their care.

A comprehensive IHA must be completed within 120 days of enrollment for new members and requires the completion of:

- a full health history
- needed preventive services
- a physical and mental health status exam
- diagnoses and plan of care
- AND an individual health education behavioral assessment (IHEBA); the Staying Healthy Assessment (SHA) is the IHEBA recommended by DHCS



L.A. Care requests providers check the Provider Portal for a monthly list of assigned members due for an IHA. Providers should document member outreach attempts and any member refusal to complete either an IHA or the SHA.

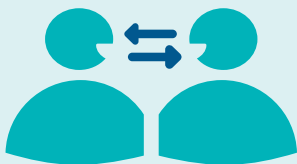
lacare.org/providers/provider-central/la-care-provider-central



Assistance with Communication

Are you having a hard time communicating with members or your patients? L.A. Care offers in-person interpreter services. When you have a member scheduled to come in, please remember that “Free Interpreter Services,” are available; for medical/ EPSDT and/or behavioral appointments/ABA.

To access interpreter services, please have the member call L.A. Care’s Customer Solution Center (CSC) Member Services at **1.888.839.9909**. A representative will take down the information of their next scheduled appointment (time, date, physician, location and duration of appointment).



If a member needs interpreter services for mental health through **Beacon Health Options**, please have them call Beacon directly for assistance at **1.877.344.2858**.

Nearly \$2 Million Awarded to Increase COVID-19 Vaccine Equity

Continued from cover

The funding will also support the acquisition of equipment to set up temporary physical vaccination hubs, including mobile vaccination units.

“L.A. Care is determined to address barriers to vaccinations,” said Richard Seidman, MD, MPH, L.A. Care Chief Medical Officer. *“These grants will help organizations tackle the decline in vaccinations by addressing factors like hesitancy, limited mobility, inflexible work schedules, homelessness, and more.”*



The Tranquada Initiative awardees are:

- AltaMed Health Services
- Arroyo Vista Family Health Center
- Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation
- Central Neighborhood Health Foundation
- ChapCare
- Clinica Monseñor Oscar A. Romero
- Comprehensive Community Health Centers
- Herald Christian Health Center
- JWCH Institute, Inc.
- Kheir Clinic
- Los Angeles Christian Health Centers
- L.A. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Center
- Martin Luther King Community Healthcare
- Northeast Community Clinics
- Northeast Valley Health Corporation
- Queens Care Health Centers
- South Central Family Health Center
- Southern California Medical Center
- St. John's Well Child and Family Center
- Tarzana Treatment Centers, Inc.
- The Children's Clinic
- UMMA Community Clinic
- Venice Family Clinic
- Via Care Community Health Center
- White Memorial Community Health Center
- Wilmington Community Clinic

Since its inception in 1997, L.A. Care has reinvested funds to support low-income, vulnerable residents in L.A. County and the community organizations and safety net providers who serve these residents. This award, which was created in 2005 to help safety net providers improve their core infrastructure capabilities and to support projects that have a long-term and systemic impact, is named after Dr. Robert E. Tranquada. A founding board member of L.A. Care, Dr. Tranquada has dedicated his life to public health. He served as the Medical Director of L.A. County +USC Medical Center and was later the Dean of Medicine at USC.

L.A. Care supports all efforts that will help L.A. County move beyond the pandemic and improve health outcomes for our members and their communities.

Progress Notes is a publication of L.A. Care Health Plan for our Medi-Cal and Cal MediConnect provider networks.

If you have any questions or comments about topics in this issue, please write to us at editor@lacare.org or call us at **1.866.LA.CARE6 (1.866.522.2736)**.



IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

L.A. Care Compliance Helpline: 1.800.400.4889

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Provider Solution Center: 1.866.LA.CARE6, 1.866.522.2736

(Eligibility & Claims questions only)

Medical Management: 1.877.431.2273

fax **213.438.5777** for authorization requests

LTSS Department: 1.855.427.1223 for Long-Term Services and Supports

HCC Outreach Specialist, Betty Garcia: 213.694.1250 x4935

fax **213.438.4874** for Annual Wellness Exam (AWE) forms

Health Education: 1.855.856.6943 for forms and programs

Nurse Advice Line:

L.A. Care – **1.800.249.3619**

Kaiser – **1.888.576.6225**,

Care1st – **1.800.609.4166**

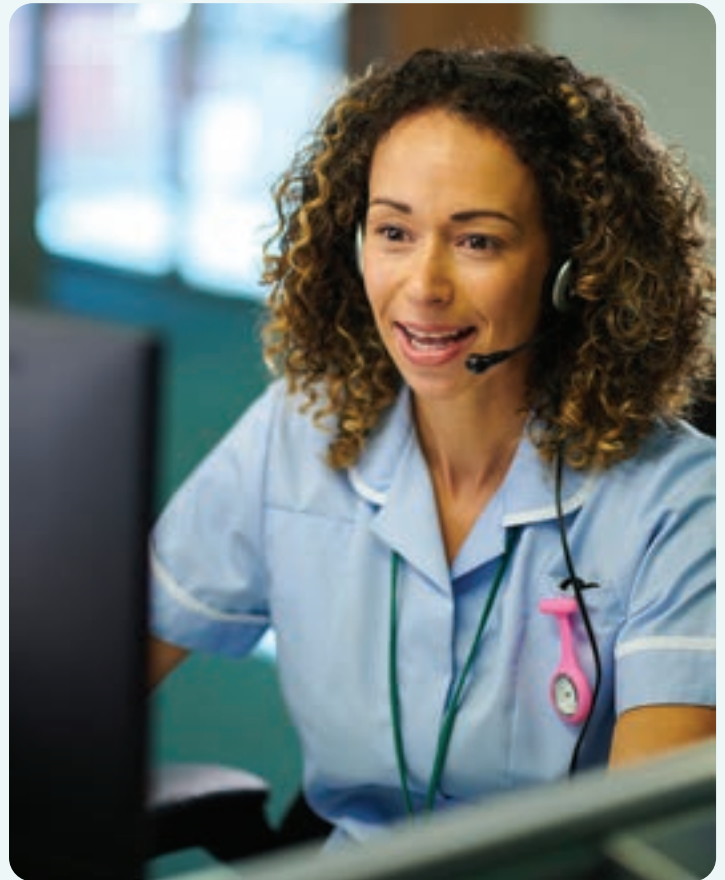
Anthem Blue Cross – **1.800.224.0336**

Beacon Health Options: 1.877.344.2858

(TTY **1.800.735.2929**) for behavioral health services

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

L.A. Care Covered™: 1.855.270.2327 (Providers: Option “2”)



L.A. Care
HEALTH PLAN®

L.A. Care Health Plan

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Progress Notes

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR PHYSICIAN PARTNERS

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News Alert



COVID-19 "Live Long & Prosper" Campaign Underway

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