

# touchpoints

Connecting you to the Heritage Provider Network

Issue 22 | Summer 2015

## New Concierge-Level Services

Ensuring Optimal Patient Experience



### »» EXCITING CHANGES!

Regal Medical Group and Lakeside Community Healthcare are ensuring ongoing quality. *Find out how! – on page 2*

### »» WHAT'S INSIDE

**FEATURED STORY:** Concierge-Level Services .....P2-4  
**GROUP SPOTLIGHTS:** Cal MediConnect .....P4-6  
**CLINICAL UPDATE:** Clostridium Difficile Treatment .....P7



We are seeing many technological advancements and innovations. It's thrilling to be on the cusp of these revolutionary new practices! We are constantly bringing these technologies to our patient populations and communities.

In this issue, you'll see how we are bringing an even higher level of customer service to our patients. In our next issue, we will delve deeper into what each of our groups is doing to meet and surpass our goals. I know that the outcomes will be outstanding.

You can see by reading this issue of *Touchpoints* how hard we strive to deliver compassion and quality to every life we touch. We're constantly at the forefront of the latest and greatest, delivering results we didn't even dream possible a decade ago.

*Richard Merkin, M.D.*  
President and CEO of HPN



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CLICK OF YOUR FINGERTIPS:**

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**Watch for more  
information in the next issue!**

This is the first of a two-part series about what Heritage's groups are doing across Southern California.

# Concierge-Level Services

## Ensuring Optimal Patient Customer Service



**Patient engagement. Positive outcomes.**  
Patients who trust and follow the course of treatment given to them by their doctors, ensuring their continued health and well-being.

For more than a year, the medical group operations team at Regal Medical Group and Lakeside Community Healthcare have been working closely with clinic staff and physicians to ensure optimal patient customer service. The goal is to ensure that each member understands how to navigate the healthcare system and what options exist for them.

## The first step that has been implemented? Bringing aboard several “Member Liaisons,” whose jobs include:



**Conducting welcome calls** to all new seniors and assisting in booking their first visit to one of our primary care physicians and connecting with them again after that appointment to see how it went.



**Connecting with each new member** to enhance retention rates by making ourselves aware of any issues that arise and quickly resolving them.



**Hosting new member orientations** with primary care physicians, pharmacists, health educators, and member liaisons who demonstrate how an HMO provides them with a healthcare team. During these orientations, they also discuss urgent vs. emergent care needs, health and wellness class opportunities, the role of a member liaison, and other benefits available to Regal Medical Group and Lakeside Community Healthcare members.



**Establishing themselves as an ongoing point of contact** and handle service recovery to quickly address any issues or concerns that arise.



**Satisfying and exceeding expectations** for the STAR ratings system, which ensures quality patient care.

## Expanding the use of the Rite-Aid wellness program

Over the past year, more than 2,300 qualifying members were educated and sent to the Rite Aid wellness program for complimentary care coaching. As part of the program, they are encouraged and mentored by care coaches to change some of their lifestyle choices to be in line with a healthier life. Pharmacists also perform a medicine reconciliation to ensure that if they haven't been to their PCP in a while, they are not taking prescriptions unnecessarily or in duplicates.



“Our patients are our guests, and everyone who interacts with them, from the front office receptionist and the nurse who takes them to their room to their doctor, play a crucial role in the overall health and experience of the patient,” said Jackie Ruffing, director of patient experience. “We have made some tremendous strides over the past year and are proud of our results.”

## Five tips for becoming a better listener



Whether you are a physician or office staff, practicing active listening helps form bonds with patients – and builds their trust. Here are five things you can do to deepen your relationship with the patient and provide exemplary service.

- 1. Be aware of your body language**  
Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.
- 2. Listen carefully**  
Pay close attention to what the patient is saying.
- 3. Restate and summarize**  
Review what you have heard; ask clarifying questions.
- 4. Acknowledge**  
Confirm the importance of what they have told you.
- 5. Demonstrate concern**  
By showing your concern, you are communicating that you understand – and care – about the patient.

## Physicians: Have Questions About **CalMediConnect?**

*New toll-free numbers help physicians instantly connect to Cal MediConnect case managers*

Primary care providers can now immediately access case management services for their Cal MediConnect patients. Two new toll-free numbers have been created for physicians – giving them direct contact to a patient’s care management team.

### Typically, physicians call in to:

- Access ICT updates
- Discuss recent hospital or emergency room visits
- Discuss medication management
- Review any complex care management issues



**North:** (844) 266-3850  
**South:** (844) 588-5286

The numbers are operational during regular business hours and answered by a live person. If calls are made outside that call range, physicians can leave a voicemail and their call will be returned as soon as possible or forwarded to an after hours answer service.



## Circle of Excellence Urgent Care Centers Exceptional Patient Care

The “Circle of Excellence” urgent care centers – part of the Regal Medical Group and Lakeside Community Healthcare network – are making a big impact on members across Southern California. The high-quality, convenient, full-service centers add a tremendous resource to a member’s healthcare options, as they see most of the conditions that patients seek care in an emergency room.



These centers were designed to provide patients with quick and efficient care for hundreds of conditions. They also have on-site diagnostic equipment, including phlebotomy and X-ray, to ensure fast treatment and recovery.

**The goal?** To encourage patients to use an urgent care instead of the emergency room for non-emergencies that require immediate care, like colds, wound care, fractures, earaches, burns, and much more.

“We continually screen our urgent care network to ensure we offer patients high quality providers, available at convenient hours, with a variety of testing and treatment options to meet their needs,” said Dan Firestone, MD, RDMS, FAAEM, medical director of Regal Medical Group. “They make a more convenient and pleasant alternative to the ER.”

Dozens of these new urgent care centers are cropping up across Southern California. **Here's what some of them are doing:**



**VIP Urgent Care in Tarzana. Patients are the first priority.**

The center prides itself on extremely short wait times, in-house diagnostic and treatment equipment including ultrasound, X-ray and CT scanner, and other state-of-the-art technology.

*“Because of our focus on organization and efficiency, we are able to spend a lot of time with each patient. Since we are all ER doctors, our urgent care is equipped with the same tools and medications as an ER, which enables us to quickly diagnose and treat each patient we see.”*

— Jaime Diaz, MD ER physician at VIP

18663 Ventura Blvd.  
Suite 200A  
Tarzana, CA 91356

**Phone:**  
818.881.9002



**I-Care Urgent Care and Sports Medicine in Murietta. There is no waiting room.**

Patients sign in and then are ushered into a room, where they are immediately seen and treated. To ensure the fast quality of care, there is a tracking board for staff to see that turns red if the patient has been there past a specified period of time.

*“We think of our center as a hyper acute urgent care. We treat a variety of conditions, including sports injuries, and continually keep our patients moving. Since we have board-certified ER physicians on staff and ER nurses on call, we can address and treat many conditions.”*

— Richard Steele, MD Owner of I-Care

27722 Clinton  
Keith Rd.  
Murrieta, CA 92562

**Phone:**  
951.878.9820



**Urgent 9 Urgent Care in Glendale. An imaging and CT center is in-house.**

This enables the doctors to see and treat a wide range of conditions and even have short stay observations for conditions ranging from pulmonary embolisms to abdominal care.

*“Patients who come here see substantially lower costs than they would in an ER – and have much, much shorter wait times. We’re helping our community create better health for themselves.”*

— Manuel P. Momjian, MD Physician at Urgent 9

1000 Central Ave.  
Suite 140  
Glendale, CA 91202

**Phone:**  
818.641.5380

## Collaboration is Key

### Desert Oasis Healthcare

Creative solutions abound within HPN groups to address the challenges of meeting the needs of the Dual Demonstration project. Desert Oasis Healthcare (DOHC), like its sister groups, has been actively working on ways to increase the engagement activities that will translate into a stable population more amenable to outreach services and participation in wellness activities and care management.

With a goal to reach out to this group, DOHC has partnered with the non-profit organization, Partners In Care Foundation (PIC), who use social-worker-type individuals with high connectivity skills to reach these patients. They will be reaching out to the Duals and other at-risk seniors that DOHC has been unable to connect with using usual processes.



PIC performs home visits, completes a comprehensive CSA, and obtains a detailed medication list that is then reconciled by DOHC's pharmacists. In addition, they provide home repairs for safety and evaluate eligibility for additional support services or benefits (e.g., IHSS, CBAS).

“The hand-off to our case management team results in a comprehensive care plan and engagement or re-engagement with DOHC programs,” said Brian Hodgkins, Pharm. D., executive vice president of clinical operations and Heritage California ACO. “What we learn from this pilot should also be transportable to other difficult to reach patients regardless of their coverage status. The results will translate into better health, quality and engagement.”

## NCQA Awards Heritage Provider Network with Certification Status

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) has awarded Heritage Provider Network with certification status for utilization management and recertification for credentialing. The certification was given to HPN for demonstrating compliance with NCQA's stringent requirements in the area of utilization management and credentialing, and will be reflected in the NCQA Utilization Management and Credentialing Report Card.

“I'm very proud we continue to provide the highest quality of care and service to our members as reflected in the NCQA certification award status,” said Dr. Richard Merkin, President and CEO of Heritage Provider Network. “I congratulate everyone in the HPN family for their ongoing dedication and hard work that is directly reflected in this NCQA award.”

**The critically important NCQA certification further strengthens and benefits all of HPN's medical groups and IPA's.**





## Is the Clostridium Difficile (C.diff) Treatment - More C.diff?

Potentially deadly *Clostridium difficile* infections usually occur in patients being treated with antibiotics for some other acute infection. Typically this antibiotic-associated infection is treated with more antibiotics. But one group is exploring the possibility of treating *C. diff* with a dose of...more *C. difficile*.

The “fight-fire-with-fire” approach by doctors at 44 centers in the U.S., Canada and Europe replaced aggressive versions of the bug with some friendlier cousins. A randomized, double-blind trial involving 173 patients with a history of *C. difficile* colitis, published May 5, 2015 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, showed the odds of repeat infection were cut dramatically.

*C. difficile* infections cause diarrhea, abdominal pain and fever. They have been a major problem in hospitals around the world, with around 29,000 deaths in the U.S. alone linked to the bug each year.

The bacteria are able to take over the gut when a course of antibiotics kills off the bugs that normally live there. Treating with yet more antibiotics puts some people into a vicious cycle as the drugs leave the gut vulnerable once again.

So the team at Loyola University Health System in Illinois conceived of the idea of giving patients spores of non-toxin-producing *C. difficile*. The friendlier bacteria should occupy the spaces in the gut that the toxic *C. difficile* normally inhabits, and thus prevent it from coming back.

### The trial showed the healthier bacteria took hold in the gut 69% of the time.

In those people, just one in 50 faced another infection. Meanwhile, one in three people had renewed symptoms if the bacteria failed to colonize the gut or if they were given placebo treatment.

“A half million people develop pseudomembranous colitis every year in the U.S. from infection with this organism, mostly during a prior hospitalization,” said Patrick Whelan, MD, PhD, Regional Medical Director for Regal Medical Group/Lakeside Community Healthcare. “The dramatic increase in antibiotic resistance and in the number of patient deaths during the last decade has made it clear that we cannot win this arms race with more antibiotics. Recent interest in probiotics and even ‘fecal transplants’ have offered some promise. But the idea of treating *C.diff* infections with non-toxic *C.diff* represents a new approach that may be both lifesaving and inexpensive for one of the more nightmarish challenges we face as hospitalists.”

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Regional Medical Director for Regal Medical Group/Lakeside Community Healthcare