

IT'S ACHIEVABLE

Achievable Health's Newsletter

Carmen's Corner

Dear Friends of Achievable Health:



Carmen Ibarra
Chief Executive Officer

This has been a season defined by both resilience and reality. We've weathered hard moments together—none tougher than the recent passage of the federal reconciliation budget bill that includes devastating cuts to Medicaid. And yet, even in the face of these setbacks, we continue to celebrate milestones that reflect our shared commitment to meeting the healthcare needs of those we serve.

Ribbon Cutting at the Lovelace Center

In May, we officially cut the ribbon on the Achievable Health Lovelace Center! We were honored to gather with donors, patients and their families, local leaders, and staff to tour our beautiful new Health Center. Every element—from the sensory rooms and spacious patient suites to the calming artwork created by professional artists with disabilities—was designed with care, inclusion, and dignity in mind.

We look forward to welcoming patients into this new space later this summer. As we near the finish line of this capital project, we have \$400,000 left to raise. Every gift counts. Donations of \$1,000 or more will be recognized on our digital donor wall in the new Lovelace Center.

It's Achievable Gala

This spring's *It's Achievable Gala* was a success, raising over \$120,000 to support our mission. We were proud to honor the Hoag Family Foundation and the Albertsons/Vons/Pavilions Foundation—two extraordinary partners in our work. It was a night filled with inspiration, community, and powerful reminders of what's possible when we come together for a common cause.

The Fight for Access Isn't Over

While we've had much to celebrate, the passing of the federal reconciliation budget bill—with its deep Medicaid cuts—marks a painful turning point for healthcare access. These cuts, along with state-level threats to Medi-Cal, strike at the very heart of what we do. For our patients—children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other low-income families—these policies could mean fewer options, longer waits, and more barriers to the care they deserve.

Let's be clear: this isn't just about dollars. It's about dignity. These decisions impact real people, and we will not stay silent as the safety net they rely on is pulled away.

On July 1st, just days before the bill was signed into law, I sat down with Louise McCarthy, President & CEO of the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County (CCALAC), to talk candidly about what this moment means for community health centers like ours. That conversation follows on the next page.

Why Philanthropy Matters Now More Than Ever

We must continue to stay focused on our mission—and now, more than ever, philanthropy will shape what happens next. As public funding shrinks, private giving becomes essential to preserve access, protect our medically at-risk patients, and ensure our doors remain open to all who need care.

If you are able, please consider making a donation today via our website at achievablehealth.org. Your gift—no matter the size—has never been more critical. Every contribution helps us move forward with compassion, urgency, and strength.

With deep gratitude and determination,

Carmen Ibarra, Chief Executive Officer



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Standing Strong for Community Health

A Conversation with Louise McCarthy, President & CEO of CCALAC
Interviewed by Carmen Ibarra, CEO of Achievable Health

“An estimated 12 million Americans could lose coverage. That means fewer resources for health centers and more uninsured patients in need of complex care with no clear path forward.”

LOUISE MCCARTHY



Louise McCarthy
President & CEO of CCALAC

Carmen: Thank you for taking the time to speak with us during such a busy season. With everything going on, Achievable Health is truly grateful. To start us off—can you share what CCALAC is and the role it plays in L.A. County’s healthcare landscape?

Louise: The Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County—CCALAC—is a coalition of nonprofit community health centers across the county. We’re talking about 450 sites serving over 2 million patients each year, from the Antelope Valley to Long Beach, and Venice to San Gabriel. These clinics joined forces over 30 years ago to advocate together, share resources, and support one another as a network. We focus on advocacy, training, technical assistance—anything our members need to better serve their communities.

Carmen: That’s an incredible reach. Can you share more about their impact?

Louise: One in five Angelenos receive care at a community health center. Among those on Medi-Cal, which is California’s Medicaid program, it’s one in three. These centers are the backbone of our safety net. They provide medical, dental, mental health, substance use treatment, and enabling services—like translation, transportation, and food support. Health centers don’t just treat illness—they connect people to what they need to thrive.

Carmen: Speaking of Medicaid --- many don’t realize just how central it is. Why does it matter so much?

Louise: Medicaid is the foundation of healthcare for millions. Nationwide, 49% of children are covered by Medicaid, and two-thirds of people in nursing homes rely on it. In California, Medi-Cal covers low-income children, seniors, working families—you name it. It’s also an economic engine. Investing in Medi-Cal doesn’t just support health—it supports jobs. Healthcare is one of the largest growth sectors for middle-skill jobs. When we invest in coverage, we’re also investing in the workforce and the local economy.

Carmen: That makes it even more urgent, given the recent policy shifts. What is the current landscape?

Louise: It’s rough. California’s already facing a \$12 billion deficit, and recent federal legislation may further undermine programs like Medi-Cal. We’re seeing new work requirements—really, paperwork requirements—that will make it harder for people to stay enrolled. The result? An estimated 12 million Americans could lose coverage. That means fewer resources for health centers and more uninsured patients in need of care with no clear path forward.

Carmen: How will this affect community health centers?

Louise: We could see site closures or service reductions. Since the Affordable Care Act, the number of health center sites in L.A. doubled—thanks to expanded coverage. But now, some centers may need to consolidate, merge, or downsize. It’s a cascading effect, and we’re going to need every tool available—outreach, forecasting, patient navigators—to help people stay covered.



Carmen: At Achievable Health, many of our patients have developmental disabilities and rely on Medi-Cal. Even if they're exempt from work requirements, they still face an overburdened system.

Louise: Exactly. The whole system is strained. Right now, it can take 45 minutes just to reach someone at the Department of Public Social Services. Health center staff often make those calls on behalf of patients. But with new requirements, those wait times and workloads will skyrocket—without additional resources. We're setting up a system that makes it harder, not easier, to stay covered.

Carmen: So, what should our patients and families know as they face these challenges?

Louise: First—know that we're still here. Community health centers are rooted in their communities. That hasn't changed. And advocacy isn't just about calling a legislator—it's about telling your story. Talk to your neighbors. Help them understand what these programs mean to real people. That's how we build support.

Carmen: And what can advocates do to protect health centers?

Louise: Stay vocal. Even though Los Angeles is lucky to have champions like Assemblymember Isaac Bryan, State Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas, and Congresswoman Sydney Kamlager-Dove, every elected official needs to hear from their constituents. These are tough budget decisions, and our voices matter. We also need to stay united with our advocacy partners. Coalition work—across issues and sectors—is more important than ever.

Carmen: That's such an important point—especially in coalition work. What advice do you have for community health centers or partners who want to advocate more effectively, but aren't sure where to start?

Louise: Share your stories as a health center and the stories of your patients. They are powerful. Lawmakers quote these personal experiences in floor speeches. Committees cite them in hearings. Data is helpful, but stories move hearts—and policies. Your patient stories remind us why we do this work.

Carmen: One last question—what gives you hope?

Louise: The Community Health Center movement was born from the Civil Rights era, out of Freedom Summer. We've come a long way—from a single clinic in Mississippi to over 30 million patients served annually. That's powerful. Community health centers are resilient, bipartisan, and here to stay. In a world of uncertainty, that gives me hope.



In the News:



Exclusive KCAL News Segment from Achievable Health's Lovelace Center Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.



View the photos from our Ribbon Cutting Ceremony:



View the photos from our 2025 It's Achievable Gala:



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We are now on **Bluesky!** Find us @AchievableHealth.bsky.social



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Wellness Tips from Achievable Health

1. Meditation

Sit quietly with your eyes closed and take time to contemplate and reflect.

- *Example:* Utilize calm music or nature sounds paired with meditation.

2. Be Fully Present

Intentionally give your full attention to the task at hand or while engaging with loved ones.

3. Practice Stretching

Move and stretch your body to help ground yourself.

- *Example:* Use guided yoga or imagery, such as “Imagine you are as tall as a tree.”

4. Practice Sleep Hygiene

Engage in habits that promote better sleep quality, which can improve energy and overall well-being.

- *Examples:*
 - Establish a calming nightly routine.
 - Try soothing activities before bed (e.g., soft music, meditation).

5. Deep Breathing

Spend 10 minutes focusing on your breath to stay present.

- *Examples:*
 - “Smell the flower” (inhale), “blow the candle” (exhale).
 - Hand-tracing while breathing: trace your hand on the inhale, trace back on the exhale.

6. Brain Breaks

Take short breaks throughout the day to reset and refocus.

7. Journaling

Reflect by journaling about “finding the good” in your day.

8. Gratitude

Write down five things you're grateful for each day.

- *Example:* Take a gratitude pause—focus on a good feeling for a few seconds.

9. 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Exercise

Use your senses to stay present:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste



10. Positive affirmations

Repeat encouraging statements to yourself to build confidence and resilience.

- *Example:* “I am capable,” “I am enough,” or “I can handle what comes my way.”
- Say them aloud or write them down as part of your daily routine.



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