

# Progress Notes

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## Chief Executives Can Be a Force for Good

John Baackes, CEO of L.A. Care Health Plan, the largest publicly-operated health plan in the country, was recently among the heavyweight speakers at the 2019 Social Innovation Summit (link is external). The two-day summit brought together a host of movers and shakers to discuss philanthropic trends, and to analyze innovative approaches for problem-solving and lasting partnerships that enable organizations to address social challenges.

The title of Baackes' session was *Leadership From the Board Room: How Chief Executives Can Be a Force for Good*. Baackes highlighted two projects that have shown that force in action. L.A. Care has committed \$20 million over five years to Brilliant Corners, an organization that helps house the homeless population in Los Angeles County. The commitment will house 300 people, most of whom are L.A. Care members.

L.A. Care also collaborates with the California Long-Term Care Education Center to train in-home caregivers of members with complex health care needs. The 10-week course trains caregivers in CPR, first aid, nutrition and home safety with a goal of making each caregiver an integral part of the member's care team. L.A. Care is funding the program for three years to train up to 2,700 caregivers.



Baackes also highlighted a collaboration with Project Angel Food that is running a pilot program to illustrate the importance of medically tailored meals, and a \$31 million workforce development initiative *Elevating the Safety Net* that addresses a growing physician shortage. All of these efforts help L.A. Care fulfill its mission of providing access to quality care for Los Angeles County's vulnerable and low-income residents.

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

# news in BRIEF

## Honored to Serve Our Diverse Community

L.A. Care Earns Nationally Recognized Distinction in Multicultural Health Care



L.A. Care Health Plan is proud to announce it has earned the Multicultural Health Care Distinction from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). The Multicultural Health Care Distinction recognizes organizations that engage in efforts to improve culturally and linguistically appropriate services and reduce health care disparities.

“Given the tremendous cultural diversity of our members, we could not be more thrilled to earn this top honor,” said L.A. Care CEO John Baackes. “We are more energized than ever to continue delivering the highest quality care that our members deserve.”

L.A. Care received this distinction for its Medicaid (Medi-Cal), Medicare (L.A. Care Cal MediConnect) and Marketplace (L.A. Care *Covered*<sup>™</sup>) product lines. This marks the fourth time in a row that L.A. Care has been awarded the distinction since 2013.

“Earning Multicultural Health Care Distinction shows that an organization is making a breakthrough in providing excellent health care to diverse populations. I congratulate any organization that achieves this level of distinction,” said NCQA President Margaret E. O’Kane. “Eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in health care is essential to improving the quality of care overall.”

L.A. Care’s Cultural and Linguistic Services dedicated staff offer a robust array of services, which include:

- Access to no-cost interpreting services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Documents in members’ preferred language
- Documents in alternative formats, including large print and audio



## L.A. Care Launches MinuteClinic Locations Around L.A. County



In early June, L.A. Care began offering a new way for its direct line of business members (MCLA, CMC and LACC) to access care through MinuteClinic at select CVS locations in L.A. County and three locations just outside the county. This expansion of our contracted provider network offers access for minor, non-emergency services and will help increase access to health care for members when their primary care physician is not available.



MinuteClinic locations are staffed by Nurse Practitioners, who can diagnose, treat, and write prescriptions for low acuity illnesses, injuries or skin conditions, and administer vaccinations for adults. MinuteClinic is able to communicate medical results to the member's primary care provider with the member's permission.

# Access & Availability

L.A. Care will be conducting its annual Provider Timely Access to Care surveys. Provider offices will be contacted via fax, email or phone to evaluate patient access with health care providers. These surveys are part of L.A. Care's effort to review and monitor compliance with appointment availability and after-hours accessibility standards. We encourage you to review your current procedures and update any necessary processes to be compliant with the Timely Access to Care Standards, as required by the Department of Managed Health Care.

Appointments must be offered within the timeframes listed here\*:

## Primary Care Doctors

- Routine appointment (non-urgent):  
10 business days
- Urgent appointment (no authorization required): 48 hours

## Specialists

- Routine appointment (non-urgent):  
15 business days
- Urgent appointment (requiring prior authorization): 96 hours

## After-hours:

- Access – After-Hours recording or answering service must state emergency instructions to address medical emergencies
- Access – After-Hours recording or answering service must state a way of contacting the provider
- Timeliness – Recording or live person must state that provider will call back within 30 minutes

**Note:** Providers must be compliant in all three of the above measures to be considered compliant with L.A. Care's After-Hours standards.

*\* The applicable waiting time for a particular appointment may be extended if the referring or treating provider has determined (acting within the scope of their practice and consistent with professional standards of practice) and noted in the relevant medical record that a longer time will not have a detrimental impact on the health of the member.*



# New Transportation Vendor for Members

L.A. Care Health Plan is committed to providing quality health care and services. To better serve our members, we have begun a phased implementation with a new transportation vendor Call the Car, as of May 1.

Call the Car has been successfully transporting members assigned to other health plans for more than 10 years. In line with their member-centric focus, Call the Car was founded by a physician and a firefighter to provide quality transportation to and from medical appointments.

## Transportation Authorization Requests

Non-medical transportation (NMT) is for members who are ambulatory (can walk with/without assistance). NMT does not require a physician certification statement (PCS) form.

Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) is for members who require assistance to ambulate (are in a wheelchair, gurney-bound, etc.). NEMT does require a physician certification statement (PCS) form. A new physician certification statement (PCS) is available on our website under “Utilization Management Forms” at [www.lacare.org/providers/provider-resources/forms-manuals](http://www.lacare.org/providers/provider-resources/forms-manuals).

## Information for Your Members

There is a number for Providers to call to schedule NMT or NEMT services. Please call the Health Services Department at **1.877.431.2273**. Please follow the appropriate prompts for transportation.

The way members access transportation services have not changed. Continue to inform Medi-Cal patients to call L.A. Care’s **Member Services** Department at **1.888.839.9909** (TTY 711), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays to schedule transportation for medical visits or for help using the transportation benefit.

Continue to inform Cal MediConnect patients to call L.A. Care’s **Member Services** Department at **1.888.522.1298** (TTY 711), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays to schedule transportation for medical visits or for help using the transportation benefit.





# Vital Signs

## Simple Urine Test to Screen for Chlamydia

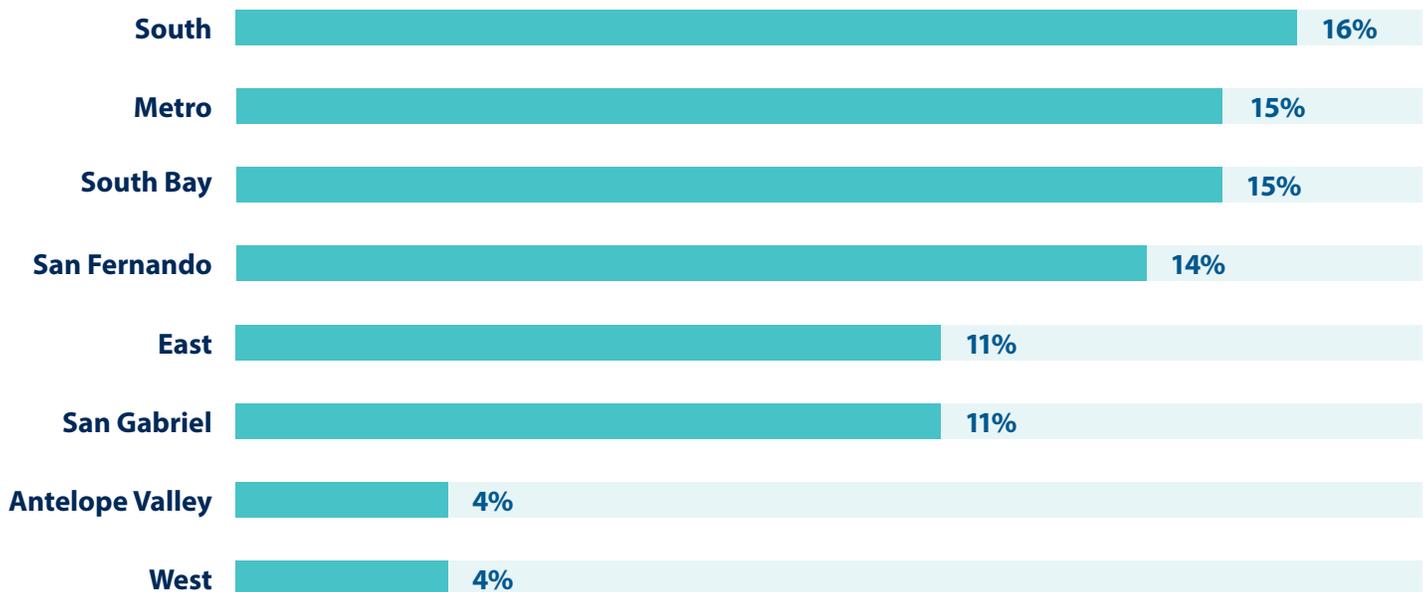
According to the Department of Public Health, chlamydia rates in Los Angeles County increased 14% from 2012 to 2016, with rates in males increasing faster than females. The largest number of reported cases were seen in Latinos (both males and females) ages 20-24. Chlamydia cases were relatively evenly distributed throughout the county; however, South Service Planning Area reports the largest proportion at 16% (see figure).

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends sexually active women ages 24 and under be screened annually for chlamydia. **Chlamydia screening has never been easier and can be done with a simple urine test.** Screening can be done in conjunction with other office visits or routine lab tests including annual wellness exams, sick visits, when prescribing contraceptives, and during pregnancy testing.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force further concludes there is insufficient evidence to assess the balance of benefits and harms of screening for chlamydia in men; however, the screening of sexually active young men should be considered in clinical settings with a high prevalence of chlamydia (e.g., adolescent clinics, correctional facilities, and STD clinics) or in populations with high burden of infection.



Proportion of Chlamydia Cases by SPA 2016



*Sources: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health 2016 Annual HIV/STD Surveillance Report  
U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Screening for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea*

## Back to Basics With IHA and SHA

Let's get down to basics! IHA stands for Initial Health Assessment and SHA, or Staying Healthy Assessment Tool, is one of the required IHA components. 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 SHA is the IHEBA recommended by DHCS and L.A. Care. It is available in nine age categories and 11 threshold languages. The SHA must be annually updated during well visits and subsequently re-administered as the patient enters a new age category.

If you plan to use SHA electronically, either by manually entering or scanning into an EMR, please complete and submit the Electronic SHA Notification Form. Visit L.A. Care's website for all your SHA needs at: [lacare.org/providers/provider-resources/staying-healthy-forms](https://www.lacare.org/providers/provider-resources/staying-healthy-forms).

## Health Education Supports Providers and Patients

L.A. Care's Health Education Unit is here to help providers and their patients! Our Registered Dietitians and Health Educators can help with weight and chronic condition management, tobacco cessation, and more.



For patients who prefer online education, we can offer our health and wellness portal, *My Health in Motion™* (My HIM™). To refer your patients or order free health education materials visit the Health Education Tools page on L.A. Care's website [lacare.org](https://www.lacare.org) under the "For Providers/Tools and Toolkits" tab.

# The L.A. Care Formulary Has You Covered!



The L.A. Care Formulary is an approved list of covered drugs for L.A. Care members. It is reviewed and updated monthly for safety and effectiveness. The Formulary and updates are available online at [lacare.org](https://www.lacare.org).

## How to Use the Formulary

- Formulary drugs are listed by their generic name and brand name as follows: Generic name (BRAND NAME)
- If only the brand name drug is on the market, only that will show: BRAND NAME
- Drugs can be searched on the online formulary by generic or brand name, or therapeutic category. Using the “Ctrl + F” function or the index makes it easy.

## Generic and Brand Name Medications

- Generic and brand name drugs are covered.
- Generic drugs are safe and cost-effective.
- Brand drugs are used when a generic drug is not available.

## Non-Formulary Medications

- Drugs not listed on the formulary are not covered (non-formulary).

## Benefit Coverage and Limitations

**Quantity Limits (QL):** Some drugs have quantity limits for safety or cost reasons.

**Step Therapy (ST):** Requires trying one or more drugs first (Step Process).

## Medication Request Process

The Medication Request Process requires a Prior Authorization (PA) request from your doctor.

The following drugs need a PA:

- Non-formulary drugs

- Formulary drugs needing safety or cost reviews
- Formulary drugs that exceed quantity limits (QL)
- Step therapy (ST) drugs that do not go through the normal Step Process
- Brand drug when the generic is available

Approval may be given for a documented medical need, otherwise the request will be denied.

## General Benefit Exclusions (Not Covered)

- Drugs for cosmetic purposes
- Infertility drugs
- Experimental drugs
- Foreign drugs

The ‘Medication Request Process’ is not available for excluded drugs, but denied requests can be appealed.

## Improving Opioid Safety

On January 1, 2019 L.A. Care implemented a new pharmacy opioid safety procedures to help keep our members opioid safe. These include:

- Limits on high dose opioids
- Limits on opioids and benzodiazepines (benzos) used together
- Limits on use of multiple long-lasting opioids used together
- Limits on how soon controlled medications can be refilled.
- \*For CMC members- 7-day limit on first time opioid prescriptions\*

# L.A. Care Invests \$1.2 Million to Help Launch Health Homes

## Up to 100,000 L.A. Care Members Eligible for the New Medi-Cal Benefit

L.A. Care Health Plan is providing \$1.2 million in grant funding to help 20 safety net clinics and other organizations implement the Health Homes Program (HHP) being launched in Los Angeles County. HHP, which is a state benefit established by the Affordable Care Act, is designed to serve Medi-Cal beneficiaries who have complex medical needs and chronic conditions through enhanced in-person care management and coordination.

Eligible members are given a care team of health and social service providers that helps them find doctors and get appointments, coordinates the care they receive from different providers, and connects them to community and social services, such as food and housing. The care coordinator will be in close contact with the primary care physician, while a community health worker on the team will remain in regular contact with the member.

*"We estimate 100,000 members could be eligible for the new benefit,"* said John Baackes, L.A. Care CEO. He continued, *"We want to make sure that our community partners are ready to provide the core services offered in this new benefit, which will ultimately help improve health outcomes."*

*"We are very excited to be able to expand services and increase our outreach to vulnerable individuals,"* said Lisa Abdishoo, CEO of Los Angeles Christian Health Centers, one of the organizations receiving a grant. She said, *"L.A. Care's support will help us add the staff and systems needed to make the program a success."*

Each grantee is receiving \$60,000 to be used for staffing and technological support.

### Awardees

Altamed Health Services, Los Angeles  
Arroyo Vista Family Health Foundation, Los Angeles  
Asian Pacific Healthcare Venture, Inc., Los Angeles  
ChapCare – Community Health Alliance of Pasadena, Pasadena  
Comprehensive Community Health Center, Inc., Glendale  
East Valley Community Health Clinic, West Covina  
Eisner Health, Los Angeles  
Garfield Health Center, Monterey Park  
Harbor Community Clinic, San Pedro  
JWCH Institute, Inc., Commerce  
Kedren Community Health Center, Los Angeles  
L.A. Christian Health Center, Los Angeles  
Northeast Valley Health Corp., San Fernando  
Partners in Care Foundation, San Fernando  
San Fernando Community Health Center, San Fernando  
St. John's Well Child & Family Center, Los Angeles  
Valley Community HealthCare, North Hollywood  
Venice Family Clinic, Venice  
Via Care Community Clinic, Los Angeles  
Watts Healthcare Corp., Los Angeles

## Internet Radio for Providers Kicks Off

L.A. Care live streaming audio is ready to come to provider offices and break rooms with Internet Radio, a collaboration between L.A. Care Quality Improvement, Communications and the office of the Chief Quality and Information Executive.

L.A. Care Internet Radio is available 24 hours a day and providers can hear tips and information they need to help their patients, improve HEDIS and CAHPS scores and much more. Find out more at [www.lacare.org/internet-radio](http://www.lacare.org/internet-radio).



# Preventing Medical Fraud and Identity Theft

You can help your patients protect their health and avoid health care fraud or abuse. If your patient reports their member ID has been lost or stolen, here are some ways to assist them:



1. Check medical records to make sure they match the patient's condition. Give them a copy of the records if needed.
2. Run a CURES report on the patient to check for controlled substances that you may not have prescribed. Go to [oag.ca.gov/cures](https://oag.ca.gov/cures)
3. Recommend that patients place a fraud alert with one of the three (3) credit bureaus.
  - a. Equifax – Call **1.888.766.0008**
  - b. Experian – Call **1.888.397.3742**
  - c. TransUnion – Call **1.800.680.7289**
4. Advise your patients to file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). They can do this online by completing the form at [identitytheft.gov](https://identitytheft.gov). The patient will be given an FTC Identity Theft Affidavit which they should print out and save. Patients can also call the FTC hotline at **1.877.438.4338**.
5. Advise your patients to file a report with their local police department.
6. To learn more about how to protect your patients and yourself from identity theft, and what actions victims of identity theft should take, please visit [identitytheft.gov](https://identitytheft.gov).

The fraud alert service is free and will help protect your patients from future abuse. When calling, the patient should ask for a copy of their credit report and check it closely.

# 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 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**.

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:** 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®

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# Progress Notes

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR PHYSICIAN PARTNERS

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## News Alert



## L.A. Care Receives NCQA Distinction Award

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