

2026 NACO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD • JULY 2, 2026

LA General Wins National Award for Innovative HIV Treatment Program

Los Angeles General Medical Center has been honored with a 2026 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award for a new treatment approach that is helping patients with a serious infection get better faster, with fewer side effects, and less time in the hospital.

What is cryptococcal meningitis?

Cryptococcal meningitis is a serious infection that mainly affects people with weakened immune systems, especially people living with HIV. It has long been one of the most dangerous complications of HIV, and treating it has traditionally meant two weeks or more in the hospital receiving daily IV medication.

A better way to treat it

In 2022, LA General began using a new treatment plan called the AMBITION protocol. Instead of two weeks of daily IV infusions, patients now receive one dose of a stronger antifungal medication, followed by two weeks of pills they can often take at home.

Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and case managers work together to make sure patients get the support they need, like help with housing or transportation, so they can safely finish treatment outside the hospital.



Members of the LA General infectious disease team behind the AMBITION protocol.

The results

	Before	After AMBITION
Patients who recovered successfully	35%	76%
Patients with serious side effects	61.5%	20.6%
Average hospital stay	19 days	7 days
Patients who left before finishing treatment	34.6%	11.8%

This new approach also saves the county about **\$12,000 per patient** — money that can go toward helping even more people in our community.

Why this award matters

This NACo award recognizes something we're proud of: a county hospital taking the latest medical research and turning it into real, everyday care for the people who need it most. LA General serves many patients facing housing instability, job loss, and other tough circumstances, and this program shows that innovative care and compassionate, patient-centered treatment can go hand in hand.

"Through this initiative, our health system has demonstrated leadership in applying cutting-edge clinical research to improve care for medically underserved populations. These improvements enhance patient outcomes and safety, while also generating savings we can reinvest in our community."

Devin Clark, MD — Associate Program Director, USC/LAGMC Infectious Diseases Fellowship

Congratulations to the entire team behind this award-winning program!