

Announcing our Community Contribution Award for L.A. Care's Dr. Michael Brodsky

By **Alison Wheeler**,
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Dr. Brodsky's work has been critical to expanding L.A. Care's program collaboration efforts and community engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are proud to announce that we are awarding Michael Brodsky, MD, L.A. Care Health Plan's Medical Director of Behavioral Health and Social Services, a Community Contribution Award for his tireless work on behalf of the greater Los Angeles area. L.A. Care is the largest publicly operated health plan in the United States, providing access to quality healthcare for more than 2.2 million residents in Los Angeles County.

Understanding the potential that the COVID-19 pandemic could have on the Los Angeles community as the outbreak was worsening, L.A. Care developed an ambitious outreach campaign to more than 200,000 of the health plan's high risk members in March 2020 – with Dr. Brodsky playing a pivotal role in its execution. The outreach initiative focused on members who are most vulnerable to the pandemic – including those with chronic conditions, individuals from the Black, Latinx, Asian, and Pacific Islander communities, and older individuals in Los

Angeles County. When L.A. Care's resource centers closed in an abundance of caution at the onset of the pandemic, the organization moved quickly to mobilize personnel from the centers to help drive the outreach. The outreach proved to be critical to the well-being of L.A. Care's most vulnerable members, ensuring that preventive care and medication priorities were being taken care of for a population that could least afford any gaps in coverage.

Importantly, the teams also incorporated personal and household needs inquiries into their outreach – identifying the concerns that were impacting L.A. Care members beyond their immediate medical needs. The outreach campaign uncovered significant food and housing insecurity concerns among members; many were struggling with the dilemma between affording food or their medications due to the economic impact of the pandemic. Based upon these findings, L.A. Care CEO John Baackes worked with L.A. Care leadership to authorize new emergency grants for organizations addressing the social determinants of health (SDoH) in Los Angeles County. This included more than \$550,000 to Project Angel Food, which provides free meals to those who are unable to shop or cook for themselves due to chronic medical conditions. Additionally, Dr. Brodsky collaborated with the communications department to add L.A. Care's Community Link social care platform to their main COVID-19 response page – helping increase awareness and expanding access to the free and reduced cost resources available via the platform to both members and the community. Since then, the platform has averaged nearly 1,000 users per month – a 400% increase compared to the months prior to the pandemic, and the majority of users were seeking food assistance.

“Dr. Brodsky possesses the best qualities of a leader – having steadfast clarity of vision, thoughtful articulation and decisiveness, and undeniable warmth and humility,” said Aunt Bertha CEO Erine Gray. “We're proud to count Dr. Brodsky and L.A. Care as partners in our work to

ensure everyone can find the services they need, when they need them. The work he's led over the past year is truly worthy of the Community Contribution Award for those who go above and beyond to improve access to social care resources in their communities.”

Aunt Bertha and L.A. Care first began working together in April 2019 on developing the L.A. Care Community Link platform. Working alongside the Aunt Bertha team, the health plan was able to develop and launch the L.A. Care Community Link platform in just under three months – a minor miracle by health IT industry standards. The platform has since become a critical part of L.A. Care's mission to provide healthcare and social needs resources to Los Angeles County's low-income and under-resourced residents.

In addition to promoting greater awareness of the resources available via the L.A. Care Community Link platform, Dr. Brodsky has been an integral partner in developing Aunt Bertha's Los Angeles Resource Collaborative. The Collaborative is focused on building a community of social service agencies, community benefit organizations, and healthcare organizations in Los Angeles County so that healthcare and social services can be better coordinated and provisioned to those in need throughout the county. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Brodsky was willing to break down organizational barriers and bring in other health plans in the Los Angeles County area, as well as other organizations such as hospitals and dental plans, to the Collaborative.

In February 2020, Dr. Brodsky partnered with Aunt Bertha to convene the first meeting with L.A. Care's expanded partner network. The venue served as a forum to discuss how partner organizations could better work together to coordinate care for their communities. This also included an emphasis on streamlining work for community benefit organizations so that they could serve overlapping needs to multiple healthcare partners at once. Rather than have the same conversation with

different partners, this helps community organizations more efficiently utilize time and resources while achieving the same outcomes. Dr. Brodsky's continued recognition of the importance of addressing social determinants of health as part of a holistic healthcare provision strategy, and understanding that community needs are ultimately a local concern, exemplifies what the Aunt Bertha Community Contribution Award is all about.

For more information on L.A. Care's Community Link platform, please visit <https://communitylink.lacare.org/>.

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