

Progress Notes

SPRING 2020 • VOLUME 15 • ISSUE 2



*Richard Seidman,
M.D., MPH*

Message From L.A. Care Health Plan's Chief Medical Officer

Physicians Must Speak Out on the Danger of Vaping

The message is simple – vaping is dangerous. Vaping has landed 90 people in California in the hospital for severe breathing problems and lung damage – two have died. Nationally, vaping is responsible for more than a 1,400 cases of lung damage and 33 people have died. It's time for physicians to help raise awareness of the danger, especially when it comes to teenagers.

Doctors have long asked patients whether they smoke, but how many pediatricians are asking their patients or the parents of their patients whether they are vaping? Frankly, parents might not even know what their kids are doing since the e-cigarette devices can be deceptive. Some look like a cigarette, but many look like something else completely, including USB sticks or guitar picks. Some are even built into backpacks or hoodie string ties. Of course, e-cigarette manufacturers have pushed kid-friendly flavors like banana split or chocolate cake to attract younger users.

We have seen a drop in adolescent tobacco use since the 1970s, so it is extremely disappointing to see the dramatic rise in vaping. The National Institute on Drug Abuse report from late last year found more than 37% of 12th graders reporting they had vaped in the previous 12 months. Nearly 12% reported daily vaping. It's important to understand that the danger is especially high in teens whose brains are still developing. What makes all of this especially troubling is that there is no clear answer on why these cases of rapid lung disease are suddenly popping up. Since the rash of illnesses, the California Department of Public Health has joined the American Medical Association, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in issuing warnings about the dangers of vaping. With the illnesses spread across 46 states, it has been difficult to pinpoint one ingredient or chemical in the e-cigarettes that is causing injury. The CDC says THC has been present in a large majority of the cases, 77%, but not all.

Continued on page 11



Inside:

Top Performing Providers in L.A. Care's Physician P4P Program	2	Valuable Information at Your Fingertips	6
Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS)	3	My Health In Motion™: Online Health & Wellness Tools for Patients	8



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HEALTHCARE**
IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SINCE 1997

news in BRIEF

Top Performing Providers in L.A. Care's Physician P4P Program



Congratulations to the physicians and community clinics listed below for providing quality care to L.A. Care's Medi-Cal members, and for outstanding performance in the 2018 Physician Pay-for-Performance (P4P) Program. Providers were selected based on the following categories*: Overall Top Performer, Overall Most Improved, Pediatric Services, Adult Services and Women's Health during Measurement Year (MY) 2018.**

The providers and their staff are being recognized by L.A. Care for their commitment to elevating care in L.A. County, in addition to their incentive payments. We celebrate their outstanding accomplishment!

Solo & Small Group Physicians***	
Category	Physician Name
Top Performer	Dr. Mi-Jeong Lee
Most Improved	Dr. Eliza Fernando
Pediatric Services	Dr. Eun Hwang
	Dr. Kyu Kim
	Dr. Helen Koo
Adult Services	Dr. Lilit Baltaian
	Dr. Thoi Lien
	Dr. Shirish Patel
Women's Health	Dr. Agustin Lara
	Dr. Harold Peart
	Dr. Martha Rodriguez

Community Clinics***	
Category	Clinic Name
Top Performer	Asian Pacific Health Care Venture
Most Improved	Center for Family Health and Education
Pediatric Services	Altamed Health Services
	Northeast Valley Health Corporation
	Valley Community Healthcare
Adult Services	Asian Pacific Health Care Venture
	Korean Health Education Information & Research Center
	Queenscare Health Centers
Women's Health	Asian Pacific Health Care Venture
	Eisner Health
	Northeast Valley Health Corporation

***Pediatric Services** include *Appropriate Testing for Children with Pharyngitis (CWP)*, *Childhood Immunization Status – Combo 10 (CIS-10)*, *Immunizations for Adolescents – Combo 2 (IMA-2)*, and *Well-Child Visits in the Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Years of Life (W34)*.

Adult Services include *HbA1c Screening (CDC-A1C)*, *HbA1c Control (< 8.0%) (CDC)*, *Eye Exam (CDC-REE)*, *Annual Monitoring for Patients on Persistent Medications – Diuretics (MPM-DIU)* and *Avoidance of Antibiotic Treatment in Adults with Acute Bronchitis (AAB)*

Women's Health includes *Breast Cancer Screening (BCS)*, *Cervical Cancer Screening (CCS)*, *Chlamydia Screening (CHL)*, *Timeliness of Prenatal Care and Postpartum Care (PPC-Post, PPC-Pre)*.

**Providers had to have at least 30 eligible members per measure and at least three scored measures within a category to be included for recognition. Performance is based on administrative data received by L.A. Care.

***Providers are shown in alphabetical order by last name.

Helping Patients Maintain Independence

Patients who are aging, chronically ill, or have a disability may experience difficulty with their activities of daily living. L.A. Care's **Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS)** benefits offer a broad range of medical and personal care assistance. Since April 2014, L.A. Care has been providing coordinated MLTSS services to eligible seniors and individuals with disabilities. MLTSS programs that we can help your patients access include the following:

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS): Enables seniors and people with disabilities to hire a caregiver to assist with daily needs. Approximately 60,000 L.A. Care members are receiving help through IHSS to assist them with services such as cooking, cleaning, personal care, and administering medications.

Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP): Provides seniors 65 years and older with intensive care coordination of home services. Through this program, a nurse case manager and a social worker conducts an assessment of a member's health and other needs in order to identify, arrange, and provide members help with accessing resources. Approximately 1,000 L.A. Care members receive social and health care coordination assistance through MSSP.

Community-Based Adult Services (CBAS): Provides professional nursing services; physical and speech therapies; mental health and social services; and nutritional meals for eligible members 18 and older in an adult day healthcare center. Over 8,000 L.A. Care members receive socialization and health care support through CBAS.

Long-Term Care (LTC): Provides continuous skilled nursing care services to eligible members in a nursing home with physical or mental conditions. This includes room and board and other medically necessary care and interventions. Over 8,000 L.A. Care members are receiving around-the-clock care through the LTC benefit.



L.A. Care's MLTSS Department assists members with:

- Identifying and coordinating access to MLTSS benefits
- Navigating MLTSS assessment or reassessment processes
- Identifying and coordinating access to non-plan community resources

To make a referral for any of the above benefits, the MLTSS Referral Form can be found on the Provider Forms section on L.A. Care's website: [lacare.org](https://www.lacare.org). For more information about these programs, providers are encouraged to call the MLTSS Department at **1.855.427.1223**.



Vital Signs

Managing Seasonal Allergies



Spring is in the air, and so are pollen and other seasonal allergy triggers. Patients sensitive to spring allergies may be experiencing:

- Itchy/watery eyes
- Sneezing
- Dark circles under the eyes
- Scratchy throat
- Runny/stuffy nose
- Post-nasal drip

Due to the availability of numerous over-the-counter remedies, many patients choose to self-medicate without consulting their doctor and may not be choosing the most appropriate treatment for their symptoms. Patients may not realize that unmanaged allergy symptoms can impact sleep quality and decrease productivity during the day.

Physicians should seek to determine the exact cause of the allergy through a skin test and once identified, the first level of treatment should be avoidance, if possible. If avoidance is not practical, there are many medications, previously by prescription, that are now available over-the-counter.

Appropriate treatments to manage seasonal allergies include steroid nasal sprays, antihistamines and antihistamine/decongestant combinations. Please review the Formulary on the L.A. Care website at [lacare.org](https://www.lacare.org) for the list of covered medications.

Alcohol Misuse Screening and Counseling

The Alcohol Misuse Screening and Counseling (AMSC) is a primary care physician screening and behavioral counseling model designed to identify members engaged in risky or hazardous drinking. Members should be provided with brief behavioral counseling to reduce alcohol misuse and/or be referred to mental health and/or alcohol use disorder services, as medically necessary. Primary Care Providers (PCP) are responsible for screening for alcohol misuse as part of their routine care.

Adults must be offered an approved screening tool within 120 days of enrollment and every three years thereafter, with annual reviews of members' answers. If a member screens positive (Yes, to the alcohol pre-screen question), the PCP should offer the expanded, validated alcohol screening tool required by DHCS. These tools are:

- Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT)
- AUDIT C *Consumption

These screenings should be administered annually. After members are screened and evaluated, and it is determined that they meet criteria for alcohol use disorder, they should be referred for further evaluation and treatment.

For Substance Use Disorder treatment (for ALL levels of impairment), please have the member contact:

- L.A. County Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control at **1.844.804.7500**, for members enrolled in Cal MediConnect (CMC) and Medi-Cal (MCLA).
- **Beacon Health Options** at **1.877.344.2858**, for members enrolled in L.A. Care Covered (LACC) and PASC-SEIU.



For all other requests for behavioral health services, please contact **Beacon Health Options** at **1.877.344.2858**.





Vital Signs

Valuable Information at Your Fingertips: Available 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 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
- 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
- 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/recredentialing 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 Relations team at **1.213.694.1250**, ext. 4719. **1.866.LA.CARE6 (1.866.522.2736)**.

Medi-Cal DUR Articles Impacting Providers

The Department of Health Services (DHCS) releases monthly Drug Utilization Review (DUR) articles which provide timely and relevant information impacting providers and their patients.

ALERT



“Improving the Quality of Care: Risks Associated With Use of Gabapentin”

On December 19, 2019, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced updates to safety labels for gabapentinoids (gabapentin, pregabalin) because of the increased risk of fatal respiratory depression. Gabapentin is often prescribed concomitantly with opioids for pain management therapy and utilization rates for Medi-Cal patients have doubled since 2008. Prescriptions for gabapentin should be limited to FDA-approved diagnoses and the potential risks and benefits should be considered when prescribed concomitantly with opioids.

https://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/dur/Articles/dured_30152.pdf



ACEs Aware Offers Educational Webinars for Providers

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Aware is hosting a series of webinars that will offer practical information to help providers integrate ACE screening and response into their clinic and workflows.

Building Resilience in the Workforce

April 29 Noon – 1:00 p.m.

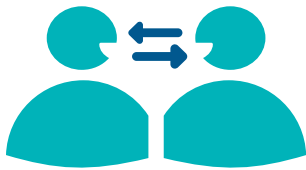
Screening for ACEs and Toxic Stress, Clinical Algorithm – Pediatrics

May 27 Noon – 1:00 p.m.



Register at: acesaware.org/heal/educational-events

Better Communication = Better Care



L.A. Care offers no-cost face-to-face interpreting services, including American Sign Language. Use of trained qualified interpreters not only complies with state and federal regulatory requirements, it also leads to increased patient health knowledge, and decreases challenges with patient-provider encounters. As you continue to deliver the best care to your diverse patient population, here are some tips on how to request interpreting services and how to cancel or change a request.

For Telephonic Appointments

Call **1.855.322.4034** to request a telephonic interpreter. Have your physician's NPI and L.A. Care member's ID ready.

For Face-to-Face Appointments

Call **1.866.522.2736** to place your interpreter request. Provide the following information:

- Language requested
- Date, time and length of the appointment
- Provider specialty
- Purpose of appointment (consultation, annual physical exam, follow-up, etc.)
- Full address and phone number: include suite and floor numbers
- Type of location (hospital, clinic, doctor's office, lab, etc.)
- Provider's name
- Contact person at provider's office (if available)
- Gender preference, if any. If gender preference is not available, is member okay with other gender?

For Cancellations or Changes

Call **1.866.522.2736** at **least 24 hours in advance** to notify us of any cancellations, or if the date, time or location of the appointment has changed. Quality health care depends upon good communication between the physician and the patient. Timely requests of interpreting services and advance cancellation notice helps us ensure that your patients will have access to interpreting services when they need it most.

Best Practices for Working With a Medical Interpreter

1. Before the session, hold a brief introductory session with the interpreter.
2. Allow enough time for the session. Remember that messages are conveyed twice.
3. Address and speak directly to the patient. Speak clearly and at a normal speed.
4. Keep it simple: Avoid using acronyms, medical jargon and technical terms.
5. Speak in short sentences and pause frequently.

Remember: Do not rely on friends and family to interpret for the patient, except in emergency situations!

For more tips and information on providing culturally sensitive care, download our Provider Toolkit for Serving Diverse Populations: lacare.org/providers/provider-resources/tools-toolkits/toolkits



My Health In Motion

Online Health & Wellness Tools for Patients

L.A. Care Health Plan's *My Health In Motion*[™] is an online one-stop shop for health and wellness information and resources for patients. This website offers personalized wellness tools to L.A. Care direct line of business members, including:

- Meal plans and healthy recipes
- Workout tips and hundreds of educational videos
- One-on-one health coaching with a health educator and/or registered dietitian
- Interactive workshops and easy to use tools for weight management, tobacco cessation, stress management, depression, and many more topics

To access *My Health In Motion*[™], members should:

- Go to lacare.org. Click "Member Sign-In."
- Log in to the L.A. Care Connect member portal.
- Click the "*My Health In Motion*" tab.



If you have questions, please contact Health Education staff at **1.855.856.6943**.



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

Kaiser Permanente:
1.888.576.6225

Blue Shield Promise Health Plan:
1.800.609.4166 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 and lacarecovered.org or calmediconnectla.org.

Preventing Medical Fraud and Identity Theft



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

1. Check medical records to make sure they match the patient's condition. Give them a copy of their 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
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. The patient will be given an FTC Identity Theft Affidavit which they should print out and save. Patients can also call **1.877.438.4338**.
5. Advise your patients to file a report with their local police department.

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.

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.



Message From L.A. Care Health Plan's Chief Medical Officer

Continued from cover page.

While researchers continue to look at the causes of the illnesses, physicians must remind patients that the use of any product containing nicotine is unsafe, including e-cigarettes. Physicians should also be doing the following, especially if someone presents with a respiratory complaint. Physicians should ask patients specifically if they vape and if so, ask what they are vaping. Ask how often they are vaping and where they are getting their vaping supplies. This information can not only help physicians in treating their patients, but they can provide valuable information to the CDC and California health agencies who are addressing the crisis on a wider level.

Some agencies have been sounding an alarm for years, but it has taken this string of serious illnesses and deaths to generate the significant and coordinated response we are now seeing. Physicians can play an important role, but they must first educate themselves about these devices that had been touted as a smoking cessation tool. They aren't working as supposedly intended. They are doing extreme harm. "Stop vaping" is the message that must be spread far and wide. We just have to hope that people – especially teens – will listen.

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®

L.A. Care Health Plan

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Progress Notes

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR PHYSICIAN PARTNERS

Progress Notes

In this issue

- 04** Managing Seasonal Allergies
- 05** Alcohol Misuse Screening and Counseling
- 07** Medi-Cal DUR Articles Impacting Providers
- 08** Better Communication = Better Care



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 under the "For Providers" section to select the "Newsletter Sign Up" link today!

News Alert



Managed Long-Term Services and Supports

SEE PAGE 3