

HEALTH CARE HERO

Dr. Michael Stacey is the chief medical officer for LifeLong Medical Care. He's not a loud man, nor is he overbearing. Even his colleagues describe him as soft-spoken and gracious when addressing others – no matter his audience. They also described him as a tireless care provider, especially when it comes to addressing inequities in our nation's healthcare system, issues that have been exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. So when he does choose to speak, people

tend to listen. For being the voice of now, Dr. Michael Stacey is this month's Health Care Hero.

Dr. Stacey explained to *Berkeley Times* how he is passionate about providing a high quality of health care, and how at LifeLong Medical Care he is surrounded by people who share his passion and commitment.

"Sometimes you don't need a big voice," he said about leading at LifeLong, "When good things are already happening, it's important to let things be."

Due to the pandemic, lots of changes are being implemented just now. For Dr. Stacey, that means not losing the big picture while helping his team manage through mountains of minutia. To help with this process, he has led "All Staff Calls" on Zoom every Monday. Typically, 250-300 LifeLong employees participate in the call. That's how his voice has become so recognizable.

Though not all of his directives for change have been popular with staff, it's obvious to all

that he's "doing the right thing," that he cares about patients *and* the well-being of his staff. He's their champion and advocate. Ironically, Dr. Michael Stacey, this month's Health Care Hero and a voice for now, offered this bit of wisdom about being a doctor during this pandemic: "It's so important to listen."

Health Care Hero: *LifeLong Medical Care chief medical officer Dr. Michael Stacey*



photo courtesy of LifeLong Medical Care

LifeLong provides essential services to older, frail adults

SOURCE: HELEN PETTAY, LIFE LONG MEDICAL CARE

As Covid-19 rips through nursing homes causing an exorbitantly high number of deaths, it is increasingly important that we provide the essential services necessary to keep older and frail adults in their own homes instead of being institutionalized.

More than 60,000 nursing home residents nationally have tested positive for the virus, and nearly 26,000 nursing home residents have died from coronavirus. One quarter of nursing homes had at least one case, and one in five had at least one death, according to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in a June 1st report marking the first nationwide government tally showing the impact of the pandemic on nursing

homes. In California, at least 44% of the state's 4,485 COVID-19 deaths as of June 5 were related to nursing homes.

How can we help older adults stay at home instead of in nursing homes? Through the visionary work of Dorothy Graham and her mother, working with Lifelong Medical Care, many older and frail adult patients in Oakland, Berkeley, and nearby areas have been able to get the lifesaving necessities and support that they need to continue to live safely in their own homes.

LifeLong Medical Care provides services for people of all ages, primarily those living below the federal poverty level. Last year alone, the Federally Qualified Community Health Center served more

than 66,500 patients with medical, dental, and social service needs

"It's because of LifeLong's varied services and commitment to the community that I was able to implement my mother's vision and establish two funds with the help of their staff. My mother and I saw the pitfalls in the health care system. It's organizations such as LifeLong who have to fill in the gaps – and they do."

"Years ago, I found a letter my mother had written to Dr. Marty Lynch, former CEO and now CEO Emeritus of LifeLong," said Ms. Graham. "In the letter she had a vision for helping older and frail adults stay in their homes and not be institutionalized for small factors, such as needing a commode, a

life-alert pendant, anti-slip grab bar in the shower. These might seem like small items, but they are a life-saving necessity to older and frail adults – and they help keep people safe and at home."

Dorothy and her mother started a fund named after their father and husband, Victor Graham. These services provide items not covered by Medicare and help keep older and frail adults in their own homes. The other fund is a respite-care service.

"As I took care of my mother in her later years, I saw how vital it was to create a program that supports not only the adult, but also the family members. They need respite breaks, and only people who have been in this situation know how dif-

ficult it is to be a 24/7 caregiver. It's not sustainable, which is how many older and frail adults end up in hospitals or nursing homes."

"Many Californians face a grim reality as programs and services that keep loved ones living at home are woefully underfunded," she added.

"Let's support community-based health care services that offer essential aid and respite care to patients and their families so we can keep loved ones living at home, where they belong."

To learn more about the programs and funds offered to older and frail adults at LifeLong Medical Care, go to lifelongmedical.org/support-us/funds-to-support.html

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY **SOLO POR CITA**

COVID-19 TESTING AVAILABLE

We care about you and your loved ones.

Large gatherings increase the probability of exposure to COVID-19. To protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community, **consider getting tested 7-14 days after attending any large gathering.**

There is no cost to you for testing
(but any insurance will be billed).

Call (510) 981-4100 to schedule an appointment.

PRUEBA COVID-19 DISPONIBLE

Nos preocupamos por usted y por sus seres queridos.

Las reuniones grandes aumentan la probabilidad de exposición a COVID-19. Para protegerse a sí mismo, a sus seres queridos y a su comunidad, **considere hacerse la prueba de 7 a 14 días después de asistir a cualquier reunión grande.**

No hay costo para usted por las pruebas.
(pero se facturará cualquier seguro)

Llame al (510) 981-4100 para programar una cita.

www.lifelongmedical.org