

Ways to Talk About Your Health

Talking to a doctor or nurse can be challenging. Try to be honest as you can. This allows the doctors and nurses to better help you and address your concerns.

Doctors and nurses are legally required keep your health information private and confidential.

Not sure how to say what you need to say? Try the following:

“I use drugs.”

“If I am honest with you about my drug use will you still give me good medical care?”

“I have questions about [fill in here].”

“I have new pain in my [fill in here].”

“I have an abcess.”

“Are you going to treat me differently than you treat your other patients because I use drugs? Do you have experience working with drug users?”

“I need you to treat me with dignity and respect so I can feel comfortable talking with you.”

“I am interested in options for recovery.”

“Will you take my pain seriously and give me help if I need it?”

Dr: Do you have a history of asthma?

“Yes, I do. It runs in my family. A couple of years ago, I went to the ER for it.”

“Is this the only option for treatment?”

“Do you have an on-site pharmacy / dental clinic / mental health provider? Will you give me a referral if you don’t?”

“My last HIV/Hep-C tests were 6 months ago.”

HEALTH CARE IS FOR EVERYONE

Simple Steps to Get Through the Process



HOUSING

You deserve housing along with healthcare. To apply for housing, everyone needs to complete a CES Evaluation Form for the Greater LA Coordinated Entry system. The Form helps the County identify who needs housing first. It can take a long time, but it’s important to try.

Call 211 to locate the nearest agency that offers CES evaluation forms. They can also provide information on emergency shelters and other available services.

Requirements are Picture ID, Social Security Number and Proof of Homelessness Form.

Honesty is the best policy when completing forms.

Ask about hotel vouchers.



created in collaboration with the Peers of the City of Angels

GETTING HEALTH INSURANCE

Under health care reform, **most people with low incomes can now get free medical care** through clinics that are “medical homes.” There are steps to take and you may not be seen right away.

We all deserve care from a doctor who knows us. **Finding a health home now** can help you get medical care before a problem becomes an emergency.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

1. GET YOUR IDs TOGETHER

To sign you up for health care, most clinics need you to bring:

- Social Security Number (usually you don't need the card)
- Official Photo ID
- Proof of Citizenship / Legal Residency (passport or birth certificate, sometimes mail)

2. CHOOSE A CLINIC

Go online and find a clinic, or just walk into your neighborhood clinic.

3. FILL OUT FORMS

You will get your forms at the clinic. If you need help filling them out, ask your service provider or the clinic to help you. Be prepared to provide an emergency contact.

4. YOUR MEDICAL HOME

Clinics now have a role as a “medical home.” This means the clinic you choose will be your access point for all health care needs.

QUESTIONS?

HOW TO GET DOCUMENTS

California offers **free birth certificates**. Starting in 2016, California will also offer **free photo IDs** for homeless people. Go to a service provider, who can give you a voucher for a free or cheap photo ID, then take it to the DMV.

Proof of Income: Don't worry about it. You will be asked about it, but if you do not have income, it should not be a barrier to your care.

WHY DO I NEED A MEDICAL HOME?

You will have an ongoing relationship with a physician. By having insight into your longer medical history, your doctor can provide you with better care.

CAN I CHANGE MY MEDICAL HOME?

Yes.

WILL MY MEDICAL HOME TAKE CARE OF ALL MY HEALTH NEEDS?

If you need **dental care, eye care, mental health services or a pharmacy**, you might be referred to an off-site provider by your doctor. But by having a main medical home, your doctor will keep track of the care you are getting from different places.

GETTING THE HEALTH CARE YOU DESERVE

Be a smart consumer. Your medical home should serve your needs — don't let these common barriers get in the way of the best care for you.



Cleaning Up can help you feel more confident asking for help, and probably more comfortable during the process.



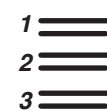
Don't let filling out **Complicated Medical Forms** overwhelm you. Fill out what you can, then ask for help on whatever you have questions about.



Health care involves **Long Wait Times** — for everyone, not just you. It's part of health care in the USA. Bring a book or something to keep you busy while you wait.



Because of long wait times, prepare yourself to **Be Well and Manage**.



Write It Down: Before your appointment, **Make a List** of questions, conditions you have or are worried about, and medications you are taking. **Take Notes** during the visit.



How are you going to **Remember Your Appointment?** Your phone? Email? A date book? Pick what works for you and ask the clinic to help you by texting or calling.



Ask the clinic about **Transportation** options. They should be able to tell you how to get to the clinic.



You may sometimes feel like **Doctors and Nurses** are rushing or judging you. Insist on being heard. But also remember they are often really busy with the number of patients they see.