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Real Stories from the HWLA Nurse Advice Line (NAL)

The 24/7 multilingual Nurse Advice Line (NAL) continues to provide members with timely clinical advice to assist them with guidance about whether to visit a health care provider and to determine which level of medical care (e.g., primary care, urgent care, emergency room) is most appropriate.

As of January 7, 2010, the NAL has received 1,704 calls. The majority of these calls were symptom related (1292, 76%). Since the first HWLA NAL call in 2007, the number of calls has consistently increased. From December 2007 to August 2009, there was an average of 46 calls per month. However, since the start of program year three (September, 2009), the average number of monthly calls has significantly increased to 149 per month. The increase in calls may be attributed to facility marketing efforts and the extra media attention given to the H1N1 flu this season.

The majority (75%) of HWLA members who call the NAL are seeking professional advice about how to care for an illness or injury at home. In life threatening situations, members are instructed to dial 911 for local emergency

medical service; if the caller is unable to call, the nurse will initiate the emergency procedure and dial 911 for them. Facilities are encouraged to remind members that HWLA is a coverage program and is not insurance — medical care services provided by private hospitals are not covered. However, HWLA will cover all medical care including urgent care visits, emergency room (ER) visits and inpatient services at any LA County Department of Health Services facility and participating Public Private Partner (PPP) clinics.

The following examples illustrate typical calls received by the HWLA NAL.

A 51 year-old female called the HWLA NAL to ask about pain she was having in both arms and was unsure if she should go to the emergency room. The nurse activated the emergency procedure after asking the member a series of questions such as "Are palpitations occurring now?" The symptoms described by the caller indicated a possible heart attack, so the nurse immediately called 911 --possibly saving the caller's life.

On another occasion, a 49



NAL helps members determine appropriate use of health care

year-old female called the NAL. She explained that she felt cold, had a headache, sore throat, and her body ached. With much media coverage about the H1N1 flu, the member was unsure if she should go to the emergency room. After asking the member a series of predetermined health-related questions based on the medical symptoms provided by the member, the nurse determined that the caller did not need to go to the emergency room, but that she did need to speak to a provider by the following day. The member was instructed to go to her medical home the next day to be seen by her primary care physician.

DHS facilities and participating PPP clinics have provided fax numbers and instructions to the NAL.

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The Nurse Advice Line has shown its usefulness in redirecting individuals who think they need to go to the emergency room.

... Real Stories from the HWLA Nurse Advice Line (NAL)

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In the second example, the nurse on the phone followed the caller's medical home instructions, which included initiating a next-day fax appointment to the member's medical home.

The NAL has shown its usefulness in redirecting individuals who think they need to go to an emergency room, to more appropriate care such as primary care, for non-urgent conditions. The HWLA NAL report tracks trends in the level of care the caller intended to seek before calling; the report compares intended level of care with NAL nurses' endpoint recommendations.

From December 2007 to January 2010, 407 of the total calls received by the NAL were members who initially indicated intent to go to an emergency room. The NAL data show that 71% of callers (N=290) whose initial intent was to go to the ER were redirected to a lower level of care (e.g., self-care) than they originally intended to seek. Additionally, 28% (117) were advised to go to an ER or call 911. Essentially, 7% of total calls (117 of 1,646) had outcomes where members were recommended to the ER or to call 911 immediately.

With all call types, the HWLA Nurse Advice Line is helping members determine the appropriate use of health care services and is empowering them with information to make informed decisions.



HWLA Reaches 50,000 members!

HWLA Reaches 50,000 Members!

The Healthy Way LA Program Office is happy to announce that as of December 21, 2009 we have reached 50,000 members! DHS and PPP staff have been working diligently and continuously to enroll members. Despite challenges such as the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA), DHS and PPPs have been able to continue enrolling new members into the program.

Since the beginning of the program, member incentives were provided to facilities to assist in

promoting the program.

In March 2009, 10,000 Kroger grocery gift certificates (\$10 value) were purchased as enrollment incentives, which attracted new members. Upon implementation of the grocery gift certificate giveaway, enrollment increased as did activity in the submission of HWLA eligibility documentation.

The HWLA Program also offers its members seasonal flu vaccine at no cost. Several facilities used the seasonal flu

shot as an added incentive to enroll patients into the program.

The HWLA Program Office is extremely proud of all facility staff who are working diligently to meet the enrollment target goal!



JWCH Center for Community Health is situated in the heart of downtown Los Angeles' skid row

Kevin Michael Key,
JWCH Peer-to-Peer
Group Facilitator
"...I want to help others like myself. I have a commitment to my community and being a facilitator is a good fit for who I am..."

JWCH: Making a Positive Difference in the Community

JWCH Institute, Inc. is a non-profit health agency that provides an array of services such as primary medical care, homeless and women's health care, drug treatment and HIV/AIDS services. At JWCH, patient education is part of its mission along with providing quality medical services. Given their purpose, they have developed a distinctive approach to working with patients with chronic illnesses.

Since June 2008, JWCH has been offering a peer-to-peer support group for homeless individuals living with diabetes. It takes place at the Center for Community Health (CCH), one of JWCH's newest facilities situated in downtown Los Angeles' skid row. This is one of the many services offered at CCH.

The peer-to-peer support group uses community health care workers such as *promotoras* to provide this vulner-

able group with social support and assist in combating the severity of diabetes. *Promotoras* are members of the community that bridge between health care institutions, professional providers and community residents, making them especially influential.

The peer-to-peer program has made a significant impact in the lives of its participants. Since its origin there have been a total of 70 sessions with over 152 participants. Due to the program's success and popularity a Spanish language group was also created. Many of the participants have made tremendous strides in overcoming daunting obstacles in continuing on a path to healthy living. For example, Kevin Michael Key began attending the group as a member. Through determination and a new-found passion, he has become the groups' facilitator. Mr. Key has been struggling with diabetes, but also like many of the participants, he battled and over-

came drug addiction. When asked why he wanted to take on the responsibility of a facilitator he answered, "I want to help others like myself. I have a commitment to my community and being a facilitator is a good fit for who I am". Mr. Key and other members are enthusiastic about what the group has done to help them manage their lives.

In addition to the peer-to-peer support groups and the numerous medical and supportive services, JWCH is also highly visible in the community. The organization participated in over 22 outreach events within the last three months. At these events, they offered glucose and blood pressure screening, information on family planning, prenatal services, and other health programs. JWCH is truly making a positive difference in the community!

Health Promotion Corner



In Los Angeles County, coronary heart disease is the #1 cause of death for men and women of all race/ethnic groups (25 of every 100 deaths, 14,842 total deaths, LAC DPH, 2006).

In simple terms...coronary heart disease is caused by a narrowing of the coronary arteries that feed the heart. When the arteries are clogged, not enough blood is supplied to the heart, causing it to work harder than it normally would. A heart attack occurs when a blood clot obstructs a coronary artery supplying blood to the heart.

Factors to reduce risk include: stop smoking, control weight, and increase physical activity.

This February we have the opportunity to increase awareness about this preventable disease.

The following links provide more information about heart health observances taking place in February:

- American Heart Association, National Heart Month <http://www.americanheart.org>
- National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, National Wear Red Campaign <http://www.goredforwomen.org>

CELEBRATE

HEART HEALTH

IN FEBRUARY!

American Heart Month

is February 1-28

and

National Wear Red Day

is February 5, 2010

HWLA Centralizes the Grievance Process

The HWLA Program Office has been working closely with the Office of Managed Care (OMC) and DHS/PPP facilities to improve and centralize the HWLA grievance process. All HWLA facilities have a site-specific grievance process system. Hence this new grievance process was created as a joint effort to centralize the grievances received by the OMC Customer Service Call Center. More importantly, this process will ensure HWLA member satisfaction as well as allow the Program Office to monitor and improve HWLA services.

There are several essential steps involved in making a complaint. When HWLA members call OMC Customer Service with a complaint, basic information is documented, such as the type of complaint, the date of the occurrence, and any details related to the incident. The members are informed that their complaint will be taken seriously, will be treated in confidence, and investigated within a certain time frame.

OMC forwards complaint details to the HWLA Program Office. The HWLA Program Office sends a letter to the member acknowledging the complaint and includes a description of the next steps to be taken.

The HWLA Program Office contacts the medical home where the incident took place and communicates the details of the complaint. The medical home investigates and resolves the issue. Upon resolution of the complaint, the HWLA Program Office is notified and sends members a resolution letter that details outcomes of the investigation. The entire grievance process takes 30 days.

As a new program, the HWLA processes and procedures will continue to be monitored and improved to ensure program success and, most importantly, member satisfaction.



DHS & OMC working together to ensure HWLA member satisfaction

Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Healthy Way LA

The HWLA Program Office's goal is to communicate the most recent program information, progress, and best practices. This newsletter is created for the staff of the DHS and participating PPP facilities.

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For general information about the Healthy Way LA Program please call Customer Services at 1-877-333-4952 or visit our Website by following these steps: (1) www.ladhs.org (2) Select "Providers" on left side of screen (3) Select "Healthy Way LA." To provide comments or to submit ideas for future topics regarding this newsletter please contact Yeira Rodriguez, MPH, CHES at (213) 240-8172, yerodriguez@dhs.lacounty.gov.

Healthy Way LA is a special program funded by Federal Section 1115 of the Social Security Act. This funding allows states to test new ideas and evaluate approaches that have potential for policy. Los Angeles County is one of ten counties in California participating in what the state refers to as the Health Care Coverage Initiative.

Healthy Way LA is not an insurance program and is not responsible for costs of services that are acquired outside of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services or PPP contracted facilities.