

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,

I am pleased and proud to share our fall issue of Checkup with you.

The biggest news around here is that Dawn Harbatkin has decided to step down from her position as Medical Director. During her tenure, Dawn has overseen the growth of our patient services from a little over 9000 patient visits six years ago to over 48,000 visits this past year. I personally would like to thank Dawn for her leadership and caring.

Of course the next most important piece of

information is that we have selected Dawn's successor: Dr. Gal Mayer. Please take a few moments to read our cover story, and hopefully it will convey the compassion and commitment this extraordinary physician feels for the LGBT community.

The Medical Director's column on page three will give you an even better sense of Gal as he discusses the impact of coronary disease among women.

These are certainly exciting times here at

Callen-Lorde, but I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the remarkable contribution our friends and donors make. Thank you for making our work possible.

Sincerely,

Jay Laudato



Executive Director



Meet Our New Medical Director An Interview with Gal Mayer

By Ed Galloway,
Director of Development

When I met with Dr. Mayer to discuss this article, we talked about the myriad health concerns among the LGBT community and how Callen-Lorde addresses them.

Gal began with the most fundamental aspect of being an LGBT patient - self-identification. He explained how being closeted can have a negative impact on health, particularly for gay men: "A medical provider will not know to ask the right questions of a closeted man. So really big concerns - like HIV risk, substance use, or sexually-transmitted infections - may never come up. And then there are the obvious emotional issues of depression and isolation inherent with a life lived in secrecy."

Gal believes part of the problem is that medical schools do not adequately address gay health issues - especially lesbian health which, in his experience, was "never mentioned, not a word."

The real shame, as Gal points out, "is that all women - especially lesbians - still face many barriers to health." Many women are unaware of the threats. "For example, not many women

know that cardiovascular disease (heart attacks and strokes) claims more women's lives than any form of cancer. And speaking of cancer, lesbians may be at higher risk for developing breast cancer than heterosexual women," continued Gal.

About his personal learning curve of LGBT health issues, Gal was very frank: "Before coming to Callen-Lorde, I knew next to nothing about transgender health, so I started attending transgender group meetings even before my first day at work. I discovered that the medical aspect of transgender care isn't so complicated. The real obstacle is not to be afraid of providing the care - but rather try to understand the psycho-social aspect of individual patients."

Callen-Lorde is most frequently involved in the care of the portion of the transgender community that is seeking transition through the use of hormones.

And in commenting on what makes Callen-Lorde so unique, he added "When people come in here - regardless of whether they come for a routine check up, an HIV test, or hormonal

therapy - we get it, we know how to treat them and we are accepting of their decisions."

We are all thrilled by Gal's appointment to the position of Medical Director. And because knowledge is power, he asked me to let you know that he is very much looking forward to communicating with patients and donors through the medical column of this publication. Welcome Gal! ▼

Dr. Gal Mayer was born in Israel and grew up in Israel, Nigeria and the United States. He completed his undergraduate work at the State University of New York at Albany and earned a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University. He then attended the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and completed his residency in internal medicine at New York University Medical Center and Bellevue Hospital - where he also served as a Chief Resident. Dr. Mayer has been providing medical care at Community Health Project and Callen-Lorde since his second year of residency.

Callen-Lorde Establishes The Howard J. Brown Society

to enable the organization to continue its vital work offering the highest quality healthcare to the LGBT community

In 1973 Howard J. Brown, M.D. (1924-75), former New York City Public Health Commissioner, publicly affirmed his homosexuality and helped change the image of gay men and lesbians in the United States. In the spirit of Dr. Brown and his unwavering courage, we have established *The Howard Brown Society* at Callen-Lorde Community Health Center.

The mission of the society is to encourage major financial support for Callen-Lorde, to enable the organization to continue its vital work offering the highest quality healthcare to the LGBT community. Financial support for Callen-Lorde comes from a variety of sources – government, foundations and corporations – but some of the most personal and enduring are commitments from individuals.

Membership in Callen-Lorde's newest initiative is open to anyone for an annual gift of \$1,000 or more. The gift can be made by credit card or check, all at once or in monthly installments. And remember: if your company has a matching gift program, this may be a way to make membership more affordable. For example, if your company matches your gift one-to-one, you can be a member for just \$500!

Members receive special listings in Callen-Lorde's printed materials and on the website, complimentary tickets to *Walk on the Wild Side* and other benefits. Join other concerned individuals who believe in Callen-Lorde's mission and want to ensure its work on behalf of the LGBT community.



For more information, visit our website, or call Ed Galloway at 212-271-7263.

Join Us for the Fifth Annual Community Health Awards

On Tuesday, November 15, plan to join us at Capitale, where we will honor three distinguished individuals: tennis legend Martina Navratilova, New York City Council member and activist Philip Reed, and psychiatrist and author Richard A. Isay, M.D., the first openly gay member of the American Psychoanalytic Association.

The Master of Ceremonies will be the incomparable Charles Busch. Corporate sponsorships are available, \$2,500 to \$25,000, and tickets, \$250 to \$1,500.

For more information - or to make your reservation - call Ed Galloway at 212-271-7263 or logon to www.callen-lorde.org. ▼

Walk on the Wild Side 5 Breaks Records

On a beautiful New York night at the Central Park Zoo, Walk on the Wild Side 5 raised over \$165,000 for Callen-Lorde's programs. A record crowd of 700 was on hand to cheer Tony Award-winning actors Cherry Jones and Denis O'Hare who served as the Masters of Ceremonies for the evening. Thanks to all who attended, and to our friends at the Zoo whose hard work every year makes this event so memorable. ▼



Gal Mayer, MD
Medical Director



The Medical Director's report on

Current Health Issues

Current Health Issues is a feature of Check-Up which highlights current issues in health care that may affect your well-being - as well as that of your partner and your family. Each health issue is followed by Internet links and/or references for more information.

Coronary Disease: Not Just for Men

Heart attack, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases are devastating to everyone. But for American women, coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death.

Many women incorrectly believe that cancer is their biggest health threat. Yet nearly twice as many women die of heart disease and stroke as from all forms of cancer - including breast cancer.

The American Heart Association has identified several factors that increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. The more risk factors, the greater the chance of a heart attack or stroke.

Age, gender, race, and family history are risk factors for heart disease that can't be controlled.

However, there are several factors that can be controlled, modified, or treated:

SMOKING - a major cause of cardiovascular heart disease among women, smoking is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States.

HIGH BLOOD CHOLESTEROL - Studies show that women's cholesterol is higher than men's from age 45 on. High levels of LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol (the "bad" cholesterol) raise the risk of heart disease and heart attack. High levels of HDL (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol (the "good" cholesterol) lower the risk of heart disease. Research has shown that low levels of HDL cholesterol seem to be a stronger risk factor for women than for men.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE - Women have an increased risk of developing high blood pressure if they are overweight, have a family history of high blood pressure, are pregnant, take certain types of birth control pills or have reached menopause.

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY - Various studies have found that heart disease is almost twice as likely to develop in inactive people than in those who are more active.

Other health factors are diabetes, high triglyceride levels, excessive alcohol intake, and stress.

For more information take a look at the American Heart Association's website at: www.americanheart.org

A Note from Dawn Harbatkin

It gives me great pleasure – be it bitter-sweet – to announce that at the end of the year I will be leaving Callen-Lorde and moving to San Francisco. I have accepted a job as Medical Director for Lyon-Martin Womens Health Services, a position that will offer me many opportunities to increase my service to our community.

In the more than seven years since I've been at Callen-Lorde, I've met some incredible people – not only some of the most dedicated medical professionals I've ever encountered in my career, but patients who would be totally left out in the cold, were it not for the help and care they receive here.

As they say in the Academy Awards, there are too many people to thank, but I want

to personally cite Jay Laudato, my friend and mentor, and the entire senior management team for everything he and they have done to make my time here so fulfilling. There is much still to be done, but in their hands I know that Callen-Lorde will continue to grow and meet the needs of thousands of LGBT individuals. And I am personally thrilled that Gal Mayer has been chosen as the new medical director, and wish him much success.

And to all of the Callen-Lorde community . . . be happy, be healthy. Stay involved. If you are a patient, continue your care. If you are a donor, keep giving. To all of the dedicated staff, keep up the good work, the community needs you! ▼



Our Mission

The Callen-Lorde Community Health Center provides quality health care and related services to New York's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community 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.

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Save a Tree!

Receive CheckUp and other news about Callen-Lorde in your e-mail! Send your e-mail address to CHECKup@callen-lorde.org. We will never share your email address and you can unsubscribe by emailing us at any time.

Callen-Lorde Community Health Center
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212-271-7200

Visit us online: www.callen-lorde.org

GET YOUR FLU SHOT NOW!

As flu season approaches, talk to your doctor about whether you should receive a flu shot - a decision particularly important for those on chemotherapy or with weakened immune systems. Callen-Lorde cares about everyone in our community. Whether or not your doctor is affiliated with Callen-Lorde, remember to take care of yourself.

It is recommended that people who are at high risk for flu and its complications make plans to receive a flu vaccine. People who are considered at high risk include:

- ▼ persons aged 65 years or older
- ▼ residents of long-term care facilities
- ▼ persons aged 2 to 64 years with pre-existing health conditions
- ▼ children aged 6 to 23 months
- ▼ pregnant women
- ▼ health care personnel who provide direct patient care
- ▼ household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children aged less than 6 months

Introducing our new Health Passport!

If you're like many of us keeping track of your preventive health care is often set aside or forgotten with all the other things going on in our lives. For our HIV positive patients, keeping track of lab tests and exams is not only something that they may forget but they can also be confusing. Our staff developed a simple annual health passport that helps our patients to keep track of their health care. The wallet size passport also gives telephone menu to help patients get through our switchboard quickly. Our contact quick list is printed here for your convenience. As we distributed our health passport we got requests from other patients saying that other health passports for lesbians, gay men, and seniors would be helpful. Our staff even said it would help them! We will be releasing our new, free health passports over the winter. Look for them at Callen-Lorde. ▼



212-271-7200

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