

# touchpoints

Connecting you to the Heritage Provider Network

Issue 26 | Winter 2017

## *Behavioral Health*

Heritage Provider Network Launches Premier Behavioral Health (PBH) to Help Our Members Sustain a Healthy Mind and Body



### »» LATEST NEWS

Heritage Provider Network continues to be at the forefront of managed care. Turn to page 3 to learn about our new initiative, Premier Behavioral Health.

### »» WHAT'S INSIDE

<b>DR. MERKIN UPDATE</b> .....	P2
<b>FEATURED STORY: Behavioral Health</b> .....	P2
<b>PRESS RELEASE: Dr. Merkin Named in "Valley 200"</b> ...	P5
<b>MEDICAL GROUP UPDATES</b> .....	P6



2016 was an exciting year for the healthcare industry. It began with President Obama's "USPTO Cancer Moonshot Challenge" – an initiative that will bring potentially new life-saving treatments to patients, the FDA's approval of new immunotherapy cancer vaccines to treat those with advanced-staged cancer, and the development of improved cancer screening analysis that will assist in detecting abnormal protein structures earlier which are normally more difficult to identify with current testing methods. As the new year progresses, Heritage Provider Network will continue to take on new challenges as we operate on the cutting edge of an ever-changing healthcare industry.

As we begin 2017, we're setting our sights on treating behavioral health issues that affect nearly 43.7 million adults. Our feature article highlights Premier Behavioral Health (PBH), an initiative HPN founded in July 2016 to develop programs that identify and manage patients with behavioral health and substance use disorders.

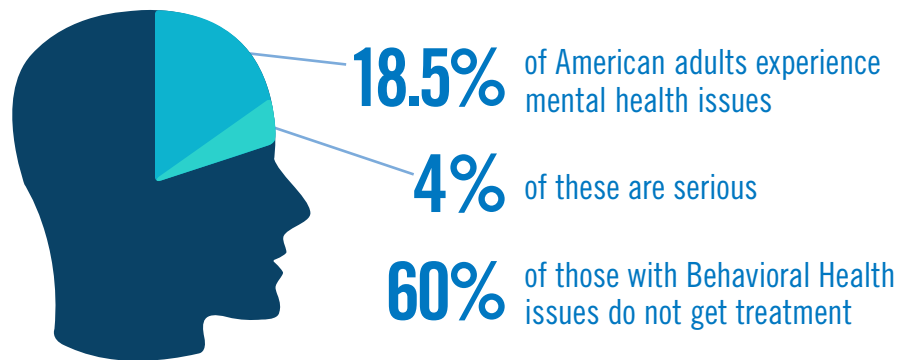
There's a stigma that comes with mental health treatment. With PBH, our goal is to bridge the gap between our members suffering from untreated behavioral health issues by providing the resources that will empower them to live happy and healthy lives. Evidence suggests coordinated and individualized behavioral health intervention will reduce medical expenses and enhance overall quality of life for our members. We look forward to effective collaborations with you as we strive to give our members the peace of mind they deserve.

Best wishes for a healthy new year.

**Richard Merkin, M.D.**  
President and CEO of HPN

# Behavioral Health: *Enhancing Our Initiatives to Support a*

Behavioral healthcare can no longer be swept under the proverbial carpet. Studies suggest that behavioral health-related conditions cost U.S. businesses more than \$440 billion annually (Price Waterhouse Cooper 2015).



According to a recent report 18.5% of Americans - nearly 43.7 million adults - were found to be experiencing some form of mental health issue. Of these, more than 4% had a serious mental illness in 2014 as reported by the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. One of every five adults experiences a mental illness or substance use disorder each year and the majority also have a comorbid physical health condition. As the population continues to grow and age, the volume of individuals diagnosed with behavioral health disorders will increase.

Nearly 6 in 10 adults with a mental health issue receive no treatment. Mental health services have historically been underutilized because of inadequate funding for services, lack of collaboration and coordination among primary care, mental health and aging service providers, access barriers, denial of problems, and the stigma surrounding mental illness and treatment.

Fortunately, major changes in legislation and reimbursement will continue to positively impact the delivery and much-needed expansion of behavioral health services.

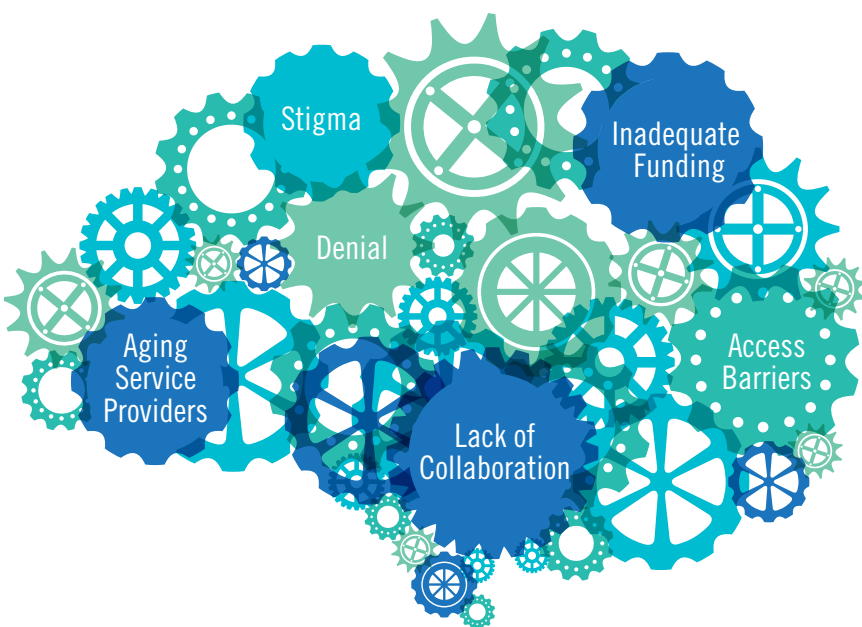
## Expansions of Behavioral Health Services:

- Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equality Act
- Increase in coverage from private health insurers
- Marginal increase in block grant funding

# Healthy Mind and Body

In response, HPN has established Premier Behavior Health (PBH), an enterprise-wide initiative to develop traditional and non-traditional programs to effectively facilitate the delivery and management of behavioral health and substance use disorders for our members and their families.

## Reasons for Underutilization of Behavioral Health Services



One of these programs is HealthyLink, developed as the cornerstone intervention of PBH. HealthyLink is designed to proactively identify behavioral health and substance use disorders in those who have previously gone undiagnosed or untreated by their PCP or other specialists. The program includes a careful cohort selection, a telephonic-based member screening process, an in-person (in-home) clinical assessment, and a referral/authorization for ongoing treatment.

PBH is overseen by Vice President of Behavioral Health, Randy Schwartz, who most recently served as the CEO of Windstone Behavioral Health and has many years of experience developing and executing strategies to effectively manage this population. His team of intervention specialists includes physicians, psychologists, nurse practitioners, and clinical social workers.



## How the HealthyLink Program Works

**1** A confidential notice is mailed to the identified member and their primary care physician notifying them that a nurse will be calling to conduct an annual wellness screening which includes the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) and the General Anxiety Disorder questionnaire (GAD-7).

**2** If the member is positive for at least one screening, a nurse and/or licensed clinical social worker visits the member in his/her home or healthcare facility.

**3** During this visit, we coordinate referrals, conduct skilled consultations, and generate a proactive care plan to manage the member's behavioral health needs.

**4** After the initial visit, a follow-up outreach is scheduled at 30, 60, and 90 day intervals. The member also has 24/7 access to trained mental health specialists, as needed.

In 2016, PBH's focus was on senior Medicare Advantage members only. This year there are plans to expand HealthyLink to Medi-Cal and commercial members.

## Case Study: Making a Difference

In August 2016, just weeks after PBH was established, a psychiatrist and nurse practitioner visited a 94 year-old member diagnosed with Alzheimer's dementia. She was admitted to the hospital after she was found driving on the wrong side of the road.

After a comprehensive assessment, PBH prescribed proper medications and assigned a case worker for facility placement and long-term care planning. Her condition has stabilized, she is being monitored on a regular basis and she has not had any ER visits or hospitalizations since PBH's intervention.

This is just one of several cases where PBH intervention has been beneficial to a member. With the expansion of our behavioral health programs like HealthyLink, we are confident we'll hear similar success stories like this one.



## Looking Forward: Premier Behavioral Health's Evolution and Expansion

Planning ahead, PBH's goals are to continue to improve upon the process and delivery of providing behavioral health and substance use programs to all of our members. We also aim to expand our resources to accommodate the growing population of members in need of these services.

### Changes We Plan on Implementing to Accomplish Our Goals:



Add additional staff to better respond to our members' needs and demands for behavioral health treatment



Install videoconferencing technology for instant access to members in their homes and mobile devices



Expand contracting and credentialing to qualify for Behavioral Health Network, a nonprofit agency that provides resources to treat mental illness for families



Continue to promote the importance in early detection of BH disorders to our primary care physicians which will result in better patient outcomes and cost reductions

To find out more about PBH and its programs, contact Randy Schwartz at (714) 402-1876 or email [rschwartz@heritagemed.com](mailto:rschwartz@heritagemed.com)





## Dr. Richard Merkin Named One of “The Valley 200” Most Influential Business Leaders by the San Fernando Valley Business Journal

By Janet Janjigian



**Dr. Merkin recognized as an outstanding community leader for his achievements improving the quality, cost and accessibility of healthcare for thousands in the community.**

Marina del Rey, California-November 28, 2016 – Dr. Richard Merkin, Founder and CEO of The Heritage Group, which includes Heritage Provider Network and Heritage Medical Systems, has been recognized by the San Fernando Valley Business Journal as one of the most influential business leaders of 2016 in “The Valley 200.”

Dr. Merkin was selected as the innovative healthcare leader in the region, recognizing his commitment to changing healthcare management and delivery resulting in a healthier, more vibrant population.

“I’m deeply honored to be recognized by the San Fernando Valley Business Journal in ‘The Valley 200,’” said Dr. Merkin. “We strive to contribute to a growing economy in the area offering quality, affordable, accessible healthcare that improves the lives of the members of the community we serve.”

“This book is a nod of appreciation to those who are strengthening our community, making it the place we want to live and creating the opportunities our children deserve. This book is a salute to the leaders we depend upon,” said Charles Crumpley, Editor and Publisher of the SFVBJ.

This inaugural edition of “The Valley 200” recognizes the 200 most outstanding, innovative leaders who shape and strengthen the community, creating new business opportunities, including jobs, for a dynamic economy that spans the entire region covering the San Fernando, Conejo, Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys in California- if this vast area were its own city, it would be the fifth largest in the country. Under Dr. Merkin’s leadership, HPN’s family of medical groups in the region includes Regal Medical Group and Lakeside Medical Group in the San Fernando Valley and High Desert medical Group in the Antelope Valley. HPN is currently the largest, physician owned and operated integrated delivery system in the country with over 50 related healthcare companies and medical groups, bringing 37 years of successful, coordinated, managed care with over 4000 primary care physicians and 30,000 specialists. HPN also encompasses numerous patent, venture capital, private equity, and insurance companies, including joint ventures with Rite Aid, Walgreen’s, Trinity Hospital Systems and Fresenius.

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## Heritage Medical Systems and Signature Medical Group Announce Joint Venture to Advance Population Healthcare Management in Missouri



Heritage Medical Systems and Signature Medical Group, the largest physician-owned, multi-specialty group in the St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri area, recently announced their joint venture, Missouri Collaborative Healthcare, which will provide population health management along Missouri's I-70 corridor.

This new partnership will enable local physicians, patients and families to drive improvements that will significantly impact health, quality, affordability and service. For many doctors, patients, and families, improving all four at the same time is difficult. The new Missouri Collaborative Healthcare will change that dynamic by providing higher quality, more affordable coverage with an improved user-friendly system.

For the first time, the joint venture will support physicians in the Midwest to expand Heritage's latest successful, proven clinical model and tailor it to each patient proactively. This venture will leverage Signature's primary and specialist physician network while recruiting more Missouri physicians – creating a robust care network.

"We are proud to be broadening the population served by Heritage, supporting physicians in yet another local market, along with Signature Medical Group, as Heritage delivers better healthcare and wellness to more people across the country," said Richard Merkin, M.D., CEO of Heritage Medical Systems. "Our proprietary technology and body of knowledge allows physicians to take full, complete clinical responsibility in the changing healthcare environment, enabling us to improve outcomes and provide the best care to families and communities in Missouri."

## Regal Medical Group and Lakeside Community Healthcare Sponsor City of Burbank's "Live Well" Project

As part of its mission to build healthier communities, Regal and Lakeside, along with a consortium of healthcare, community, and social service organizations, are sponsors of the "Live Well" wellness program at Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center.

The six-month program was created for Burbank residents at risk for heart disease and diabetes. Many classes are presented by a Regal and Lakeside health educator on topics including nutrition, carbohydrate counting for diabetes management, weight management, and nutrition for heart health.

Participants also receive baseline health screenings, access to local fitness centers, educational wellness classes, gift incentives, and follow-up health screenings at the end of the program.

The program is structured in a group format of 100 participants to provide the optimum level of support and personalized attention. Participants will receive gift incentives initially and after hitting monumental points like exercising regularly and attending educational classes.

"Due to the generosity of Regal and Lakeside providing health education and lifestyle classes, the Live Well program is able to meet its goals of helping Burbank residents become more physically active, reduce their health risks for diabetes and heart disease, and become more informed healthcare consumers," said Terry Walker, Business Development Manager at Providence St. Joseph Medical Center.

## Diabetes Awareness Program Targets Heritage's Senior Population in Brooklyn

Hundreds of Brooklynites recently gathered at Brooklyn Borough Hall Courtroom to take part in a full-day diabetes awareness program designed to provide them with education, resources, and free diabetes and cholesterol testing.

The event was sponsored by Healthcare Partners, IPA and Joe Healy, COO, with support from Debby Kelly, Senior Vice President of Business Operations and Employee Services of Heritage New York Medical, PC, Brooklyn Borough Hall and Borough President Eric L. Adams. Nurses and staff from Healthcare Partners, IPA facilitated the screening and informational event.

*“HealthCare Partners, IPA cares for more than 20,000 Brooklyn residents and we are continuing to grow,” said Joe Healy, COO, Healthcare Partners, IPA. “This is just one example of the programs we hope to offer as we expand our commitment to Brooklyn.”*

Attendees packed the house, enjoying the opportunity to have the screenings conducted and receiving valuable information. When Brooklyn Borough President Adams spoke to the crowd, sharing his personal experience with diabetes and the importance of lifestyle changes, the audience was rapt.

“As an individual who was recently diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, I applaud Debby Kelly and Heritage New York Medical, PC for their efforts to combat this growing epidemic,” said Adams. “More than 29 million Americans have diabetes and one in four does not know they have it. More must be done to educate communities about the impacts of glycemic loads on blood sugar, and I look forward to continuing to work with Heritage New York Medical, PC to raise awareness and change lifestyles.”



*Attendees glean important information about diabetes during the recent diabetes awareness program in Brooklyn.*



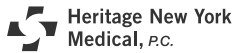
*Keynote speaker Torian Easterling, M.D., MPH - Assistant Commissioner of Brooklyn District Public Health Offices (left), and Debby Kelly, SVP of Business Operations and Employee Services (right).*

“The event was a great platform for Heritage New York Medical, PC to partner with the large community of Brooklyn. Staff and I received many warm thank you hugs and requests for more of these events,” said Kelly. “The attendees seemed truly grateful, encouraged, and motivated to make required lifestyle changes to better manage their diabetes and be healthy. As a result of the success of the event, Heritage New York Medical, PC has been invited to be part of a strategic planning group focusing on diabetes prevention.”

Assistant Commissioner of Brooklyn District Public Health Office, Torian Easterling, M.D., MPH, was the keynote speaker, addressing the inequity of resources in neighborhoods predominantly occupied by minorities that lay the foundation for the food related health issues in Brooklyn communities. Suzette Williams, MSN, FNP-BC, CDE, Director of the Diabetes Resource Center at NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County, delivered a presentation about the nutritional myths of diabetes and illustrated meal portion control.



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