As the New Year begins and the holidays become memories, we often make resolutions and begin to plan ways to improve our health. Resolutions may include goals such as eating better, increasing exercise, quitting smoking or getting more sleep. However, to see long-lasting changes, we must let go of old unhealthy habits and make new healthier habits.

**Break Your Goals Down**
Sometimes we make a goal too big and because we’re frustrated, we quit. It is important to break your goals down into small chunks that you can do easily. For example, if you have a goal to walk or run a marathon, take a walk every day for 20 minutes. When you are able to do that, then increase the time to 30 minutes. Before you know it, you will meet your marathon goal! When it comes to weight loss, set a realistic weight loss goal of 1-2 lbs a week. This equals at least 5 lbs a month or 60 lbs. over a year, which is significant.

**Make Healthy Food Choices**
Eating healthier is often about being able to avoid temptation. Be prepared by planning ahead. Get rid of fattening, sugary foods, chips and sodas in your cabinets and refrigerator. Buy healthier foods and snacks. Get fruits and vegetables and lean protein meats and dairy, like turkey and low-fat yogurt. Drink more water and less sweetened drinks.

**Get Active!**
Increase your physical activity. Going to a gym is not the only way to exercise. You can get exercise by just regularly taking a walk during lunch or after dinner. Plan time every day to do something fun and physical. You’ll want to do it and have more success if you enjoy it! Get-in-shape goals tend to fizzle out by the third week of January, per recent research. Yet some people keep at it. What’s their secret? People who are successful are more likely to view fitness as a lifestyle change, not an activity they can give up once they reach a number on the scale.

*Continued on page 6*
**Ask the Doc: Cold, Flu and Sore Throat Season Has Arrived!**

**Q:** When are sore throats most common and do I need to see a doctor?  
**A:** Winter is here which means that sore throats are back. It can be the first sign of a cold, flu or strep throat. Depending on the cause of your sore throat, you may, or may not, need to see your doctor. Colds and flu are caused by viruses and can often be treated at home.

**Q:** How long will a sore throat last with a cold and what are the symptoms?  
**A:** If your sore throat is caused by a cold, it will go away in a few days and does not need antibiotics to be treated. However, if you have strep throat, which is caused by bacteria, an antibiotic may be needed.

**Q:** How do you know the difference between a sore throat and strep throat?  
**A:** A sore throat that is caused by strep is very painful and does not go away on its own. It can come on suddenly and is accompanied by high fever and white patches in the throat. You will want to see your doctor who can provide you with a strep test before antibiotics are given.

**Q:** How can I protect myself from flu?  
**A:** The flu is also common during winter. A great way to protect yourself and your loved ones from catching the flu is to get a yearly flu shot, which temporarily immunizes and protects you. L.A. Care Health Plan offers the flu shot as a free service. It’s easy to get one by simply going to see your doctor or visiting a local pharmacy and showing your L.A. Care member ID card.

**Q:** Should I go to an Emergency Room for treatment?  
**A:** If you do need to see your doctor this winter, think about the best place to get care. Emergency rooms are for life threatening situations. Colds, flu and strep throat can be treated at your doctor’s office. If your doctor’s office is closed when you call, listen to the instructions for getting after-hours care. Save the emergency room for true emergencies.

Questions? Call **1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711)**. For more information, please visit the L.A. Care website at **lacare.org**.

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**A Healthy Outside Starts From the Inside!**
Clean Hands Save Lives

Washing your hands is one of the best ways to get rid of germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others. It’s quick, simple and can help save lives.

Five Easy, Important Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold) and then turn off the tap. Add soap.

2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.

3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. This is about as long as it takes to sing, “Happy Birthday” twice.

4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.

5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Protect yourself and others from the flu and other illnesses this season by keeping your hands clean and getting your flu shot. Hand washing is a win for everyone, except the germs!

Got Low Vision? Serving You Is Part of Our Mission

February is Low Vision Awareness Month. According to the National Eye Institute (NEI), 4.2 million Americans ages 40 and older are visually impaired. By 2030, this number is expected to reach 7.2 million people, with 5 million having low vision.

Central to L.A. Care’s mission is our commitment to provide high quality health care that is accessible to all our members. If you are living with vision loss, we are happy to provide you with information in a format which better meets your needs, such as large print or audio.

**To request a document:**
- Call Member Services at 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays
- Let them know which document you need
- Ask for large print or audio format

**Member Services** will help you find the best option that meets your needs.
January Is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month
It’s the perfect time to learn about cervical cancer and takes steps to prevent or find it early.

Cervical cancer starts in the cervix. Regular Pap tests can detect changes in the cervix before they become cancer. Pap tests are easily done in your doctor’s office and take only a few minutes.

**Women ages 21 to 65 years should get a Pap test every three years.**

Most cervical cancers are caused by a virus called human papillomavirus or HPV. An HPV test looks for the types of HPV most likely to cause cervical cancer. The HPV test is similar to a Pap test and can be done at the same time.

There is a vaccine to prevent HPV. This vaccine should be given to both girls and boys starting at age 11 or 12 years.

Make time today to call your doctor and get tested!

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Prescription Drugs Listed on the L.A. Care Website

To find out more about L.A. Care’s list of covered drugs called the Formulary, and monthly updates, visit the L.A. Care website at lacare.org. You will also find information about limits or quotas, generic and brand medications, restrictions on medication coverage, the medication request process, drug preferences and procedures on how to use the Formulary.

Care1st Health Plan Changing Its Name

On January 1, 2019, Care1st Health Plan (Care1st) changed its name to Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan. In 2015, Blue Shield of California bought Care1st to help provide Californians access to high quality, affordable care. Under its new name, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan will continue to serve Medi-Cal and Medicare members in Los Angeles and San Diego counties.
Vaccinate Against the Flu

Preventing the flu will help keep you healthy and active. Many people who catch the flu get very sick. Some people get hospitalized and even die. Call your doctor if you or your children have signs or symptoms of the flu such as:

- Headache
- Body ache
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Fever/Chills
- Fatigue (tiredness)

Ways to protect against the spread of flu:

1. Get your flu shot every year, and encourage others to do so.
2. Get your children vaccinated against the flu.
3. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
4. Stay home from school, work and avoid doing errands when you are sick.
5. Keep kids home when they are sick.

6. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
7. Wash your hands regularly.
8. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth to prevent the spread of germs.
10. Take good care of yourself: stay active, eat healthy, manage stress, and drink lots of water.

Steps to Fight the Flu

Flu season is here! Get a FREE flu shot to prevent getting sick. It’s simple. Go to your doctor or to your local pharmacy and show your L.A. Care member ID card. Questions? Call 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711).
Pencil in Bedtime

Not getting enough sleep routinely can affect your mood and productivity, make you tired and cause accidents. It is also associated with chronic diseases and conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity and depression. Set a reminder for a half hour before your bedtime so that you can start to wind down and wrap up any activities.

Keep in mind that your bedroom should be a place for resting and recharging your battery. Avoid watching television, using a tablet, computer and cell phone just prior to bed. Digital devices can keep you from getting a restful night’s sleep. The blue light given off by these devices keeps the brain alert and affects the hormone, melatonin, which controls sleep/wake cycles.

Be Smoke-free

Smoking cigarettes is not good for your health. It is the leading cause of heart attacks and heart disease. But many risks can be reversed simply by quitting smoking. It can lower your blood pressure and heart rate as well as sharpen your hearing, improve your vision and help you feel more vibrant, energetic and focused. And it can also save you money by not buying cigarettes.

If you are ready to quit smoking, and you need help, L.A. Care can help. Call 1.855.856.6943 (TTY 711) to learn about in-person workshops and online self-paced programs and resources. Talk to your doctor about medications covered by your health plan that can help you quit smoking.

Be sure to visit a L.A. Care Family Resource Center near you for health education and exercise classes that are free and open to everyone. You can get support to help you kick off the New Year in a positive way and be a healthier you!

Source: CDC Office of Health Services

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February Is American Heart Month

Q: What is heart disease?
A: Heart disease is a broad term for different types of heart conditions. It is the leading cause of death in men and women.

Q: Are women at risk?
A: Yes! Women are more likely to get heart disease after menopause. Symptoms for women are generally shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain.

Q: How can I reduce my risk?
A: Risk factors such as age and family history can’t be changed, however, you can reduce your risk by:
- Not smoking
- Exercising and staying active
- Eating fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meats
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Keeping blood sugars in a healthy range
- Talking to your doctor about ways to lower cholesterol and blood pressure

Q: What if I have questions about heart health?
A: You can call L.A. Care’s Nurse Advice Line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1.800.249.3619 (TTY 711). A Registered Nurse will answer your health questions in your preferred language at no cost to you. Find the Nurse Advice Line number on your member ID card.

You can also contact L.A. Cares About Your Heart® to find out if you are eligible for our Disease Management Program. Call 1.855.707.7852 (TTY 711).
Nurse Advice Line: Available to Help You With Your Health Care Needs

Do you have questions about your health? Need medical advice fast? The Nurse Advice Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Registered nurses will answer your health questions and help you take care of your family. Get tips on avoiding the flu, treating the common cold and so much more. Use the audio library to listen to recorded messages on many different health topics. Call the L.A. Care Nurse Advice Line at 1.800.249.3619 (TTY 711) or chat with a nurse online for free. To access the nurse chat function, go to lacare.org and click on “Member Sign In” to log on.

If you are a Medi-Cal member with one of our Plan Partners, you can call the Nurse Advice Line at:

- **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)

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Your Centers for Health and Wellness!

Come to L.A. Care’s Family Resource Centers (FRCs) to improve your health and elevate your knowledge with a variety of classes and services that are FREE and OPEN to anyone! The Centers offer classes like CPR, Dance, Healthy Cooking, Parenting Support, Yoga, Zumba*, children’s classes and much more. Earn rewards when you attend six health education classes and receive a gift! L.A. Care members can attend a Member Orientation to learn how to get a member ID card, choose or change a doctor, and fill a prescription. At the Centers, L.A. Care members can also speak to a Member Services Representative or Care Manager to learn more about their health plan benefits. For more information and to view the schedule of classes, visit lacare.org/frc or call 1.877.287.6290 (TTY 711).

**Boyle Heights**
(The Wellness Center at the Old General Hospital)
Phone: 213.294.2840

**East L.A.**
4801 Whittier Blvd.
Phone: 213.438.5570

**Inglewood**
(Corner of Century & Crenshaw)
Phone: 310.330.3130

**Lynwood**
(Plaza Mexico)
Phone: 310.661.3000

**Pacoima**
(Corner of San Fernando Rd. & Van Nuys)
Phone: 213.438.5497

**Palmdale**
(In the Towne Square)
Phone: 213.438.5580

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L.A. Care Works For You

At L.A. Care, we inform, educate, and engage our members. We want to empower YOU to be well and happy with your health care. We reach more than 2 million members through mail, email, phone, websites, newsletters, and even through your doctor!

Let us help you with your health care when and how you need it. Call us at 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays. Also, visit our website and member portal at lacare.org.

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Phone: 213.438.5580
Know Your **Rights and Responsibilities**

As a member of L.A. Care, you have the right to…

**Respectful and courteous treatment.**
- You have the right to be treated with respect and courtesy by your health plan’s providers and staff.
- You have the right to be free from consequences of any kind when making decisions about your care.

**Privacy and confidentiality.**
- You have the right to have a private relationship with your provider and to have your medical record kept confidential.
- You also have the right to receive a copy of and request corrections to your medical record.
- If you are a minor, you have the right to certain services that do not need your parents’ approval.

**Choice and involvement in your care.**
- You have the right to receive information about your health plan, its services, its doctors and other providers.
- You also have the right to get appointments within a reasonable amount of time.
- You have the right to talk candidly with your doctor about all treatment options for your condition, regardless of the cost or benefit coverage, and participate in making decisions about your care.
- You have the right to say “no” to treatment, and the right to a second opinion.
- You have the right to decide how you want to be cared for in case you get a life-threatening illness or injury.

**Receive timely customer service.**
- You have the right to wait no more than 10 minutes to speak to a customer service representative during L.A. Care’s normal business hours.

**Voice your concerns.**
- You have the right to complain about L.A. Care, the health plans and providers we work with, or the care you get without fear of losing your benefits.
- L.A. Care will help you with the process. If you don’t agree with a decision, you have the right to appeal, which is to ask for a review of the decision.
- You have the right to disenroll from your health plan whenever you want. As a Medi-Cal member, you have the right to request a State Fair Hearing.

**Service outside of your health plan’s provider network.**
- You have the right to receive emergency or urgent services, as well as family planning and sexually transmitted disease services, outside of your health plan’s network.
- You have the right to receive emergency treatment as follows:
  - **Medi-Cal and Cal MediConnect members:** Emergency care services are covered at all times anywhere in the United States, Mexico, and Canada. For Medicare-covered services, emergency is NOT covered outside of the United States and its territories. For Medicare-covered emergency care provided outside of the United States and its territories that are not covered by Medi-Cal, you may receive a bill from the provider.
  - **PASC-SEIU members:** Emergency care services are covered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, anywhere.

**Service and information in your language.**
- You have the right to request an interpreter at no charge. You have the right to get all member information in your language or in another format (such as audio or large print).

**Know your rights.**
- You have the right to receive information about your rights and responsibilities.
- You have the right to make recommendations about these rights and responsibilities.
As a member of L.A. Care, you have the responsibility to...

**Act courteously and respectfully.**
- You are responsible for treating your doctor, all providers, and staff with courtesy and respect.
- You are responsible for being on time for your visits or calling your doctor’s office at least 24 hours before the visit to cancel or reschedule.

**Give up-to-date, accurate, and complete information.**
- You are responsible for giving correct information that your providers and L.A. Care need in order to provide care.
- You are responsible for getting regular checkups and telling your doctor about health problems before they become serious.

**Follow your doctor’s advice and take part in your care.**
- You are responsible for talking over your health care needs with your doctor, developing and agreeing on goals, doing your best to understand your health problems, and following the treatment plans you and your doctor agree on.

**Use the Emergency Room only in an emergency.**
- You are responsible for using the emergency room in cases of an emergency or as directed by your doctor.

**Report wrong-doing.**
- You are responsible for reporting health care fraud or wrongdoing to L.A. Care.
- You can do this without giving your name by calling the L.A. Care Compliance Helpline toll free at 1.800.400.4889 (TTY 711), going to www.lacare.ethicspoint.com calling the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Medi-Cal Fraud and Abuse Hotline toll-free at 1.800.822.6222.

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**Go Green and Get Be Well Electronically!**

Would you like to get Be Well by email? Please sign up on our website at lacare.org/be-well to receive it by email. Be sure to like us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.
Looking for L.A. Care Members to Join the Community Advisory Committees!

Do you want to learn how the health care system works? Would you like to share your thoughts on how L.A. Care can improve their services?

L.A. Care is looking for people to join the Community Advisory Committees (CACs). As a CAC member, you can help L.A. Care meet the needs of the neighborhoods we serve. Your voice can really make a difference in improving the health care for the over 2 million L.A. Care members in L.A. County!

For more information, please call the Community Outreach & Engagement Department at 1.888.522.2732 (TTY 711), Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Important 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
1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711)

PASC-SEIU 1.844.854.7272 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care Cal MediConnect
1.888.522.1298 (TTY 711)
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 (TTY 711)

L.A. Care Covered™
1.855.270.2327 (TTY 711)

L.A. Care Compliance Helpline
(to report fraud or abuse)
1.800.400.4889 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care Language/Interpreter Services
1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711)
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 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

MEDI-CAL PLAN PARTNERS
Anthem Blue Cross
1.888.285.7801
(TTY 1.800.368.4424)

Blue Shield of California (BSC)
Promise Health Plan
1.800.605.2556
(TTY 1.800.735.2929)

Kaiser Permanente
1.800.464.4000 (TTY 711)

Plan Partners’ Nurse Advice Lines
(for non-emergency medical advice)
Kaiser Permanente: 1.888.576.6225 (TTY 711)
Blue Shield of California (BSC)
Promise Health Plan: 1.800.609.4166
(TTY 1.800.735.2929)
Anthem Blue Cross: 1.800.224.0336
(TTY 1.800.368.4424)

OTHERS
Transportation Services
(No Cost Medi-Ride to the Doctor)
1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Beacon Health Options
(Behavioral Health Care)
1.877.344.2858
(TTY 1.800.735.2929)
beaconhs.com
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, CALL 911
Keeping Yourself Safe From Medical Identity Theft

You could become a victim of medical identity theft if someone gets your medical ID or Social Security number. If this should happen, they can use it to see the doctor, buy prescription drugs, or submit fake bills in your name.

Your credit rating and your health could also be harmed by medical identity theft. If false information gets into your medical records, you may get the wrong treatment.

**Tips to protect yourself against medical identity theft include:**

- Do not trust strangers who offer free or discounted medical services.
- File paperwork and shred what you do not need.
- Keep your insurance and Social Security numbers safe.
- Never share your information with persons who say they are bill collectors. If they really are bill collectors, they will already have your information.
- Review your medical bills and statements (if any) and/or your Explanation of Benefits. Check for items or services you did not receive. If you see something strange or wrong, call your health care provider.

If you have questions about your bill and/or Explanation of Benefits or think there is a mistake, please call L.A. Care Member Services at 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711).
Health and wellness or prevention information

IN THIS ISSUE:
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• And More!

The benefit information provided is a brief summary, not a complete description of benefits. Limitations, co-payments, and restrictions may apply. Benefits may change on January 1 of each year. To learn more, please call the L.A. Care Member Services at 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including 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 Member Services at 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week including holidays.

Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Statement
L.A. Care complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

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