Mental Health for Overall Wellness

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month and L.A. Care’s Behavioral Health Services will be hosting community events to make sure that members know that coverage for mental health and substance misuse treatment is included in their benefits. For other events, please visit the National Alliance for Mental Health website: nami.org

Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential. It affects how you live your day-to-day life and the way you take care of yourself, perform at work, and get along with others. Blending of behavioral health services and physical health care supports wellness. Listed below are some of the available behavioral health services:

- Screenings for early child development, emotional health and substance misuse
- Outpatient medication treatment and monitoring
- Brief counseling support and education
- Direct referrals to a network of dedicated mental health therapists
- Referrals to specialty mental health and substance use treatment services

Prescription Medicine Treatment for Depression

Treating depression and other mental health conditions, improves the quality of life. Recovering from depression can give people a positive outlook on life.

Antidepressants are prescription medications used as one option to treat depression. Be sure to follow your doctor’s instructions when taking medicine. It is important to pick up refills on time and not run out of medicine.
Q: What is the difference between asthma and allergies?

A: Asthma is a disease of the lungs that narrows your airways and makes it hard to breathe. It causes coughing, wheezing and tightness in the chest. Allergies occur when the body reacts to something harmless around you like trees, dust or the family pet. It causes sneezing and itchy eyes. Both asthma and allergies have triggers – things around you that cause your symptoms. Also, allergies can make asthma symptoms worse.

Q: What do I need to do if I have asthma?

A: See your doctor to make a Asthma Action Plan. You will likely take medicines using an inhaler. Controller medicines are taken every day to reduce airway inflammation and help prevent asthma symptoms from occurring. Quick-relief medications (sometimes called rescue medicines) are taken as soon as you have any warning signs of an asthma attack.

Q: What are some common asthma triggers?

A: Grass, trees, plants, and weeds are common triggers. So are dust and mold, some insects and household pets. Smoke, colds or flu, and changes in the weather can also trigger asthma.

Q: How can I avoid allergy and asthma attacks?

A: Know the things that trigger your symptoms and avoid them when you can. See your doctor often to review your triggers, medicines and Asthma Action Plan. Take steps to keep your sneeze from becoming a wheeze! The L.A. Cares About Asthma® Program is here to help. For questions, please call Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., 1-888-200-3094 (TTY/TDD 1-888-448-6894). You can also get information online at asthmadm@lacare.org.
Preparing for an Earthquake

Southern California does have earthquakes, so it is smart to be prepared. Here are some ways to get ready in case one does happen.

Inside the House

- Pick a safe place in each room, such as under a sturdy piece of furniture. Practice “Drop, Cover and Hold On” in each room.
- If a quake hits when you are in bed, stay there. Hold on and protect your head with pillows.
- Keep a flashlight and a sturdy pair of shoes under each bed.
- Bolt and brace water heaters, bookcases, china cases and other tall furniture.
- Make an emergency supplies kit. Learn what should go inside at redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/get-kit to be ready.

Outside the House

You and your family may not be in the same place when an earthquake strikes. Find out the plan for where members of your family work, go to school or have childcare.

- If a quake happens, use text rather than voice to reach people. Also, choose an out-of-town person to contact. Make sure everyone keeps the contact information with them, for instance in a wallet or backpack.
- Choose a place outside your neighborhood to meet in case you cannot get home.

You can get more information about being prepared for an earthquake at the following websites:

- **American Red Cross** – Earthquake Preparedness: redcross.org/prepare/disaster/earthquake
- **American Red Cross** – Be Red Cross Ready: Earthquake Safety Checklist - redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4240216_Earthquake.pdf
- **Ready.gov** – Call a family meeting and make a plan

High Blood Pressure: What You Need to Know About the “Silent Killer”

Your heart pumps blood to all parts of your body. If the blood pushes too hard against the walls of the arteries, it can cause high blood pressure and put you at risk for stroke, heart and kidney problems. High blood pressure is often called the “silent killer” because you cannot feel or see it and may not have any symptoms. It is the most common heart health problem as you get older. More men have high blood pressure than women.

It is important to get your blood pressure checked regularly. High blood pressure can be treated. You can lower high blood pressure by changing your health habits:

- Eat healthy
- Increase physical activity
- Keep your weight at a healthy level
- Do not smoke
- Learn to cope with stress

Your doctor may prescribe medicine to help control your blood pressure, so it does not damage your health.
Eat Less Fat and More Fiber

Eat lots of fresh fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains to help you stay healthy. They are nutritious low-fat foods that help you feel full because they are also high in fiber. Eat and drink less high-fat dairy products like cheese, ice cream and whole milk. Include low-fat dairy products such as yogurt, which is also good for digestion, in your diet. Eat more fish and less red meat.

Not sure how to add whole grains to your diet? Try eating oats, brown rice or barley. Choose whole wheat bread instead of white bread. Beans are fiber super stars. One cup of cooked beans gives nearly half the daily recommended amount of fiber. As you eat more fiber, be sure to also drink more water.

Swap Salt for Spices

Avoid foods that have a lot of salt (sodium) in them. Check package labels for salt content and aim for 1,500 - 2,300 mg per day. Beware of soy sauce, baking soda, baking powder and MSG – all are high in sodium. Consider flavoring your food with herbs and spices instead of salt. Here are some to try: garlic, onion, parsley, basil, dill. Lemon also adds great flavor to foods.

Along with eating healthy, be sure to include physical activity regularly in your routine. Do an activity that you enjoy such as exercising, walking, running or swimming. Good nutrition and exercising will help you live a healthy and happy life!

Eating for Health

The foods you eat can make a big difference in your health, how you feel and how you fight off disease. You can boost your health by eating foods that are good for your body. Eating a healthy diet can help you prevent heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes.

Here are three easy changes - eat less fat, eat more fiber and swap salt for spices, which can make a difference in how you feel now and how healthy you are in the years ahead.

Healthy Creamy Cole Slaw *

*(makes about 5 cups)*

**Ingredients**

- 1/3 cup plain yogurt
- 3 tablespoons sour cream
- ½ tablespoon honey
- ½ teaspoon cranberries
- ¼ cup walnuts
- 1 ½ lb. cabbage, (purple and green) cored and thinly sliced
- 1 carrot, shredded

**Directions**

1. Whisk together yogurt and sour cream in a large bowl until smooth, then whisk in honey.
2. Add remaining ingredients and toss well.
3. Let stand for about 30 minutes with occasional stirring. Enjoy!

*Recipe from the Family Resource Centers (FRCs) healthy cooking classes. To learn more about the FRCs and view class dates and times, visit lacare.org.*
Dangers to Your Life

Here are some examples of emergencies that need quick care. It does not include ALL types of emergencies:

- A hard time breathing
- Suddenly not able to move or speak
- Severe chest pain
- Blacking out (fainting)
- Choking
- Poisoning
- Severe bleeding

Dangers of Permanent Injuries

Again, these examples are not ALL the types of injuries that may be an emergency:

- Deep cuts or severe burns
- An attack by a person or animal
- Broken bones, or sudden severe pain and swelling in a joint

When It Is an Emergency

Go to the Nearest ER

If you can, go to the hospital ER closest to you right away. If you cannot get there right away, call 911 or your police emergency number.

After an Emergency

Call Your Primary Care Doctor

Tell your doctor about the emergency. Call within 24 hours of going to the ER. If you cannot call, have someone call for you. Go to your doctor (not the ER) for any follow-up care.

When It Is NOT an Emergency

If a health problem is not an emergency, follow these steps:

Call the Nurse Advice Line (NAL) for Your Health Plan:

- L.A. Care: 1-800-249-3619 (TTY/TDD 711)
- Kaiser: 1-888-576-6225
- Care1st: 1-800-609-4166 (TTY/TDD 1-800-735-2929)
- Anthem Blue Cross: 1-800-224-0336 (TTY/TDD 1-800-368-4424)

If you cannot call, have someone call for you. Your insurance claim may be denied if you go to the ER when it is not an emergency.

Follow Instructions

The staff of the Nurse Advice Line or your doctor will tell you what you should do to get the help you need. You may be told to see your doctor right away, to go to the ER or to an urgent care center. Be sure to follow the advice you receive.

Nurse Advice Line: Free Health Care Advice 24/7

Last year the L.A. Care Nurse Advice Line took close to 9,340 calls from members who planned to go to the emergency room (ER). Most of them had a health problem like a runny/stuffy nose, earache, cough, backache, or upset stomach. Over 86.8% of those callers were able to avoid spending long hours in the ER.

Instead of going to the ER, they called the Nurse Advice Line and received fast answers - advice on how to self-treat and help to decide if they needed to make a trip to the doctor’s office or ER. This means many times you don’t need to go to the ER to get help. It makes good sense to spend a few minutes speaking with a registered nurse on the phone at home, instead of waiting perhaps for hours in an ER, to get the same help.

The phone number for your Nurse Advice Line is on the back of your member ID card. Here are the numbers for your convenience:

- Anthem Blue Cross: 1-800-224-0336 (TTY/TDD 1-800-368-4424)
- Care1st Health Plan: 1-800-609-4166 (TTY/TDD 1-800-735-2929)
- Kaiser Permanente: 1-888-576-6225
- L.A. Care Health Plan: 1-800-249-3619 (TTY/TDD 711)
Confused about the new Cal MediConnect Plan that combines Medicare and Medi-Cal?

L.A. Care members can get their questions answered about the Cal MediConnect Plan. We are here to help. Cal MediConnect Plan is a program for people in Los Angeles County who have both Medicare and Medi-Cal. It combines services into one single plan with one phone number to call for all your health care needs.

**Coordinated health care in ONE plan – ONE number – At No Extra Cost!!**

If you, a loved one, a caregiver or a friend is eligible for the L.A. Care Cal MediConnect Plan, our dedicated doctors, Care Coordinators and Support Services are ready to help and give you the care you deserve.

We’ve made it easy and simple to get the services that are important to you and your well-being. Our Care Coordinators can help you with benefits such as:

- ✓ Chiropractic Services
- ✓ Dental Services
- ✓ Doctor Visits and Hospital Care
- ✓ In-Home or Long-Term Supportive Services
- ✓ Non-Emergency Transportation
- ✓ Nurse Advice Line
- ✓ Part D Prescription Drug Benefits
- ✓ Routine Podiatry Services
- ✓ Vision Care

**Contact us if you have questions about L.A. Care’s Cal MediConnect Plan.**

L.A. Care is your partner in health care. L.A. Care’s Member Services Department is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays. We are only a call away! **For more information about the L.A. Care Cal MediConnect Plan, call 1-855-522-8243 (TTY/TDD: 1-888-212-4460) today!**

Looking for New L.A. Care Volunteers!

You can be a voice to help L.A. Care meet the needs of the neighborhoods we serve. We are seeking new people to help with our Regional Community Advisory Committees (RCACs).

RCAC members bring the voice of their communities to L.A. Care’s Board of Governors, which guides programs for over 1.6 million members. We invite people over 18 years of age of many backgrounds. L.A. Care encourages seniors and people with disabilities to be part of RCAC. Please call 1-888-522-2732 to find out more.
How Long Should You Wait for an Appointment?

Need to see a doctor? California law has new standards for appointment wait times. How long you wait may depend on why you are visiting the doctor. Here are California’s guidelines:

- **Urgent care**: within 48 hours
- **Non-urgent primary care**: within 10 business days
- **Specialty care**: within 15 business days
- **Mental health (non-physician) care**: within 10 business days
- **Ancillary care (such as lab work or home health)**: within 15 business days

You can contact L.A. Care Member Services at 1-888-839-9909 (TTY/TDD 1-866-522-2731) for assistance. They are open 24 hours, 7 days a week, including holidays. California law requires that you speak to a Member Services representative within 10 minutes.

Partner with your doctor to get care when you need it. Keep your doctor’s appointments. Let your doctor’s office know as soon as possible if you cannot make an appointment. Be aware of California’s new standards.
Follow us….for a Healthy Life!
L.A. Care’s Family Resource Centers Welcome You

L.A. Care Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are your centers for health and wellness. There are now four FRCs located throughout Los Angeles County.

- Boyle Heights (The Wellness Center)
- Inglewood (Corner of Century & Crenshaw)
- Lynwood (Plaza Mexico at the Old General Hospital)
- Pacoima (San Fernando Rd. & Van Nuys Blvd.) new center!

The FRCs offer free health classes, such as Zumba and healthy cooking. They can also help you get free and low-cost health care with L.A. Care Health Plan.

L.A. Care knows that a healthy city depends on its members taking action for their own health. This means it starts with YOU! Bring your family for free health classes. Take a dance class with your neighbors, or have your caregivers stop by with your children after school.

To learn more about the FRCs and view class dates and times, visit lacare.org or call 1-877-287-6290.

Should You Call the Compliance Helpline or Member Services?

L.A. Care provides a toll-free Compliance Helpline number, 1-800-400-4889, to report suspected fraud or concerns about covered services. You can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or report online by going to lacare.ethicspoint.com. Many of your needs can be handled by L.A. Care’s Member Services Department at 1-888-839-9909 (TTY/TDD 1-866-522-2731).

When do you use Member Services? When do you use the Compliance Helpline?

Call Member Services when:
- You are concerned about the quality of care you received.
- You think you were treated rudely by your doctor, the staff or medical group.
- You feel that L.A. Care staff did not treat you fairly or resolve your complaint.
- You want to change your medical group or doctor.
- You need a member ID card.

Call the Compliance Helpline when:
- You suspect fraud, waste or abuse.
- Your doctor or someone at the office tells you that you have to pay for covered services.
- You think someone is using government programs to get services they are not entitled to receive.
- You think someone has stolen your member ID card.
L.A. Care Works for You

L.A. Care aims to inform, educate, engage and empower YOU! We want you to be well and happy with your health care. We engage more than 1.6 million members in many ways, such as mail, e-mail, phone, websites, newsletters, and even through your doctor!

Let us help you with your health care when you need it and how you need it. Call us at 1-888-839-9909 (TTY/TDD 1-866-522-2731) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays. Also, visit our website and member portal at lacare.org.

Get Help in Your Language

Is your primary language something other than English? Are there times when you have trouble talking with your doctor because of language problems? L.A. Care offers free interpreters to help you. To get an interpreter for office visits, call L.A. Care’s Member Services Department at 1-888-839-9909 (TTY/TDD 1-866-522-2731).

You have the right to have help in your preferred language. L.A. Care is here to help you get the care you need and make sure you understand your health and your doctor.

Also, if you speak Cantonese, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog, Thai or Vietnamese, L.A. Care is proud to offer a DVD called “Know Your Rights: What You Need to Know about Interpreting Services.” This DVD shows how easy it is to get help talking to your doctor in your language.

To request a copy of the DVD, call the L.A. Care Member Services Department at 1-888-839-9909.

Quick Tips: When to Call Member Services

L.A. Care’s Member Services Department at 1-888-839-9909 is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays. The number is also on the back of your member ID card. Call us; we are here to help.

• Ask Us Questions: Wonder about your benefits, claims, how to see a doctor or get medicine, or anything else? Call our Member Services Department.

• Keep Us Informed: Moving and need a new doctor? Let us know right away by calling our Member Services Department.

• Report Actions That Don’t Seem Right to You: Did you get a bill or statement for services you did not have? Did a doctor or staff member ask you to pay for a service you feel is a covered benefit? Did you get assigned to a doctor or group that wasn’t what you chose? If so, call our Member Services Department or use our Compliance HelpLine. To use the HelpLine, call 1-800-400-4889. You can also report online at lacare.ethicspoint.com.

• Help Us Fight Fraud and Abuse in Government Programs: Everyone is hurt by fraud and abuse. Millions of dollars are paid to those not entitled to receive services or cash. That money could be spent to provide more care to people in need. Do you know someone getting care that they are not entitled to receive? Do you suspect a doctor or lab of billing too much or billing for services not provided? If so, please call Member Services Department or use our HelpLine at 1-800-400-4889. You can make a difference!
Visit L.A. Care’s New Health Library!

L.A. Care has a new online health and wellness library that puts health information and resources right at your fingertips. It includes several useful features:

- disease management topics
- a symptom checker
- healthy living ideas
- health quizzes
- videos

The health library is not intended to be a substitute for seeing your doctor, but gives you up-to-date information that can help you manage your health and well-being. Visit lacare.org/healthy-living/health-resources/health-library.

How Much Do You Know About Asthma and Allergies?

Match the words to their meanings.

1. Quick Relief ________  a. Problems breathing due to narrowed airways
2. Trigger ________  b. A reaction to something harmless around you
3. Controller ________  c. A device to take medicine into the lungs
4. Asthma Action Plan ________  d. The type of asthma medicine that prevents symptoms
5. Asthma ________  e. The type of asthma medicine to take if you start having symptoms
6. Inhaler ________  f. Something that can bring on an asthma attack, such as stress, dust or pets
7. Allergy ________  g. A plan you and your doctor make to help you manage your asthma

Go green and get Be Well electronically!

Would you like to get Be Well by e-mail or on your cell phone? Call us or send your e-mail or cell phone number to editor@lacare.org. Standard text message rates may apply. Be sure to like us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.
1. Always keep your member ID card with you. Show your ID card when you:
   • Go to a doctor’s office
   • Go to the hospital
   • Need emergency services
   • Pick up a prescription
Don’t give your member ID card to anyone else to use. If you lose or damage your ID card, call L.A. Care.

2. You have the right to receive service and information in a language or format you understand. If you need a FREE interpreter for a doctor’s visit, or member information in your language or other format (like Braille, large print or audio), call L.A. Care.

3. You can talk to a nurse for free, any time day or night, 7 days a week. Check your ID card for the phone number. The Nurse Advice Lines also provide pre-recorded information on many health topics. There is a list of these topics at the end of the Member Handbook we mailed to you.

4. Visit our website at lacare.org. You can:
   • Find a doctor
   • Learn about your benefits
   • Look into our health education programs and Family Resource Center classes
   • Find out about your rights and responsibilities
   • File a complaint, called a “grievance”

5. Do you have questions, need a member ID card, or interpreter? L.A. Care is here to help you get the care and service you need. Call our Member Services Department at 1-888-839-9909 (TTY/TDD 1-866-522-2731) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (open holidays).

Important Phone Numbers
Do you have questions about your health plan or your benefits? Call your health plan directly or call L.A. Care Health Plan.

L.A. CARE:
L.A. Care Health Plan & L.A. Care Healthy Kids (0-5)
1-888-839-9909 (TTY/TDD 1-866-522-2731)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care Cal MediConnect Plan
1-888-522-1298 (TTY/TDD 1-888-212-4460)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care Family Resource Centers
(Your Centers for Health and Wellness)
1-877-287-6290

L.A. Care Covered
1-855-222-4239

L.A. Care Compliance Helpline
(to report fraud or abuse)
1-800-400-4889
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care Language/Interpreter Services
1-888-839-9909 (TTY/TDD 1-866-522-2731)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care’s Nurse Advice Line
(for non-emergency medical advice)
1-800-249-3619 (TTY/TDD 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

**MEDI-CAL PLAN PARTNERS:**

Anthem Blue Cross
1-888-285-7801

Care1st Health Plan
1-800-605-2556

Kaiser Permanente
1-800-464-4000

Plan Partners’ Nurse Advice Lines
(for non-emergency medical advice)

Anthem Blue Cross: 1-800-224-0336 (TTY/TDD 1-800-368-4424)

Care1st: 1-800-609-4166 (TTY/TDD 1-800-735-2929)

Kaiser: 1-888-576-6225

**OTHERS:**

LogistiCare
[No Cost Medi-Ride to the Doctor]
1-866-529-2141 (Spanish 1-866-529-2142)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Beacon Health Strategies
[Mental Health Care]
1-877-344-2858 (TTY/TDD 1-888-735-2929)

www.beaconhs.com
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, CALL: 911

Things To Remember

1. Always keep your member ID card with you. Show your ID card when you:
   • Go to a doctor’s office
   • Go to the hospital
   • Need emergency services
   • Pick up a prescription
Don’t give your member ID card to anyone else to use. If you lose or damage your ID card, call L.A. Care.

2. You have the right to receive service and information in a language or format you understand. If you need a FREE interpreter for a doctor’s visit, or member information in your language or other format (like Braille, large print or audio), call L.A. Care.

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5. Do you have questions, need a member ID card, or interpreter? L.A. Care is here to help you get the care and service you need. Call our Member Services Department at 1-888-839-9909 (TTY/TDD 1-866-522-2731) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (open holidays).
Health and wellness and prevention information

The benefit information provided is a brief summary, not a complete description of benefits. Limitations, copayments, and restrictions may apply. Benefits may change on January 1 of each year. To learn more, please call L.A. Care Member Services Department at 1-888-839-9909 (TTY/TDD 1-866-522-2731), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and holidays.

Be Well is a member news publication by L.A. Care for members of L.A. Care's Health Plan.

If you would like the information contained in this newsletter in another language or another format, please call our Member Services Department at 1-888-839-9909 (TTY/TDD 1-866-522-2731), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week including holidays.

To request free interpreting services, information in your language or in another format, call L.A. Care at 1-888-839-9909 or TTY/TDD 1-866-522-2731.