



LAWNDALE CHRISTIAN  
**HEALTH CENTER**

*Loving God. Loving People.*

SPRING 2019 NEWSLETTER



## LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear LCHC Partners,

LCHC's mission is community based. I love that part of who we are. It shows up in many ways. As an organization, we are often described as being a Community Health Center, and an important part of this is being governed by a Board of community members. The name of our organization starts with the name of our community. As employees, we value the beauty of living where we serve. Our communities are at the core of our identity.

Being healthy is both simple and complicated. Health is not easily purchased as a commodity in the market. We rarely say 'my mall' when talking about where we shop, but we frequently say 'my doctor' when discussing our health. To me, this reveals that health is achieved in community, in relationship with others. The writer in Leviticus 19:18 advised us to, "love your neighbor as yourself." As a Community Health Center, that is what we do when we are at our best.

I hope you'll enjoy the stories and updates that follow. They highlight the importance of relationship in our collective desire to live healthy lives. You'll read about Andres who found healing in the context of a Support Group. Karen Johnson discusses how her love for her community motivates her to share about both its history and future. Seniors are thriving and building friendships in our Senior Day Services. Our new Immediate Care Clinic is meeting an important need in our community.

As always, thank you for caring about our efforts and caring about the communities we serve.

Thank you,

Bruce Miller  
CEO, Lawndale Christian Health Center

# HELPING SENIORS THRIVE

It's Thursday in the Gallery, and 17 seniors are eating lunch, just like they do every weekday. They're part of Lawndale Christian Health Center's Senior Day Services, and they're here to enjoy activities, socializing, exercise, and meals. The program helps seniors thrive; they can stay in their home and community and out of nursing homes. Whether they are simply seeking friendship or need nursing support, they find that here.

The program provides a warm home-away-from-home for participants. "We all get along beautifully and it feels so homey," says Ms. Ora Lee Downing, who has been coming for 6 months. She describes what this group has done for her emotional health. "I've been a widow for over a year now, but I'm coping. A lot of my friends here have had losses, too. Being here helps to overcome the sadness." At age 87, Ms. Downing is the oldest participant, but she has the support she needs to continue living at home.

Ms. Georgia Williamson similarly looks forward to spending time with people her age. "We laugh and talk together here. My husband is in a nursing home, and my kids are grown and going about their business. It's great to have something to do!"

The presence of caring nurses brings peace of mind to participants like Ms. Rita Simmons. During her initial check-up, she discovered her blood pressure was dangerously high. "I'm not sure I would've known if I hadn't come here," she says. "At home, you may not pick up on everything going on. Here, a nurse checks on us and sees how we're doing physically."

As Senior Day Services moves to the dedicated Senior Center, the participants are excited for new opportunities. The beautiful Senior Center boasts its own kitchen, a large dining space, fitness area, senior medical clinic, bright atrium, and more. The facility will allow LCHC to care for as many as 150 seniors, all while developing even more high-quality services tailored to their needs.

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The bright and beautiful waiting room at the Immediate Care and Pharmacy.



## RESPONDING TO NEED

More than half of all visits to Emergency Rooms are avoidable, national surveys have found. Many visit the ER for non-emergencies because they are guaranteed to be seen that day without an appointment. Some emergency visits could be prevented through ongoing primary healthcare.

This statistic highlights the barriers to consistent care that many people face. Without access to primary healthcare, patients do not receive the ongoing medical attention needed to manage their health and avoid emergency situations.

In 1984, residents of the Lawndale community came together to address the lack of access to primary healthcare in their neighborhood through the founding of Lawndale Christian Health Center. Over the last 3 decades, LCHC has continued to grow and adapt to meet the community's needs.

LCHC's Immediate Care Clinic opened in March to help address urgent needs. This new clinic provides walk-in appointments for non-life-threatening medical needs such as illnesses, minor injuries, and infections. When a patient has a timely concern but is unable to get a same-day appointment with their care team, they can now receive necessary medical attention at the Immediate Care Clinic.

The updated building will also be the new location for LCHC's Pharmacy. A large waiting area with tall windows and comfortable seating is designed to invite patients in and allow them to feel at home in this space. LCHC looks forward to continuing to address community health needs by providing this resource to current patients and connecting new patients to its Primary Care services for long-term wellness.

## ROOTED IN COMMUNITY

“Being part of transformation in my own community is very rewarding,” says Karen Johnson, who has worked in accounting and finance at the health center for the last 25 years. Karen was born and raised in Lawndale, is a long-time member of Lawndale Community Church, and still lives in the neighborhood today.

As Supervisor of Patient Accounting, Karen oversees a committed and talented team of 8 people. Their collective longevity makes them an efficient team and a pleasure to manage. “Our accountants have years of experience. Getting to know each team member on both a professional and personal level has been one of my favorite parts of this role.” Karen describes the family-like bond with her co-workers. They offer support, prayer, and understanding through the ups and downs of life.

“This work can be very intense,” Karen admits as she describes the daily challenges. She and her team don’t often get to interact face-to-face with patients. But for Karen, LCHC’s mission of showing and sharing the love of Jesus extends to fellow staff as well. “We are in contact with a lot of staff, and it’s important to remember that we are a beacon of light no matter who we are talking to.”

Karen has a deep sense of loyalty to the Lawndale community and encourages anyone contributing to LCHC’s mission to get to know the history of the organization. “If you know where we’ve been, you know where we’re going. While we continue to grow, may we never forget how we got started.”

Karen is proud of LCHC’s commitment to increase employment opportunities for residents of Chicago’s West Side and desires to see more Lawndale community members serving within their own neighborhood. She hopes young people in the area will explore the many opportunities available at LCHC and find meaningful employment here, just as she has.

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## THE FIRST STEP

Andres Resendiz settles into a chair in an otherwise empty circle and begins to describe the journey that brought him to this room for the first time. “For more than 20 years, I would wake up in the middle of the night drenched in sweat and lie there trying to solve the world’s problems,” he recalls. Last year, his restless sleep gave way to more symptoms.

Andres came to his LCHC provider in a panic — his mouth was so dry he couldn’t swallow, and he had difficulty breathing. He was thoroughly examined, but his heart and other vital functions were operating as they should. Over the next several weeks, however, his symptoms worsened. He underwent more testing and even an MRI scan, but results showed that the root cause was likely not physical.

His provider had recommended the Stress Management Group led by staff psychologists in LCHC’s Archer clinic, and Andres felt it was time to try this approach. After attending the first session accompanied by his wife of 44 years, he knew he was in the right place. In this circle, he came to terms with the depression and stress he had dealt with for over two decades and understood the toll it was taking on his body.

The sessions equipped Andres to cope and led to immense relief. “You can’t do it on your own,” he says, explaining why he now recommends professional therapy to others. “Especially if you’ve been struggling for a while. I have the tools I need now. The rest is up to me. You just have to start – you have to give yourself that opportunity to get better.”