

# Progress Notes

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## New Chief of Equity and Quality Medical Director Named

L.A. Care Health Plan is pleased to announce the promotion of James Kyle, MD, to the new position of Chief of Equity and Quality Medical Director. Dr. Kyle joined L.A. Care as Medical Director for Quality Improvement (QI) in April 2019, leading QI efforts in clinical quality, including health disparities, accreditation initiatives and member and provider surveys. Late last year, he was named the Medical Director for Quality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. In that role, Dr. Kyle led the health plan's enterprise-wide equity efforts outlined in L.A. Care's Statement of Principles on Social Justice and Systemic Racism. He will continue to lead these efforts in his new position and promote diversity, equity and inclusion practices that will be evidenced through L.A. Care structures, culture and leadership.



James Kyle, MD

In the summer of 2020, when the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 in Black and Latino communities was becoming devastatingly clear, Dr. Kyle organized two COVID-19 Disparities Leadership Summits. He gathered health care leaders from across Los Angeles County to strategize on how to address these disparities. He also led L.A. Care's participation in L.A. vs Hate's inaugural United Against Hate Week, and is leading the health plan in preparation for the county's second United Against Hate Week.

Dr. Kyle will continue to help lead the Quality Improvement Department as Chair of the Credentialing and Peer Review Committee and the Performance Improvement Collaborative and Physician Quality Committee. He implements strategy for the quality improvement functions within the health plan, in collaboration with the administrative and clinical leaders of the organization. In this position, Dr. Kyle works to help reduce health care inequities among the under-resourced communities that L.A. Care serves.

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## Population Needs Assessment



L.A. Care's 2021 Population Needs Assessment used demographic and utilization data, health appraisal data, and member input to assess health education, cultural and linguistic, and other health care needs. Key findings include:



- Most of L.A. Care's members are women and children.
- The largest racial groups are White/Caucasian (inclusive of Hispanics/Latinos) (77%), Blacks/African Americans (13%) and Asians (8%).
- The most frequently spoken languages are English (61.5%) and Spanish (30.9%).
- African Americans/Blacks have lower rates for many HEDIS measures than other racial groups including the Comprehensive Diabetes Care measures.
- The most common chronic conditions among adult members are: high cholesterol (19%), anxiety (16%), high blood pressure (15%), depression (13%), asthma (9%) and diabetes (9%).

Based on Health Appraisal data, 31% of members self-report consuming less than one daily serving of fruits and vegetables. As such, L.A. Care's Health Education unit will strategically promote the importance of fruits and vegetables to members and remind providers to discuss healthy eating during office and telehealth visits.

L.A. Care's Health **Education and Cultural & Linguistic Services Department** offers multiple services and resources to help providers meet their patients' needs and can be reached at **1.855.856.6943 (TTY 711)**.

## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Individuals who experience Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are at greater risk of 9 of the 10 leading causes of death in the United States, including: Heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes.

The Office of the California Surgeon General and Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) are working to reduce Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and treat the impacts of toxic stress through the “ACEs Aware Initiative.” When someone experiences ACEs without the necessary support, it can cause prolonged activation of the stress response system or toxic stress. Toxic stress can affect learning, behavior and health across the lifespan. Screening for ACEs allows providers to have supportive interventions in place and be more understanding and compassionate in treating patients that have experienced trauma.

Providing early screening for ACEs will help identify patients who need treatment and provide an opportunity to refer members to services. Medi-Cal providers can complete the ACEs training and receive \$29-reimbursement for each ACEs screening completed.



Service	Population	HCPCS Codes	Supplemental Payment
Adverse Childhood Experiences Trauma Screenings	Children & Adults ≤64 years old	G9919 or G9920	\$29



For more information on how to register and attest for the training please visit: <https://www.acesaware.org/screen/provider-training/>

# L.A. Care Collaborates with First 5 LA to Increase Child Development Screenings

Did you know that only 21% of children in California receive timely developmental screenings for language, movement, thinking, behavior, and emotions? This is especially concerning when you consider that screenings and early intervention lead to kindergarten-ready children which in turn lead to successful independent adults.

Therefore, L.A. Care has partnered with First 5 LA to help increase the number of developmental screenings and interventions in Los Angeles County. First 5 LA has awarded L.A. Care a grant of more than \$1.2 million, as part of Help Me Grow LA, for a four-year partnership that will help resource-strained clinics integrate developmental screenings and referral protocols into their workflows.

“Working closely with providers, members and the community through a wide variety of programs and projects will be a key factor in the success of this partnership,” said John Baackes, L.A. Care CEO. “Everyone needs to know how important early developmental screenings are – and the significant impact they have on a child’s life.”

Much of that education will happen through provider trainings, information on L.A. Care’s website and member newsletters, and at the network of Community Resources Centers that it jointly operates with Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan across Los Angeles County.

“Families have shared stories of how challenging it can be to navigate a system of referrals and to find the right services as early as possible to support their child’s development,” said Tara Ficek, Director of Health Systems at First 5 LA. “Through this partnership, we aim to address these family experiences by improving early identification and intervention standards across all health service sectors, especially in family-serving clinics.”

Help Me Grow LA is a collaboration between First 5 LA and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to improve connections between providers and families/caregivers. For more information about Help Me Grow LA, please visit [First5LA.org/Help-Me-Grow](https://First5LA.org/Help-Me-Grow).



# L.A. Care Health Plan Receives 2021 Multicultural Health Care Distinction



Once again, L.A. Care has received the 2021 Multicultural Health Care Distinction (MHC) from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). L.A. Care initially received the distinction in 2013 and has successfully earned the distinction every two years since.

For the MHC Distinction, NCQA evaluated L.A. Care's ability to collect Race/Ethnicity/Language (REL) data and to provide language assistance and culturally responsive services to members of our MediCal, Cal MediConnect and L.A. Care Covered™ product lines.

L.A. Care offers free language assistance services to members. Interpreting services are available in over 200 languages, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays. Members can also request written member materials in their preferred threshold language, or in their preferred format. Providers can direct members to these services through [lacare.org](https://www.lacare.org) or have members call **1.888.839.3309** (TTY 711).



Earning the MHC distinction means NCQA recognizes L.A. Care's continued commitment to actively striving to reduce health care disparities and to providing culturally and linguistically sensitive health care services to all of our members.



# Vital Signs



## Vaccinate Your Patients Against Flu

Providers are the most trusted source of vaccine information and advice. For that reason, please use every in-person visit as an opportunity to educate and vaccinate patients 6 months and older for the flu. This is also an opportunity to educate patients about the COVID-19 vaccine and provide the pneumococcal vaccine to patients 65 years and older. Providers can access documents covering topics such as “Strategies to Shorten Talks about Vaccines” and “Communication Skills for Talking about COVID Vaccines” through L.A. Care’s Provider Flu and COVID-19 Tools & Resources under L.A. Care’s Provider Tools and Toolkits webpage.

### A few things are different for the 2021-2022 influenza (flu) season, including:

- The composition of flu vaccines have been updated.
- All flu vaccines will be quadrivalent (four component) and is designed to protect against four different flu viruses.
- Flucelvac Quadrivalent is now approved for people 6 months and older.
- Flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time.

Source: Centers for Disease Control



## Access L.A. Care’s Clinical Practice and Preventive Health Guidelines

L.A. Care systematically reviews and adopts evidence-based Clinical Practice and Preventive Health Guidelines disseminated from peer-reviewed sources and from organizations like the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Guidelines for disease and health conditions identified as most salient to L.A. Care members for preventive, acute or chronic medical and behavioral health services are regularly reviewed by L.A. Care’s Joint “Performance Improvement Committee” and “Physician Quality Committee” to help improve the delivery of health care services. Review of the following guidelines will help you provide evidence-based care and stay informed on changes and updates.

### Clinical Practice Guideline

- Behavioral Health
- Cardiovascular
- Endocrine
- Infectious Diseases
- Pain Management
- Obstetrics and Perinatal Care
- Respiratory
- Musculoskeletal
- Obesity

### Preventive Health Guidelines

- U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) A and B Recommendations
- Recommendations for Preventive Pediatric Health Care, Bright Futures from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- Recommended Adult, Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule for ages 18 years or younger (CDC)
- L.A. Care Health Plan Health Education Tools  
Fluoride Varnish Application Video



The complete list of Clinical Practice and Preventive Health Guidelines adopted by L.A. Care are available at [lacare.org](https://www.lacare.org) in the *For Providers* section under *Tools and Toolkits* and *Clinical Practice Guidelines*. Additional resources are also available under *Provider Toolkits*, including recommendations during COVID-19. For hard copies, please email us at [quality@lacare.org](mailto:quality@lacare.org).

## Switching to 100-Day Supply Can Help With Medication Adherence



Effective January 1, 2022, L.A. Care Cal MediConnect members can get up to a 100-day supply at one time for many prescription drugs. This extended supply of medications can be filled at certain network retail pharmacies or delivered directly to a member's home via mail order pharmacy services. Switching your patient's prescription to a greater day supply has shown to increase medication adherence.

As you are likely aware, poor medication adherence can greatly increase morbidity and mortality, accounting for more than 125,000 deaths and 10% of all hospitalizations annually in the U.S. By helping our members to become more adherent, you can optimize patient health outcomes and the performance on medication adherence measures as part of the Value Initiative for IPA Performance and Pay-for-Performance (VIIP + P4P) for patients on non-insulin diabetes medications, renin-angiotensin system antagonists (RASA), and statins.

Based on the CMS definition of proportion of days covered (PDC), patients will need at least 80% of their medications covered throughout the year to be considered adherent. By utilizing a 100-day supply, members will only need to fill their medications 3 times a year instead of four or more times using a 90-day supply or less. Members who are using an extended day supply will also avoid additional trips to the pharmacy. It is important for members with chronic conditions to avoid crowded places, especially during the pandemic.

For additional information on obtaining an extended supply of prescription drugs for members, please call L.A. Care Cal MediConnect Plan Provider Information at **1.866.LACARE6 (1.866.522.2736 TTY 711)**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays.





## 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 TTY 711**

**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](https://www.lacare.org)**, **[lacarecovered.org](https://www.lacarecovered.org)**, and **[calmediconnectla.org](https://www.calmediconnectla.org)**.

# Information at Your Fingertips: Valuable Information Available to Providers on L.A. Care's Website

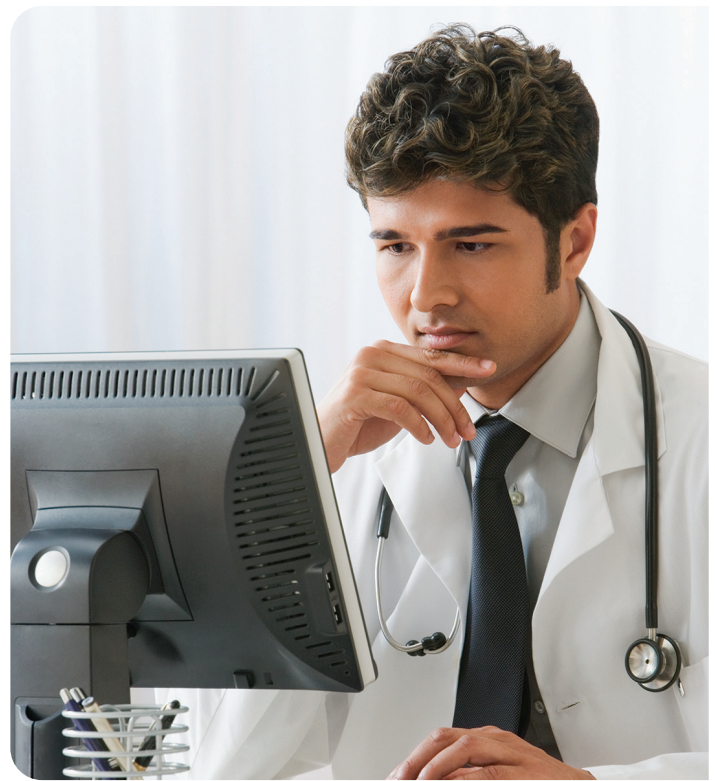
L.A. Care's website has information about many different topics that might be helpful to you. It provides a useful way to get information about L.A. Care and its processes. Please visit our website at [lacare.org](https://lacare.org) and click on "For Providers" for the following information:

- Quality Improvement Program, including goals, processes and outcomes related to care and services
- Policy encouraging practitioners to freely communicate with patients about their treatment, including medication treatment options, regardless of benefit coverage limitations
- Requirement that practitioners, providers and facilities cooperate with quality improvement activities; provide access to their medical records, to the extent permitted by state and federal law; maintain confidentiality of member information and records, to the extent permitted by state and federal law; maintain confidentiality of member information and records; and allow L.A. Care to use performance data for activities such as quality improvement activities and public reporting to consumers
- Policy on notification of specialist termination
- Access standards
- Case management services and how to refer patients
- Disease Management Program information and how to refer patients
- Health education services and how to refer patients
- Coordination of Medicare and Medicaid benefit
- Care services to members with special needs
- Clinical Practice Guidelines, including ADHD and Depression
- Preventive Health Guidelines
- Medical record documentation standards; policies regarding confidentiality of medical records; policies for an organized medical recordkeeping system; standards for the availability of medical records at the practice site and performance goals
- Utilization Management Medical Necessity Criteria, including how to obtain or view a copy. UM criteria and UM procedures and processes are available to L.A. Care practitioners, providers, members and their representatives, and the public upon request. To obtain a copy of any L.A. Care UM criteria, UM procedure or UM process, practitioners, providers, members and their representatives, and the public may contact the L.A. Care **Member Services Department** at **1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711)**, 24 hours, 7 days a week, and holidays, or the L.A. Care UM Department at **1.877.431.2273 (TTY 711)**, Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and ask to speak with the UM Director or UM Manager to make the request.
- Policy prohibiting financial incentives for Utilization Management decision makers
- Instructions on how to contact staff if you have questions about Utilization Management processes and the toll-free number to call
- Instructions for triaging inbound calls specific to Utilization Management cases/issues

*Continued from previous page*

- Availability of, and the process for, contacting a peer reviewer to discuss Utilization Management decisions
- Policy on denial notices
- Policy regarding the appeals notification process
- Pharmaceutical management procedures and lists of pharmaceuticals included in the benefit plan and formulary updates
- Policy regarding your rights during the credentialing/re-credentialing process, including how to review information and correct erroneous information submitted to support your credentialing application, as well as how to obtain information about the status of your application and how to exercise these rights
- Members' Rights and Responsibilities
- Web-based provider and hospital directory

If you would like hard copies of any of the information available on the website, please contact our Provider Solutions team at **1.866.LACARE6 (1.866.522.2736)**.



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](mailto: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: phone 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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**lacare.org**

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# Progress Notes

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR PHYSICIAN PARTNERS

# Progress Notes

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## Get the latest from thePULSE

Sign up today for thePULSE, L.A. Care's newsletter created by L.A. Care's Provider Network Management and Marketing departments and emailed exclusively to network providers. Get important updates on incentives, initiatives, HIT and relevant L.A. Care news. Progress Notes is also available electronically. Visit [lacare.org](http://lacare.org) under the "For Providers" section to select the "Newsletter Sign Up" link today!

## News Alert



## L.A. Care Health Plan Receives 2021 Multicultural Health Care Distinction

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