



IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Our New Long Beach Health Center Takes Shape

Facility offers a range of health care services to LGBT people in Long Beach and nearby South L.A. County communities

APLA Health & Wellness proudly kicks off 2016 with the opening of our brand-new health center in Long Beach, which is now offering services for free or on a low-cost, sliding-fee scale for everyone, with a focus on LGBT individuals.

Located at 1043 Elm Ave. on the St. Mary Medical Center campus just north of downtown, the Long Beach Health Center currently provides primary

medical care services, PrEP counseling and management, HIV testing and STD screening and treatment, and health insurance enrollment assistance. Over the next four months, services will expand to include behavioral health care and a dental clinic with four operatories and lab.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Human Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) selected APLA Health & Wellness through a nationally competitive application process to receive a \$650,000 grant to open and operate the new health center. HRSA awarded the grant in fall 2015. We have launched a [capital campaign](#) to raise funds for construction, equipment, and furnishings for the health center.

"We're honored HRSA selected APLA Health & Wellness to receive this funding to help open our Long Beach Health Center, and excited that our supporters understand how important it is to bring these critically needed health care services to people who will benefit most from them," CEO Craig E. Thompson says.

Currently, the new Long Beach Health Center includes an exam room and a treatment room, as well as office space for staff. A second phase of construction will be completed by the end of March and will add a laboratory and phlebotomy room, a full reception area, counseling rooms, additional offices, and new rest rooms. A third, and final, phase of construction will add additional exams rooms and a full dental clinic. When fully operational later this spring, the health center will encompass 7,000 square feet and will have the capacity to serve more than 5,000 patients per year.

Long Beach is the second largest city in Los Angeles County and home to a sizable LGBT population. The new health center increases the community's capacity to provide care to everyone who needs it. "Providing excellent culturally competent care is a community effort, and we are working with key partners, including other service providers, the Long Beach Health Department, and elected officials to expand access to these critically needed services," Thompson notes.

The Long Beach Health Center is currently open Tuesdays and Thursdays 9 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1-5 p.m. (closed for lunch 12-1 p.m.). It is located at 1043 Elm Ave., Suite 302, in Long Beach on the St. Mary Medical Center campus. For additional information, please call 562.432.7300 or visit [aplahw.org](#). Services are available in English and Spanish.

NEWS & NOTEWORTHY



2016: A Year of Growth and Positive Change

First, let me wish you a very happy 2016. I hope it's off to a good start. Thank you again for supporting us—and by extension our clients and patients—in 2015. We literally cannot do it without you.

Last year at this time we were excited to tell you about several important milestones for APLA and APLA Health & Wellness and the ways we continue to expand our mission to include health care services for everyone regardless of their HIV status. 2016 continues that excitement, as we begin it with more good news to share—starting with the opening of our new [Long Beach Health Center](#).

Thanks in part to a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Human Resources and Services Administration, we are now able to offer critically needed free and low-cost health care services to residents of Long Beach and surrounding South L.A. County communities. Our focus in Long Beach, just as it's been at the

Gleicher/Chen Health Center (GCHC) in Baldwin Hills, will be on delivering quality care to everyone, with a focus on the LGBT community. Services in Long Beach currently include medical care, HIV testing and STD screening and treatment, health insurance enrollment assistance, and [pre-exposure prophylaxis \(PrEP\) counseling and management](#). Providing information about and access to PrEP, in particular, is an important aspect of our services, as PrEP is a critical tool that can make a real impact in the fight against HIV.

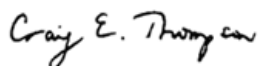
The Long Beach Health Center will continue to take shape over the next few months, with dental and behavioral health services launching this spring. We will be keeping you updated on our progress. We're also excited to work with our community partners in Long Beach, as well as the Long Beach Department of Health, to expand health care services so people receive the care they so critically need.

The start of a new year also means that it's officially "awards season" here in Los Angeles. Now that the nominations have been announced, we're gearing up for our 15th Oscar viewing party, The Envelope Please. This is one of our favorite events, and we're excited to have longtime supporter Pauley Perrette as our host. Thank you, as well, to David Cooley and The Abbey Food & Bar in West Hollywood for their generosity. Please join us February 28th for this intimate black-tie affair. Tickets are available at apla.org/oscars.

We are also proud to [welcome three new members to our board of directors](#). Craig Bowers, Janice Littlejohn, and Jim Patton are already hard at work as part of the team that guides the overall direction for both APLA and APLA Health & Wellness. All three are accomplished professionals and deeply engaged community members, and their presence and input on the board make them valuable additions as we continue to expand our health care mission and reaffirm our commitment to those living with HIV/AIDS.

That's just a taste of the great things already taking shape in 2016. There will be many other exciting developments in store over the next 11 months, and we're looking forward to sharing all of them with you. Thank you again for being so instrumental in making it happen.

With gratitude,



Craig E. Thompson
Chief Executive Officer
APLA, APLA Health & Wellness



Getting to Know ... Capacity Building Assistance

Helping health departments across the country in the fight against HIV

The fight against HIV encompasses many facets, and a vital, if often less publicly visible, one is the work local and regional health departments do. This includes providing services such as HIV testing, prevention information, and an understanding of medications for those living with HIV.

APLA's [Shared Action^{HD}](#) program, which is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, provides what is known as Capacity Building Assistance (CBA) to health departments nationwide and ensures they have the knowledge and tools to deliver effective services.

We recently asked Miguel Chion, MD, MPH, director CBA programs and associate director of APLA client services, to talk a bit more in depth about the CBA team's work and how it impacts not only health departments but also the people who live in the areas those departments serve.

Explain what "capacity building assistance" means and tell us a little bit about what you do.

Capacity building assistance is the process of developing and strengthening the infrastructure, skills, abilities, processes, and resources that organizations need to address, in this particular case, the HIV epidemic. ... A common misperception is that capacity building means providing only trainings. Our team's approach emphasizes building capacity through an assessment of the recipient's strengths and opportunities for growth and transfer of knowledge and development of skills so that the outcomes achieved are effective but also sustainable. We utilize a blended approach that includes information transfer, trainings, and technical assistance, or TA, through various methodologies, including distance learning, in-person activities, and peer-to-peer TA.

Tell us what it's like to work with health departments across the country.

Just like APLA clients, the health departments we work with are very diverse in resources, capacities, needs, and the type of population they serve. As a result, it is important that we take a client-centered approach that acknowledges the expertise, knowledge, and existing strengths within health departments. ... For example, we assisted a health department to develop a detailed implementation plan to recruit individuals into their testing programs and clinics. The work we do is important, as we have access to best practices and lessons learned from around the country, access to experts on topical areas of interests to health departments, and technical expertise on how to improve the planning and implementation of programs and services. As a result, the impact of our work affects not only the health departments but all of the populations they serve.

Why does this work resonate with you and your team?

Most of our team began working in the HIV field as direct service providers to individuals affected by HIV. Now we have the opportunity to use our

experience and knowledge of capacity building to help and empower our peers to implement better, improved, and new practices. Each of the members of Shared Action understands that we are positioned to reach farther and produce a deeper impact in high-risk and marginalized communities.

What are some of the notable things about the CBA staff?

Our CBA team has a great balance of staff with diverse educational backgrounds—including international public health, medicine, education, anthropology, psychology, chemistry—and skill sets, which arms us with a wealth of knowledge and experience to apply to our work. All of our staff are also multilingual, with seven languages represented between us.

What can we look forward to from CBA in the future?

Our program is gaining momentum thanks to the changes deriving from National HIV/AIDS Strategy and the Affordable Care Act. We have had opportunities to work closer with our APLA family, especially with client services programs. As our team strives to be at the cutting edge of trends in HIV prevention, we are continually learning the newest updates in the field through in-services, trainings, and study. In the near future we will be conducting trainings for navigators, including PrEP navigators, and also other important skills-building trainings such as “101 competencies” and mental health and substance use screening and referrals.

To learn more about CBA's work, visit sharedactionhd.org.



Agent of Change

AmeriCorps Community HealthCorps member Emily Byrne writes about how she helps people stay healthy

Everyone at APLA Health & Wellness aims to offer our patients the best possible care. Unfortunately, when it comes to chronic medical conditions, the scope of care needed to ensure the best outcomes may exceed the amount of time allotted for appointments. Who hasn't experienced a time when your eyes glaze over as your provider instructs you to eat healthier or increase your physical activity? Add to that the confusing terminology and instructions given when you're diagnosed with a chronic condition: "My A1c is what? I'm supposed to take medications how many times a day?" It's now easier to understand why helping a patient manage a chronic condition can be challenging for a provider.

That's where I come in.

Last fall, I began serving as an AmeriCorps Community HealthCorps member at APLA Health & Wellness' Gleicher/Chen Health Center (GCHC). Community HealthCorps is the largest health-focused program within AmeriCorps, placing members at health centers across the country in order to enhance and expand their available services. During my 11-month term, my role is to serve as a chronic disease coordinator. I provide health education and help patients create individualized and realistic health-management goals, especially with respect to diabetes, obesity, and medication adherence.

Patients are referred to me directly by their providers at GCHC. This way, I'm included as a member of each patient's care team. First, I schedule an initial meeting with patients to get to know them and talk about their lifestyle, strengths, and struggles. With an hour set aside for each of these sessions, I learn a lot about how patients feel about their own health. We discuss basic information about chronic conditions, as well as ways that healthy eating and physical activity can help improve their symptoms.

Using this information, patients set health goals that are personalized for their own lives. Through a series of follow-up visits I continue to help patients work through obstacles they may find on their path toward healthy lifestyle changes. Most patients I've met with have begun incorporating healthier choices into their daily lives, allowing them to lose weight and feel better overall. Many have expressed how they appreciate having an extra source of support, helping them become more aware of their choices and begin to find real solutions to their healthcare challenges.

In only a little over four months of service, this experience has already solidified my passion for providing high-quality comprehensive care in community health centers. I know that every encounter I have helps me become a more well-informed community member and a stronger agent of change. As I apply to medical school, I'm also sure it will make me a more compassionate physician in the future.



Meet Our New Board Members

We are proud to welcome Craig Bowers, Janice Littlejohn, and Jim Patton to the board of directors for APLA and APLA Health & Wellness.

[Press Release](#)

PARTNER PROFILE



A History of Giving Back Where Help Is Needed Most



Bank of America has been a supporter of AIDS Project Los Angeles for nearly 25 years. Most recently, they awarded APLA a \$15,000 grant to support our vital Vance North Necessities of Life Program food pantries. In addition, Bank of America employees have for many years participated in a variety of APLA events, such as AIDS Walk Los Angeles.

We recently spoke with Jim Bachand (pictured), executive member of the Los Angeles LGBT Business Council and global executive leader of technology & operations and LGBT leadership council at Bank of America, to discuss how the company encourages volunteerism, their involvement in supporting organizations that provide social services, and why education is one of

the most important weapons against HIV.

Bank of America has a long history of supporting APLA. Why does B of A consider APLA's work crucial?

The local Bank of America LGBT Pride Employee Network has had a long-standing relationship with APLA. We are proud to partner with organizations that serve people who are at-risk and lack access to basic resources. APLA and organizations like it provide critical and vital services to our local communities and the people who live there. Partnering with APLA enables us an opportunity to give back where help is needed most.

Are there specific criteria you use in selecting community partners?

We strive to improve the economic future of our communities and those who live there by supporting nonprofits that provide resources for jobs, housing, and basic needs. ... So, for example, within the basic needs category, we seek partners that connect individuals and families facing financial challenges to basic necessities such as hunger relief, basic medical needs, supportive housing and emergency shelter, and access to resources and referrals. So this is where APLA plays a critical role that aligns with our community work.

What do you think is important these days for people to know about the fight against HIV/AIDS?

Education is one of the most important weapons against the spread of HIV/AIDS. At a minimum, there needs to be quality basic education, and skills-based HIV/AIDS prevention education. The HIV/AIDS epidemic poses a threat to global health and development. The epidemic affects people of different nationalities, ethnicities, gender, ages, and income classes.

How else does Bank of America support social services and organizations such as APLA?

In Los Angeles County, our employees participate in activities such as AIDS Walk Los Angeles, AIDS LifeCycle, and with the Trevor Project. ... We also take an approach to giving back that goes beyond a check. We provide pro bono expertise, and volunteerism is a huge priority for us. In 2014 alone here in Los Angeles, our employees contributed more than 73,000 volunteer hours in our local communities.

PICTURE IT

The holidays have come and gone, and we're looking forward to all 2016 has to offer! Browse some of the fantastic photos from our recent fundraisers and community events and be sure to join us at another one soon!



[20th Annual Toy Box Party](#)



[Long Beach Health Center
Capital Campaign Kick-Off Reception](#)

SAVE THE DATES



National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

February 7

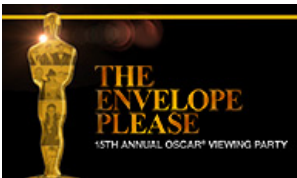
nationalblackaidsday.org



T2 and the L.A. Marathon

February 14

t2ea.com



The Envelope Please

February 28

apla.org/oscars

#ItFeelsGood

...telling my friends that **PrEP** helps protect them **AGAINST HIV**

WANT TO KNOW IF PrEP IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

(844) 830-PrEP APLAHW.ORG/PrEP **APLA Health & Wellness**

If you are HIV-negative, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a pill you take every day that protects you from HIV. PrEP does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia. Condoms offer additional protection against HIV and other STIs. PrEP must be prescribed by a medical provider, who will monitor the drug's effectiveness and impact on your body, and also test you every three months for HIV and other STIs.

#ItFeelsGood

We are launching a new public education campaign about PrEP to raise awareness of this important HIV prevention tool. See why it feels good to talk about PrEP!

aplahw.org/prep

We need you to volunteer with APLA!

For more information, contact Jim Williams, our Volunteer Resources program manager, at volunteer@apla.org or 213.201.1379.