FAST FACTS

Mobile Clinic Adds Stop in Echo Park

By Michael Wilson

The LAC+USC Breathmobile is adding a new stop in Echo Park starting in November thanks to a new partnership with Barlow Respiratory Hospital and the L.A. Unified School District. Every six weeks the van will park at Barlow Hospital to screen and treat children with asthma who are enrolled at nearby Logan and Castelar elementary schools. Services will include pulmonary function testing, allergy skin testing, medications and education.

Barlow Hospital has been a fixture of the Chavez Ravine since 1903 when it opened as a tuberculosis sanatorium. Medical director Dr. David Nelson said the area has a high need for asthma care because more than half the county’s asthma cases are in this zip code. Every six weeks the van will park at Barlow Hospital to screen and treat children with asthma who are enrolled at nearby Logan and Castelar elementary schools.

The Breathmobile was created in 1995 to improve preventative asthma care for underserved children in the county. The program is based at LAC+USC Medical Center and run by the Department of Pediatrics.

(See ‘MOBILE’ on back)

A Message From the Director

This is my last message to you as Director of the Department of Health Services. But I remain the Director of the Health Agency, and will continue to communicate with you in that role until I leave for New York City around the end of the year. Thank you to all of the people who emailed me, or came up to me, to wish me well. The biggest surprise of making my announcement was how many people in DHS and the Agency have or are taking care of their parents. I realize it is something we don’t talk about as much as we talk about our children. In the past two years, as the health of my parents has deteriorated, I still responded when anyone asked me about my family. My aging parents—she’s 82 and 6 feet tall and still sweet. Roxie is 13 and loves to surf and still wakes up every morning singing. I haven’t talked nearly as much about how torn I felt about my parents being in New York without sufficient help. I learned in sending out my message how many of you have struggled with this same issue. Many people told me that they understood why I was leaving because it meant so much to them to care for their parents on a daily basis. Others, in situations like mine, spoke of the heartbreak of having aging parents far away. I think as a community we need to talk more about how we care for our parents, and how challenging it is to be in the sandwich generation of young children and aging parents.

I have tremendous confidence in Dr. Christina Ghaly, who is now the Acting Director of DHS. She is smart, hardworking, and a very caring physician. She and I worked together on the patient service at LAC+USC so I watched her in action taking care of patients. Meanwhile, I will be supporting her and the Directors of Public Health and Mental Health for the next several months. Best wishes.

Mitch Katz, M.D.

From Dr. Katz

October 10, 2017

(See ‘HOPE’ on back)

Hope Reigns at Hill

By Michael Wilson

Dr. Astrid Heger (left) receives a scroll from LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis to commemorate the opening the Leonard Hill Hope Center. Also pictured is Dr. Patricia Gordon, founder of CureCervicalCancer and widow of Leonard Hill.

The project is a partnership with the Leonard Hill Charitable Foundation, named for the prolific Hollywood writer, producer and friend of pediatrician and VIP executive director Dr. Astrid Heger, who praised Hill’s commitment to making a difference during his lifetime.

According to data provided by VIP, foster youth moving out of the county system face sobering odds: 45% will be homeless and living on the streets, 46% will not graduate high school, and 50% of females will be pregnant or already have a child.

The project is a partnership with the Leonard Hill Charitable Foundation, named for the prolific Hollywood writer, producer and friend of pediatrician and VIP executive director Dr. Astrid Heger, who praised Hill’s commitment to making a difference during his lifetime.

According to data provided by VIP, foster youth moving out of the county system face sobering odds: 45% will be homeless and living on the streets, 46% will not graduate high school, and 50% of females will be pregnant or already have a child.

Representatives from the LAC+USC Medical Center Breathmobile program, L.A. Unified School District, and Barlow Respiratory Hospital joined families and Dodger great Al Ferrara, Jr. at a ribbon-cutting to kick off the partnership on September 16. The Breathmobile will make regular visits to Barlow Hospital to serve kids with asthma in neighboring elementary schools.

This is my last message to you as Director of the Department of Health Services. But I remain the Director of the Health Agency, and will continue to communicate with you in that role until I leave for New York City around the end of the year. Thank you to all of the people who emailed me, or came up to me, to wish me well. The biggest surprise of making my announcement was how many people in DHS and the Agency have or are taking care of their parents. I realize it is something we don’t talk about as much as we talk about our children. In the past two years, as the health of my parents has deteriorated, I still responded when anyone asked me about my family. My aging parents—she’s 82 and 6 feet tall and still sweet. Roxie is 13 and loves to surf and still wakes up every morning singing. I haven’t talked nearly as much about how torn I felt about my parents being in New York without sufficient help. I learned in sending out my message how many of you have struggled with this same issue. Many people told me that they understood why I was leaving because it meant so much to them to care for their parents on a daily basis. Others, in situations like mine, spoke of the heartbreak of having aging parents far away. I think as a community we need to talk more about how we care for our parents, and how challenging it is to be in the sandwich generation of young children and aging parents.

I have tremendous confidence in Dr. Christina Ghaly, who is now the Acting Director of DHS. She is smart, hardworking, and a very caring physician. She and I worked together on the patient service at LAC+USC so I watched her in action taking care of patients. Meanwhile, I will be supporting her and the Directors of Public Health and Mental Health for the next several months. Best wishes.

Mitch Katz, M.D.

(See ‘MOBILE’ on back)
Satisfaction Kiosks Coming to ACN Clinics
By Juan Ortega

Patients seeking care in DHS clinics will soon be able to share their experience by tapping a face on a kiosk. The Ambulatory Care Network (ACN) in Martin Luther King Jr. Outpatient Center (MLK) are launching a new patient experience and employee engagement pilot that is the brainchild of the Service Excellence Sub-Committee of the Labor Management Transformation Council (LMTC). This joint effort aims to nurture a culture of partnership in service excellence.

The HappyOrNot kiosks feature a screen where a single question can be viewed in multiple languages; patients respond by tapping the emoji-style happy or unhappy face that best reflects their experience. Because it’s quick and simple, HappyOrNot kiosks get a high response rate and results are available the next day in easy to read tables that will be available to everyone.

Immediate and transparent feedback from the HappyOrNot kiosks will be great, but it’s only a starting point. As the ACN and MLK roll out the kiosks, they will be paired with other efforts to engage both patient and employees in problem solving to improve patient and staff experiences.

View a product demonstration here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cg8y3X1SKc

Just Culture' Focus of Town Hall

Health Agency leaders joined labor partners at a Town Hall session on August 30 to herald the rollout of ‘Just Culture’ across the three departments. The Health Agency is adopting Just Culture principles of kindness and fairness to build a more accountable, happier, productive and safe workplace. The new policy will impact over 30,000 combined employees.

Agency leaders said Just Culture was critical for healthy system transformation and that employees should feel motivated to come to work every day and do their best work, knowing that as long as they do their best, they will be supported when adverse events or mistakes happen in the course of business.

A Just Culture strikes a balance between human and system accountability that encourages open reporting of ‘near misses’ to establish a strong safety culture. Incidents are viewed within a matrix that factors in the role of system problems, and an employee’s actions, so that safety incidents can be resolved equitably.

“It’s about coming together to create a work environment where we all thrive and the people we serve are in service of benefit because we are all able to do our best work, and we can’t do that unless we create a genuine learning community,” said L.A. County Department of Public Health director Dr. Barbara Ferrer.

A team from the MLK Outpatient Center presented a skit applying Just Culture concepts to a real workplace incident. Participants also watched an SEIU-produced video of supervisors and front-line workers from DMH, DPH and DHS discussing Just Culture merits. Training sessions are underway for managers and front-line staff.

To view the session, click here.

(MOBILE)

“We strive to keep kids out the emergency room and in school,” says Dr. Marilyn Li, associate professor of Pediatrics, Keck School of Medicine of USC. “This partnership with the Breathmobile and Barlow Respiratory Hospital will allow us to serve two schools at a centralized location and improve local community health.”

Every patient receives care at no cost to the family. If patients cannot afford medications, sample medications are provided when available. Having the Breathmobile mobile clinics allow students and families to access clinic services in their own community and decreases length of time required for school absences and parental work absences.