

# CheckUP

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*Important news from the nation's leading health care facility serving the LGBT communities*

## From the Executive Director

Dear Friend,

As our country debates major reform in our nationwide healthcare system, we applaud the efforts of those working to create equal access to healthcare – because at Callen-Lorde we believe that healthcare is a human right. That's why our state-of-the-art services have always been available to the community regardless of any patient's ability to pay.

Inside this issue of Check-Up, you'll see how we are working to maintain our position as the nation's premier LGBT health center by implementing cutting edge health information technology. And in our Medical Director's column, you'll learn about the programs we have in place to protect our patients from the dangers of seasonal flu and H1N1, the "swine flu" virus.

I'd like to take a moment to extend my thanks to our generous donors and supporters, without whom our doors could not stay open – and also to the dedicated staff at Callen-Lorde who work every day providing quality, sensitive, affirming care to everyone who comes to us seeking our services.

In gratitude,



Wendy Stark



## Callen-Lorde Welcomes New HOTT Director

Callen-Lorde is proud to welcome Reed Christian as the new Director of our Health Outreach To Teens (HOTT) program. Reed's entire career has been focused on helping underserved and at-risk youth – from supporting homeless youth in Los Angeles with the LA Gay and Lesbian Center to providing leadership opportunities to young people in Washington DC and promoting economic justice with the New York Association of Homeless and Runaway Youth Organizations. "I like working with young people because they harbor such enormous potential, despite some really challenging circumstances. Our patients are at an age where they are grappling with huge issues like race, class, sexual orientation, and gender identity . . . and HOTT can have such a positive impact on their lives today and their ability to successfully make it to tomorrow."

Reed is excited to build on the HOTT program's innovative and critical services. Since 1989, HOTT has provided a vital link to health care and HIV prevention for homeless youth, squatters, runaways, and other young people who make their homes on New York City streets. HOTT is currently the only program of its kind in New York State, focusing special attention on preventing HIV among homeless youth ages 13-24, who are also at high risk for other sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies. HOTT's wide array of services are provided at our youth-only medical suite at Callen-Lorde and on our medical van, which travels to areas where young people congregate. Nearly 1,500 adolescent patients are served each year through Callen-Lorde and the HOTT program. "Providing the vital service of health care to underserved youth is very rewarding. Helping young people understand the importance of their health is the first step toward realizing the value of their lives and their strength as leaders in the community." Reed's enthusiastic and dedicated leadership will serve HOTT well as we plan for the program's future. ▲

## Improving Patient Care Through Technology

In 1998 when Callen-Lorde first opened the doors of our new home on West 18th Street, we were a state-of-the-art medical facility in all areas – including technology. We are proud of the fact that we were among the first community health centers in the nation to adopt an electronic medical record, or EMR.

In the ensuing years, however, Callen-Lorde's resources became stretched, and there were even times when we literally were struggling to survive. Because the top priority was to keep the doors open to care for our patients, we were forced to postpone upgrades to technology, and as a result, our once progressive facility fell behind the curve.

Recently, that all changed. Over the last year, we have been working with health information

technology experts to bring us back to the forefront of innovation by upgrading our systems and working to implement new functions. Moreover, in recognition of Callen-Lorde's critical role in our community, we were selected to receive nearly a half million dollars in federal stimulus funds to continue to upgrade our health information technology.

**"This grant will help us regain our competitive edge and allow us to maintain our status as the premier LGBT healthcare facility in the nation."**

— Gal Mayer, Medical Director

*Continued on Page 3*

## HELP US WITH OUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS!

Visit [www.callen-lorde.org](http://www.callen-lorde.org) to join our Email Communication Center.

As a member, you will receive future issues of *CheckUP* and invitations to our events like **Walk on the Wild Side** and the **Community Health Awards** delivered right to your email inbox.



**Gal Mayer, MD**  
Medical Director

And, each fall, this means taking precautions to ward off seasonal flu; this year, we also have the unwelcome addition of the H1N1 virus, or “swine flu.”

## SEASONAL INFLUENZA

Seasonal influenza generally affects us from the late fall through the early spring. The main reason influenza is so contagious is that it spreads through the air. This explains why a classroom of children or an entire community can become sick all at once.

Coming down with the flu most often occurs by breathing in microscopic airborne droplets, which are produced by infected people who are coughing or sneezing. Influenza can also be spread — to a lesser degree — by touching a surface, such as a faucet handle, doorknob, or phone that has the virus on it. And symptoms usually occur within two to three days.

*The seasonal flu is a serious national problem — with tens of millions of Americans getting sick each year.* Most people will get better within a week or two, but thousands will become sick enough to require hospitalization. Flu-like symptoms include fever (usually higher than 100.5F), headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting.

**GETTING THE FLU SHOT, TAKING PRECAUTIONS, BEING AWARE OF SYMPTOMS, AND GETTING PROMPT MEDICAL CARE ARE SOME OF THE WAYS TO MINIMIZE RISK AND SAFEGUARD YOUR HEALTH AND THE HEALTH OF THOSE AROUND YOU.**

## The Medical Director's Report

# Staying Healthy During Flu Season

As we bid goodbye to summer, Callen-Lorde continues to help all the members of our community take a proactive stance on protecting their health.

Some people are at higher risk for developing serious, even life-threatening, complications from flu infection. But it's worth repeating that *most people who become infected with seasonal flu, even those at higher risk, get better within a week or two.* In our community, those at higher risk include:

- Children under 4 years old (up to 18 years old if on chronic aspirin therapy)
- Adults over 50 years old
- Anyone who will be pregnant during flu season
- Anyone with a chronic medical condition, but particularly those with asthma, heart disease, diabetes, and immune suppression including HIV infection. (Have you been tested lately?)

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone be immunized against seasonal flu. Immunization is especially important for the higher-risk groups and anyone who lives with or cares for someone at higher risk.

Other precautions you can take to reduce your risk of getting the flu:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Flu is spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

If you develop symptoms of the flu, call your medical provider. Although there is no cure for the flu, prescription medications can help you feel better faster, prevent complications, and reduce your risk of infecting other people. These medications must be prescribed by a medical provider and should be started within two days of symptoms. If you are diagnosed with the flu, stay home and away from other people, except to get medical care, as much as possible until 24 hours after your fever goes completely away.

Getting the flu shot, taking precautions, being aware of symptoms, and getting prompt medical

care are some of the ways to minimize risk and safeguard your health and the health of those around you.

This year New York State made it mandatory that all healthcare staff in facilities like Callen-Lorde be immunized against seasonal flu. *As an extra precaution to our patients, all Callen-Lorde staff will be required to have the flu shot this year.*

**Callen-Lorde is providing Seasonal flu shots to our patients, but we have a limited supply of vaccine. Please check our web site or call to find out if we have vaccine available – if not, we will refer you to a site that does.**

## H1N1 – OR SWINE FLU – VIRUS

The H1N1 influenza, also known as “swine flu,” is a newly identified virus that is transmitted human-to-human in the same ways as seasonal influenza.

According to the CDC, our best current understanding of this infection is that the same higher-risk groups for seasonal influenza apply to H1N1. (See above for a description of these groups.)

While no evidence suggests that people living with HIV are more susceptible to the swine flu, health officials have long advised HIV-positive people to get vaccinated for the seasonal flu each year.

Fortunately, a new H1N1 vaccine has been developed, recently approved by the FDA and will be available later this fall. Callen-Lorde recommends that everyone at risk should be inoculated. ▲

**Later this fall, Callen-Lorde will be administering H1N1 (swine) flu shots. Check our website ([www.callen-lorde.org](http://www.callen-lorde.org)) to find out when the vaccine will be available. Talk to your provider about questions and concerns.**

## Improving Patient Care Through Technology (*cont'd*)

These upgrades are giving our providers the tools they need to more effectively care for our patients. For the past few months (and for several months to come), changes have been taking place behind the scenes – all without interrupting the flow of care or interfering with our patients' experiences.

Today, our providers can access a patient's complete, accurate, and searchable medical record at the click of a button. This allows our providers to make more informed decisions — enhancing the quality and reliability of healthcare delivery at Callen-Lorde.

As always, the privacy of our patients' information remains paramount. Dr. Mayer explains: *"Patient privacy and confidentiality have always been critically important to our community. That is why we are taking every step to protect the privacy of our patients while we forge new technological ground."*

An enormous step forward in patient care, the electronic health records allow for truly comprehensive management of medical information — everything from health history to lab results to prescriptions will be centralized and instantly available.

Callen-Lorde is once again at the leading edge of healthcare delivery technology. Today, our providers are starting to:

- Prescribe pharmaceuticals for their patients electronically, eliminating errors and improving

accuracy.

- Receive lab results that are automatically entered into a patient's record securely over the internet, eliminating the painstaking process of manual data-entry.

- Attach digital copies of paper documents directly to the patient record, which can be retrieved instantly – no more searching through files for important medical information.

These new tools are already increasing efficiency, saving time, and eliminating potentially dangerous data entry errors. . .but the bottom line is, *they are improving quality of care.*

And there are other advantages yet to come. Many patients have expressed an interest in being able to communicate with their providers via email. In response, we are exploring a new system that will offer a secure means of internet communication between a patient and his or her provider.

Healthcare delivery systems are changing, and through it all, Callen-Lorde remains steadfast in our commitment to our guiding principle: that we will provide the best possible care to all of our patients. And we will continue to be a welcoming beacon for everyone seeking healthcare — particularly those of us who have the fewest options and regardless of any patient's ability to pay. ▲

## SEXUAL HEALTH CLINIC NEWS: NEW SERVICES FOR TRANSGENDER PATIENTS

Callen-Lorde's Sexual Health Clinic now includes comprehensive services for transgender and gender non-conforming patients. New services include:

- Chest/Breast Exam
- Pelvic Exam & PAP Test
- Prostate Exam
- STI Screening & Treatment, including HIV Testing
- Harm Reduction Counseling

The Sexual Health Clinic is available to all patients seeking comprehensive clinical care for sexually transmitted infections (STI). For more information about STI screening and treatment and other services at the Sexual Health Clinic, visit [www.callen-lorde.org](http://www.callen-lorde.org). ▲

To schedule an appointment, please call (212) 271-7200.

THE 2009 CALLEN-LORDE

## COMMUNITY HEALTH AWARDS

NOVEMBER 16, 2009, 6 TO 9  
AT ESPACE 635 WEST 42ND ST

### Mark Your Calendars:

On Monday November 16<sup>th</sup>, we will once again honor the individuals and organizations that have positively impacted the health and well-being of our communities. This year's event will be hosted by **Bryan Batt**, longtime community activist and star of AMC's Emmy Award-winning drama **Mad Men**.



### THIS YEAR'S HONOREES:

#### Antonio E. Urbina, M.D.

Medical Director, HIV/AIDS Education & Training  
St. Vincent's Comprehensive HIV Center

#### The Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus

of the U.S. House of Representatives

For its commitment to achieving the full enjoyment of human rights for LGBT people in the U.S. and around the world.

#### The New York State Health Foundation

For its efforts to reduce the number of uninsured New Yorkers, contain health care costs, and increase access to high-quality services for all.

We hope you will join us to honor their achievements!

For information on becoming a sponsor, table captain, host committee member, or to purchase a ticket, please call Ed Galloway, Director of Development and External Relations at 212-271-7263 or [edgalloway@callen-lorde.org](mailto:edgalloway@callen-lorde.org).

# Our Mission

Callen-Lorde Community Health Center provides sensitive, quality health care and related services primarily to New York's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities -- in all their diversity -- regardless of ability to pay. To further this mission, Callen-Lorde promotes health education and wellness and advocates for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender health issues.

## FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS

New York State Health Foundation  
The New York Community Trust  
Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS  
The Greater NYC Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure  
Carnegie Corporation of New York  
The Ira W. De Camp Foundation  
The Brian A. McCarthy Foundation  
H. van Ameringen Foundation  
MAC AIDS Fund  
Harry S. Black & Allon Fuller Fund  
Heinz Family Foundation  
The Ted Snowdon Foundation  
Diving for Life Foundation  
Corcoran Cares  
The Gatewood Foundation  
Bernard and Muriel Lauren Foundation  
New York University Community Fund

## CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

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Lutheran Family Health Centers  
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Saatchi & Saatchi Healthcare Communications  
Madison ENT & Facial Plastic Surgery  
Macy's  
IJR Consulting Corporation  
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Advanced Sports Medicine & Rehabilitation  
NextGen Healthcare Information Systems  
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Roche  
VidaCare  
Beth Israel Medical Center  
RSM McGladrey  
Tribeca Skin Center  
Verizon

Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation  
Goldman, Sachs & Co.  
Primary Care Development Corporation  
Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals  
Control Group

## CALLEN-LORDE COMMUNITY SUSTAINERS (\$5,000+)

The Estate of John B. Montana, MD  
The Estate of Mark J. Richard  
Perry Borenstein  
Ellen Alpert and Janice Sears  
Kriszcar Bungay, MD and James F. O'Sullivan  
Claudia Slacik  
Darren Henault and Michael Bassett  
Elisabeth R. Benjamin and Daniel Coughlin  
Zoe Rodriguez, MD  
Michael L. Bayer and A. Miguel Marzullo  
Jack and Ian Archer Watters  
Lawrence M. Weingart

## HOWARD J. BROWN SOCIETY MEMBERS

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Dion Oglesby  
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Lanita A. Ward  
Colin Weil  
Kim M. Whitehurst and Anne M. Aldrich  
Samuel Wiener  
Robert B. Wilson  
Douglas A. Wirth  
Andrea Woodner

## New Care Coordination Services at Callen-Lorde

Navigating the health care system is often a tricky process. This is why Callen-Lorde has expanded our care coordination services for:

- **Patients 50 and older**
- **Transgender and gender non-conforming patients**

These services — adding to our existing programs for adolescents, women, and HIV-positive patients — are part of our expanding efforts to reach out and increase access to all members of our community. Care Coordinators provide patients with a gateway to care through one-on-one dialogue, enrollment into entitlement programs, supportive counseling, and referrals.

In other exciting care coordination news, we are thrilled to announce that Callen-Lorde has been awarded a large federal grant that will enable us to implement a corps of "patient navigators" who will work in the field outside of Callen-Lorde to assist and support our HIV-positive patients who need these services.

If you have questions about your health issues, if you need help understanding your health insurance policy, or if you'd like to find out what benefits and services you may be entitled to — Callen-Lorde's team of Care Coordinators are here to help. ▲

**To make an appointment with a Care Coordinator, please call (212) 271-7200.**