



Director's Desk

Christina R. Ghaly, MD
Director

DHS is made up of incredibly talented, caring and committed individuals. I see evidence and hear stories of the dedication, passion and resourcefulness of our staff every day. Whether it's going the extra mile to help a patient or a colleague, DHS staff are ready to help. It's what we do. DHS staff are also eager and ready to innovate, to try new things and to solve problems in new ways. This is also what we do, and it makes our system better every time. This issue is full of examples. First, DHS received numerous awards granted by the Quality and Productivity Commission, a County initiative focused on fostering and rewarding innovation. The awards included a Top Ten Countywide recognition for Harbor's Homeless Task Force, and a Customer Service Award for LAC+USC's efforts to address food

insecurity in primary care. These and other awards are well-deserved -- demonstrating just a few examples of the good work that goes on everyday to make our services better for patients.

The next articles highlight specific outreach events and programs targeting certain populations within our system. Whether its building awareness and support for LGBTQ+ staff and patients at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center, expanding support for opioid-addicted patients in our hospitals' emergency departments, brainstorming ways we can better serve our elderly patients, or even coordinating medical activities halfway around the world as in the case of Bismarck "Biz" Nwadike, the common theme of all of these efforts is initiative being taken by DHS staff for a cause they believe in. That's the root of most good work in the world; DHS is no different. With your talent and passion, you can lead change in your unit, in your clinic, or in your work area. I can't wait to see what stories will be shared tomorrow!

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Innovating for Impact

By Connie Salgado-Sanchez

On Wednesday October 10, 2018, the Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Commission hosted the 32nd Productivity and Quality Awards luncheon at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion Music Center. In attendance were administrators and staff from many County Departments and four members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. Suzie Suh from CBS Los Angeles served as the Master of Ceremonies. The event recognized innovative programs throughout the County.

The Department of Health Services (DHS) received awards for several projects within the Top Ten Awards category that recognized the ten most impressive projects, within evaluation guidelines. Among the Top Ten Awards recognizing DHS was **Homeless Task Force: Home Is Where Your Health Is**. This program is a direct response to the recognition that persons experiencing homelessness inappropriately seek services from the Emergency Department. The Clinical Social Work Department at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center formed a specialized task force to link persons experiencing



homelessness to placement and appropriate community services. During the first year, over 250 individuals were placed and saved the County approximately \$5,682,332.

Other awards within the Top Ten Awards category included **Campus Kilpatrick and the LA Model**. This is a collaborative effort with Probation, Public Works, DHS, Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Los Angeles County Office of Education. The Campus Kilpatrick LA Model is designed to be trauma-responsive and provide youth with pertinent resources to transition safely and effectively back into the community. Another Top Ten Award recipient was **Exide's Exit: Unprecedented Community Empowerment**. This is a partnership

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between the First Supervisorial District, DPH, DHS and DMH. Efforts included permanently closing the Exide battery recycling plant, identifying chemicals released into the environment and educating area residents about the associated risks of the toxins. This has led to a concerted effort to provide resources to the affected communities to mitigate the risks and facilitate the cleanup of the affected areas.

The Grand Eagle awards - Gold, Silver and Bronze respectively, recognize the top three projects from throughout the County. This year the Gold Eagle award went to **Parks After Dark** (Parks and Recreation, DMH, DPH, Department of Children and Family Services, Probation, Sheriff, and Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services). The Silver Eagle was awarded to **ADD to Improve Pre-Hospital Patient Care** (Fire Department); and the Bronze Eagle was awarded to **Hepatitis A Outbreak Response** (DPH, DHS, Sheriff’s Department, Fire Department and Human Resources).

DHS also received:

Commission Special Award in the Customer Service Category

- Addressing Food Insecurity in Adult Primary Care at LAC+USC Medical Center, Project Managers Dr. Jagruti Shukla and Dr. Barbara Rubino

Outstanding Teamwork Award

- Reporting that Counts-“Faster, Cheaper, Better” Collaboration with Contracts & Grants, Kathy Hanks

Traditional Plaque Awards

- Obstetrics and Gynecology AfterCare Program, Project Manager Latisha Stewart-Smith, NP

Certificates of Recognition

- An Integrated Approach to Serving Vulnerable Youth; Project Managers Dr. Shannon Thyne and Dr. Joseph Rojas

- Reprocessing SUDs Makes the Old New Again; Project Managers Dawna Willsey, RN, Carlos Gutierrez III and Veronica Davis
- Reduce Psych ER Patient to Staff Assaults, Project Manager Sunday Okundolor, RN
- My Health Folder-Preparing for Surgery at LAC+USC , Project Managers Dolores Gibbs, PhD and Kari Cole, EdD
- Surgical Navigation Access Program, Project Manager Dr. Peter Balingit
- Physicians and Pharmacists Team Up to Improve Care, Project Managers Dr. Jagruti Shukla, Dr. Josh Banerjee, Beatrisa Bannister, PharmD
- Improving Exclusive Breast Milk Feeding Rates, Project Managers Tanya Vasserman, RN and Danielle DeVito, RN
- Implementing a Perioperative Surgical Home, Project Manager Dr. Sachin Gupta
- A “Dose” of Patient Safety Every Day, Project Managers Dr. Arun Patel and Marife Mendoza, RN
- Nurse Practitioner Fast Track Program in the ED, Project Manager Aristides Orue, NP
- Prime Medication Reconciliation Initiative, Project Manager Dr. Wei-An (Andy) Lee
- Improve Lab Workflow for Patient Discharge, Project Manager Fred Lowder
- Health Administration Leadership at Olive View, Project Manager Armen Carapetian
- Primary Care Staff Wellness and Vitality, Project Managers Dr. Jagruti Shukla and Dr. Barbara Rubino

The Quality and Productivity Commission reviews submissions of applications for projects throughout the County every year. The projects must be fully implemented for a year in order to be considered for an award. The criteria for consideration and the timeline can be found at: <http://qpc.lacounty.gov/Commission-Programs/Productivity-and-Quality-Awards-Program>

Congratulations to the recipients of the awards!

Around DHS

Olive View-UCLA Medical Center Hosts First LGBTQ+ Coming Out Day Health Fair and Educational Panels

By Janine Roach, MD

The LGBTQ+ Committee at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center hosted its first annual LGBTQ+ health fair on October 11 in honor of National Coming Out Day. Our committee worked diligently to promote the event to our hospital staff, patients and community members through social media, flyers, and email blasts. In addition, local mental health clinics, primary care clinics, the Board of Supervisors and community partners invited their members to attend. Local businesses also promoted the event and donated food and prizes, demonstrating broad support for the LGBTQ+ community.

Because of our collaborations, the event was a huge success. Approximately 400 people attended the event. Eighteen organizations participated and provided information about a number of LGBTQ+ topics including HIV testing and prevention, local LGBT centers, transgender health care, as well as resources available for older adults, survivors of intimate partner violence and people with substance use disorders. Employee health staff and students from local nursing colleges provided free flu shots and Costco performed free hearing tests.

Along with the health fair, a panel of transgender community leaders shared with our staff, residents and students their personal experiences in the health care sys-



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tem. Attendees learned about the unique challenges and obstacles trans people face and gained insight into what they, as healthcare providers, can do to provide a safe and inclusive hospital environment. County employees will soon be able to access video of their compelling stories on the Olive View-UCLA LGBTQ+ intranet page.

The LGBTQ+ Committee at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center would like to thank everyone who helped this event come to fruition. Our committee works to build an inclusive and supportive environment of care for all employees, patients, families and hospital guests across the gender and sexuality spectrum. We strive to affirm the value and dignity of every individual and dedicate ourselves to creating a healthy community. You can find more information as well as links to educational materials on the Olive View-UCLA Internet and Intranet LGBTQ+ pages, or contact the committee at OVMLGBTQ@dhs.lacounty.gov.



Geriatrics Workforce Roundtable: “Who is going to care for us as we age?”



By Katherine Ward, MD and Heather Schickedanz, MD

The Health Agency Los Angeles Department of Health Services (HALA – DHS) Geriatrics Workgroup joined forces with the LA City Department of Aging and the Purposeful Aging Los Angeles (PALA) initiative to answer the question, “Who is going to care for us as we age?” in Los Angeles County. On September 18, a panel of aging experts from across the County convened a roundtable with an audience of health agency, academic, and community partner stakeholders to discuss challenges, opportunities and next steps for geriatrics workforce development in LA County.

Geriatrics is the field of medicine that specializes in the care and wellbeing of older adults, many of whom are particularly vulnerable within the health care safety net due to social and medical issues that need an individualized approach in order to maintain and improve function. The goals of the roundtable were to assess the current state and future needs of the geriatrics workforce in LA County, including training all types of health care team members as well as caregivers to serve the population as it ages. We know there is a physician shortage: there are only 7,500 physicians in the United States who practice geriatrics – compared to the more than 63,000 general pediatricians in the country. There are over 12 million older adults in the US and the population is growing. LA County DHS alone cares for over 40,000 older adults annually and to better serve this special population, the Geriatrics Workgroup formed in 2017 to convene leaders from all three branches of the Health Agency, as well as community-based organizations. Our workgroup identified geriatrics workforce development as a

critical issue to address in an interdisciplinary and comprehensive manner across LA County.

We partnered with PALA, which is an LA City and County initiative to join the global network to achieve “Age-friendly Cities and Communities” designation. PALA leadership Laura Trejo (General Manager, LA City, Department of Aging) and Cynthia Banks (Director, County of LA, Workforce, Aging and Community Services) introduced the panel and Valentine Villa (Professor of Social Work, CSULA) moderated the roundtable discussion. Panelists included HALA-DHS Geriatrics Workgroup Chair, Heather Schickedanz; USC Keck School of Medicine Dean and Chair of Family Medicine, Laura Mosqueda; UCLA Assistant Dean for Curricular Affairs and Medical Director of Alzheimer’s and Dementia Care program, Zaldy Tan and Associate Professor of Gerontology and Public Health at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, Janet Frank.

The panelists presented current and projected workforce needs for caring for the older adult population in LA County and the roundtable discussion centered on innovative models of workforce development and shovel-ready solutions to address the population’s most pressing issues. All of the roundtable attendees agreed that this was just the beginning of an important conversation for Los Angeles County’s older adults and the people that serve them. We look forward to convening a follow-up meeting in early 2019 to prioritize, strategize, plan and implement optimal solutions to address the geriatrics workforce shortage in LA County.

DHS Emergency Departments Address the Opioid Crisis



By Rebecca Trotzky MD, MS and Henry Kim, MD

“There are few medications that transform a person’s life so quickly,” one of the ER nurses mentioned. She was pleasantly surprised after seeing a patient who had been a heroin user, now sober and healthy. This patient’s life was improved by the new DHS-wide program called Emergency Department Bridge to Buprenorphine.

This year, doctors, nurses, and social work leaders from all three DHS Emergency Departments (ED) reviewed best practices for providing care for patients with opioid use disorder. The team is committed to changing the way the health system delivers care to persons with substance use disorders. Buprenorphine is used to treat dependence and addiction to opioids. It helps prevent withdrawal symptoms caused by stopping other opioids. Because starting buprenorphine lowers the incidence of death from opioids, some patients are started on buprenorphine in the ED to begin treatment since it may be the only chance to intervene with these patients.

Now when patients come into the ED with opioid withdrawal or after an overdose, they will leave the ED with a connection to care with buprenorphine. Many of ED physicians have obtained special training in addiction medicine and have received an “X-waiver” necessary to prescribe buprenorphine. Training sessions have occurred at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center and LAC+USC Medical Center and are coming soon to Harbor UCLA Medical Center.

Concurrently, EDs have increased access to naloxone (Narcan), which reverses overdoses in high-risk patients. The number of naloxone prescriptions from DHS EDs has increased more than tenfold compared to the prior year. While the number is small, the program has steadily increased with education and expanded awareness. While our system innovations effectively link patients with opioid addictions to both naloxone and buprenorphine in the ED, providers are also working on decreasing inappropriate opioid prescriptions. For example, LAC + USC Medical Center decreased unsafe opioid prescribing by 40% in two years – all while treating pain effectively.

DHS is one of the leaders in the country with these new programs. This helps vulnerable patients obtain appropriate care while keeping our communities safe and it is worth it!

DHS HIM Employee Proud Recipient of 2018 Humanitarian Award from United Nations



Bismarck “Biz” Nwadike, lead of the Health Information Management Team within the Enterprise Application Management Office (EAMO), was presented with the 2018 Humanitarian Award by the United Nations on September 13, 2018 in recognition of his work organizing a volunteer health community outreach program for women and children in sub-Saharan Africa.

For over a decade, Biz has worked diligently to coordinate volunteer medical activities in rural Sub-Saharan Africa, with a particular focus on Nigeria. Biz works with volunteer medical practitioners who provide treatment to rural women and children. These practitioners promote healthy living through education and disease prevention. They provide free medicines, supplies and equipment to rural clinics and village dispensaries. The team focuses primarily on treatment of common ailments. One of the most noteworthy accomplishments was the oversight of borehole digging for six villages. By tapping into the groundwater supply, boreholes provide a sustainable water source for several years.

Biz became interested in humanitarian efforts after witnessing the Nigerian Civil War (Biafra War). Although he relocated to the United States over 25 years ago, the suffering he observed left an indelible footprint on him. Biz saw babies born during the war that did not survive. Many died of malnutrition, malaria and other treatable ailments.

Biz notes that despite the global technological and healthcare advances of this decade, Africa is still facing seemingly insurmountable challenges and perils and he contends that now is the time to act and lend a helping hand to the poor. It is his hope that we can collectively rise above the narrow confines of our individualistic concerns to extend broader concern for all humanity. Congratulations to Biz Nwadike!