

# touchpoints

Connecting you to the Heritage Provider Network

Issue 24 | Winter 2016



## Making a Difference for Our Medicare Patients



Health Education



Cal MediConnect Program



Vital Care Program



Pharmacy Services

### »» EXCITING UPDATES!

Heritage Provider Network is supporting new innovations in medicine and technology, making big waves in the industry.

Learn all about it on page 6.

### »» WHAT'S INSIDE

#### FEATURED STORY:

Making a Difference for Our Medicare Patients .....P2

HPN SPRINGS INTO ACTION: .....P6

HPN GROUP UPDATES: .....P7



Happy new year! This issue of *TouchPoints* addresses something we can all relate to – support for our senior population. We have many programs and resources in place for the seniors in our communities – and have made a difference in many lives as a result. We also provide support services to caregivers, including the “sandwich generation,” because we know they are crucial to the care of our senior members. I encourage you to read our feature article that describes many of our programs.

We are also pleased to share how we are supporting professorships in regenerative medicine, demonstrating that we are at the forefront of technology. We are also providing an important update about our partnership with Brookings Institute – and I am very proud of what we have accomplished.

We continue to pave the path to new technologies, using new ideas, new strategies, and brilliant methodologies to make a difference in the communities we serve. I know that 2016 is going to be a momentous year.

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



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## Making a Difference for Our Medicare Patients

**Over the course of their lives, they saw actors like Elizabeth Taylor and Clark Gable grace the silver screen, watched on television as the first man walked on the moon, and witnessed the rise of innovation and technology as computers, e-mail, and Smartphones integrated into world culture.**

At HPN, the goal is to help these communities of older Americans enjoy life, taking advantages of the services, programs, and resources available to them. Whether it's free health education classes or help for more serious physical conditions, they have the support they need to continue aging gracefully.

### Providing Solutions

#### Health Education

Healthy eating classes, diabetes management tips, fitness and yoga. With a focus on prevention, HPN provides a slew of resources and health classes free of charge to older adults throughout Southern California. The goals are to provide information, teach skills, promote ways to be active and facilitate effective self-management of chronic conditions. As a result, members feel empowered and more in control of their health.



Fitness Classes



Diabetes Management Tips



Healthy Eating Classes



Yoga Classes

*“As a Medicare member, knowing what’s out there and available is really the key to success. With the right education, tools, and resources, we have the ability to help our patients feel better, remain independent, and have a good quality of life.”*

— Mindy Morgen, MS  
Gerontologist and Director of Patient Engagement and Health Education



## Pharmacy Services

Senior patients have more chronic diseases and multiple conditions and therefore use more prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs – which can lead to more adverse drug events. They also have to deal with the cost of medications, transportation to appointments, and formulary issues.

“Our team of pharmacists and case managers provide many resources and programs to ensure that our senior members are not only taking the right medications for their specific conditions, but are doing so properly,” said Bahar Davidoff, director of pharmacy services. “The biggest issues we have seen are the member not picking up their medications, not remembering how to take them, and not taking them correctly. That’s why we focus so strongly on preventing medication-related issues.”



**The team provides resources to members, such as:**

**Medication reconciliation:** Before a member is discharged from the hospital, a pharmacist from will visit the member, talk to his or her doctor about medications, and review with the patient to make sure instructions are understood.

**Bedside medication delivery:** If a member is unable to leave home and get his or her medications, he or she can be set up by their pharmacy case manager with bedside delivery of their medications, which is facilitated by Walgreens.

**Co-pay assistance program:** “Sometimes, members have had to make a choice between eating and paying for their medications,” said Davidoff. For those members who can’t afford the co-pays for their medication, they can take part in the co-pay assistance program for medications such as insulin for diabetes, inhalers, and more.

**Repackaging of medications:** To make it easier for members to know what medications need to be taken at specific times of day, 30-day customized pill boxes and packaging are provided (e.g., what to take morning, noon, and night).

**Disease management:** For members who have chronic diseases like diabetes or COPD, pharmacists are available at Lakeside Community Healthcare clinics to demonstrate face-to-face how to use the medications. “In this way, we are able to personally show how to correctly use the medication, which helps members immensely,” said Davidoff.



## Vital Care Program

The risk of developing chronic disease increases as a person ages. According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA), 92 percent of older adults have at least one chronic disease; two out of three older adults have multiple chronic conditions. For those patients, the Vital Care Program can make a big difference. Through the program, each member is assigned a nurse case manager who works closely with them, following their treatment and progress on a regular basis.

In addition to nurse case managers, the Vital Care interdisciplinary team is made up of physicians, pharmacists, coordinators, and even select social and support service agencies. This dedicated team provides an extremely focused and comprehensive care program catered to each member's individual needs.

Through Vital Care, members are able to get individual assistance with psychosocial and clinical issues as well. Vital Care nurses and pharmacists are available in Regal Medical Group and Lakeside Community Healthcare clinics to help those who have chronic conditions but can't afford their medications. If a member is having other issues like housing, needing ramps at their home, or are not able to pay their bills, the nurses can provide connections to non-profit agencies that can help.

"We are responsible for our member holistically, which means that we want to help them clinically and psychosocially," said Tamara Bedoy, director of Vital Care.

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## The Sandwich Generation

Generally defined as those in their 40s and 50s who are squeezed between caring for both their own children and aging parents, the "Sandwich Generation" often is overwhelmed by the financial and emotional cost of care.

According to 2013 data from the Pew Research Center, nearly half of adults in the sandwich generation have a parent 65 or older and are either raising a young child or financially supporting an older child, often leading to severe emotional and financial stress for everyone involved.

## Cal MediConnect Program

Cal MediConnect, a program designed to serve those who are eligible for both Medicare and MediCal, provides dual beneficiaries through Regal Medical Group and Lakeside Community Healthcare with coordinated, comprehensive care. This includes medical, dental, vision, behavioral health, long-term institutional, and home and community-based services.

The program is backed by case managers who provide clinical resources and caregiver support, like in-home supportive services and transportation assistance. Specially-designated "member advocates" work directly with each beneficiary to help access programs and available resources.

"The advocates speak a variety of threshold languages, like Spanish, Farsi, and Vietnamese, making it easy for them to communicate with the entire community," Eicher said. "Member advocates typically schedule one-on-one welcome meetings to get a feel for the member's individual situation, and then work closely with him or her over a period of time."

Advocates visit the members in the hospital, at local coffee shops, or in the emergency room. The team also visits Cal MediConnect patients in the hospital before they are discharged. "In this way, the members know and understand that they have someone in their court who will be their advocate and teach them how to use the system effectively," Eicher added.

Cal MediConnect members are offered a "Circle of Care" cell phone with pre-programmed contact numbers for their doctors, case management, pharmacists, and member advocate. In 2015, the member advocates reached out to 3,500 members – making a positive difference in each one of their lives. *See Landa's Story on next page >*

*"It can be difficult and time consuming for someone to be taking care of a parent and their children. That's how we can help. We can become their advocate, working with them and their families to provide support and resources."*

— Hana Eicher  
Vice President of Patient Engagement and Outreach,  
Regal Medical Group

# True Stories of CalMediConnect

Through the Cal MediConnect program at Regal Medical Group and Lakeside Community Healthcare, senior members have someone advocating for them – providing physical and emotional support to better their lives and situations.



## Landa's Story

When Landa talks about the help she received from Regal Medical Group, her face lights up. She had been going through a difficult time, having some medical issues and feeling out of sorts. It was hard for her to know what to do next, to know what steps she needed to take to feel better.

After receiving a flyer in the mail about an upcoming member orientation at Denny's, she decided to attend, expecting to learn what medical insurance options were available to her. What she ended up learning was that – and so much more. She met Hilda, a Cal MediConnect Outreach Supervisor, and from that moment on, her life took an instant, positive turn.

“We talked for awhile and she set up a face-to-face meeting with Gracie, a member advocate, at a Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf,” she says. “When I met with Gracie shortly after the member

orientation, we talked about the things that were happening with me, including some questions I had about my medications.”

Once she heard Landa's story, Gracie immediately got in contact with Landa's pharmacy, primary care physician, and specialists and resolved all of her issues quickly. The face-to-face meeting was only an hour, but it helped change Landa's life.

*“Gracie calls and checks in with me often and I know I have someone to call if I ever need help. It's a wonderful feeling,” Landa says.*

Because she has Gracie in her corner, she can relax and do things she enjoys, like sit in the sun at her favorite coffee shop and chat with friends.



### Feature story sources:

<https://www.ncoa.org/resources/fact-sheet-economic-security-for-seniors/>

<http://www.governing.com/topics/health-human-services/gov-poverty-among-elderly-harder-to-ignore.html>

<http://www.cnbc.com/2015/03/31/being-stuck-in-sandwich-generation-is-no-baloney.html#>

<https://www.ascp.com/articles/about-ascp/ascp-fact-sheet>

[http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public\\_policy\\_institute/econ\\_sec/2013/income-and-poverty-of-older-americans-AARP-ppi-econ-sec.pdf](http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public_policy_institute/econ_sec/2013/income-and-poverty-of-older-americans-AARP-ppi-econ-sec.pdf)

<http://www.cdc.gov/aging/data/stateofaging.htm>

# Heritage in the News

## HPN Springs Into Action; Supports New Innovation

**HPN Partners with Caltech to Support Translational Sciences and Health Technology.**

A new partnership will support translational sciences and health technology at Caltech thanks to a three-year commitment from Heritage Medical Research Institute (HMRI), a nonprofit founded and led by Caltech trustee and President and CEO of HPN, Richard Merkin, M.D.



From left to right: Andre Hoelz, Mikhail Shapiro, Mitchell Guttman, Viviana Gradinaru, Richard Merkin, M.D., Thomas F. Rosenbaum, Sarah Reisman, Azita Emami, Sarkis Mazmanian, and Hyuck Choo.

With this gift, the Institute and HMRI have created the Heritage Research Institute for the Advancement of Medicine and Science at Caltech. Eight Caltech faculty members from three academic divisions have been selected for the inaugural cohort of Heritage researchers, with a ninth yet to be named. These scientists and engineers—who will hold the title of Heritage Principal Investigators—will receive salary and research support. They will also have opportunities to learn and collaborate with each other, along with practicing physicians in the local community.

“Dr. Merkin’s insights into the changing landscape of modern medicine, his devotion to supporting young talent, and his exceptional generosity have come together to create an innovative program to advance translational research,” said President Thomas F. Rosenbaum, holder of the Sonja and William Davidow Presidential Chair and professor of physics.

Dr. Merkin has witnessed the rapid evolution of medicine and patient care in recent decades—and says he sees monumental changes on the horizon. “I think some of the greatest breakthroughs this century will occur in biology, and Caltech is particularly positioned to be a leader in this area,” Dr. Merkin said. “Our biggest problems are our biggest opportunities and Caltech is gifted in looking at the world not as it is, but as it could be.”

## Dr. Richard Merkin Establishes Fund for the University of California Keck School of Medicine

Dr. Merkin and the Merkin Family Foundation recently announced a commitment to the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine to establish the Merkin Fund for Professorships in Regenerative Medicine. The gift will provide sustained support and training for four professorships in regenerative medicine as these professors blaze new trails in this critically important field. The gift will also provide resources for each Merkin professor to initiate and assemble complementary clinical collaborations with interdisciplinary teams.

*“I’m delighted to establish the Merkin Fund to further support research and discoveries that can unlock debilitating chronic diseases and develop new therapies. Successful research can play an integral role in overcoming barriers for millions of Americans suffering from nerve disease, diabetes and perhaps in solving some of the mysteries surrounding Alzheimer’s disease as well.”*

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

“This gift supports USC’s progress in assembling and cultivating one of the most dynamic teams of research scientists in the field of regenerative medicine. I am confident that these faculty will make transformational contributions to human health in the years to come,” said Andy McMahon, PhD, FRS, chair of the Department of Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine.

Keck School of  
Medicine of USC



## Making an Impact on Our Community

### Bakersfield Family Medical Center

#### Caring for Their Communities

Bakersfield Family Medical Center (BFMC) and their team members take great pride in their community. A few months ago, BFMC launched the “Care for Community Committee,” a group of employees who volunteer their time at various community events. BFMC provides their volunteers with special BFMC recognition tee-shirts that feature the phrase, **“Because We Care for Our Community.”**

Since launching the committee, the team has already attended the American Heart Association Heart Walk, Out of Darkness (Suicide Prevention Walk), Honor Flight – Welcoming Our Veterans Home, and Autism on the Run.

*“We support our local community and all of our members. That’s why this program is so important to all of us – and we have big plans for 2016.”*

— Kristy Webb,  
Marketing Supervisor

### Heritage Victor Valley Medical Group

#### Joining Forces with the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation

To support the children in their community with juvenile diabetes, or type 1 diabetes, Heritage Victor Valley Medical Group (HVVMG) has created the first-ever support group in the high desert. They provide monthly support group meetings designed to bring families together in their support of their children with the disease.

The idea started when Regional Case Manager for Heritage Victor Valley Medical Group, Sherree Manning, LVN, had a patient with type 1 diabetes. The 19-year-old girl didn’t have a local place to go for support. Manning reached out to the Juvenile Diabetic Foundation and quickly learned that the organization was looking for a location in the High Desert to hold classes.

*“We have families up here who work, and the last thing they want to do is drive 45 more minutes,” she said. “They are looking for other families to gain ideas and suggestions from and who understand what they are going through.”*

— Sherree Manning, LVN

### High Desert Medical Group **Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program: Seeing Great Results**

High Desert Medical Group (HDMG) has started a Pulmonary Rehabilitation program run by a respiratory therapist with physician and pharmacist oversight. The program, spearheaded by Dr. Anthony Dulgeroff, M.D. and Eric Oak, Pharm.D., aims to address a much needed therapy for patients suffering from COPD and other respiratory diseases.

The eight-week pulmonary rehab program helps to improve the well-being of people who have chronic breathing problems such as COPD, emphysema, idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, or cystic fibrosis. The goal is to improve quality of life by:

- Decreasing respiratory symptoms and complications
- Encouraging self-management and control over daily functioning
- Improving physical conditioning and exercise performance
- Improving emotional well-being
- Reducing hospitalizations

*“This revolutionary program is the first of its kind in the Antelope Valley and has been a much needed program given the number of patients with respiratory ailments in the high desert,” said Oak. “It also encourages patients to enroll in our smoking cessation program so that we can help them kick the habit.”*

— Eric Oak, Pharm.D