

From the CEO's Desk: Carmen Ibarra



Recently I had an opportunity to present to a large group of community health center leaders of today and tomorrow from across the State on Achievable's role in reducing health disparities for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). I talked about the barriers individuals with I/DD encounter when seeking care as well as our own experience providing high-quality, culturally appropriate healthcare to our patients of all abilities.

There was a great deal of interest in our unique model, including co-location with a Regional Center, extended appointment times, and a staff focused on providing the best care possible to our population. I also provided the audience with insights on how their health centers can be more patient friendly, especially when treating patients with I/DD. Conversations like this allow us to raise awareness of what people with I/DD experience, and have a larger impact on changing the healthcare landscape for those with I/DD.

As we complete our 3rd year of operating the Achievable Health Center, these conversations have become especially critical. Reflections by our Board and staff on what we have learned and accomplished during this time period are helping us create the structural framework for our future efforts. These reflections on the first three years of operating our health center are helping us to fulfill our mission and continue to increase our impact.

We are very excited to be releasing our 2015-16 Year End Report in the next month. I urge you to read through it to learn more about some of the specifics on how the philanthropic dollars we receive have allowed us to advance our mission throughout the year.

The Achievable Foundation Honors Lou Spitz



Lou Spitz is a renaissance man - college football player, soldier, movie actor, owner of a successful apparel company and most importantly, the father of four. Achievable has been lucky to have had Lou on its board for 20 years, and was incredibly proud to honor him for his unwavering dedication during a special event on September 27th at the home of Anahita and Jim Lovelace.

Lou takes pride in everything in his life, Melinda his beloved wife of 39 years, his career, his charitable work, and especially his family. Lou took full custody of his four children (Steven, Jeff, Doug and Suzanne) in 1972, at a time when single fathers rarely did this type of thing.

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Foundation Spotlight: Mark Bunin Benor, MD



Dr. Mark Bunin Benor is a mission-oriented person. It's why he became a doctor – to make a difference – and it's how he came to Achievable. “Helping patients with complex challenges is a recipe for personal growth and, when done well, endlessly satisfying,” he says. Since he was in medical school in Philadelphia, Dr. Benor has had a passion for working with vulnerable and underserved patients, and has volunteered in communities as far away as Chiapas, Mexico and Cuzco, Peru.

Dr. Benor has played a vital role at the Achievable Health Center since the very beginning. “The idea of building an integrated, interdisciplinary primary care home for kids and adults with developmental disabilities was incredibly attractive to me,” says Dr. Benor. “The focus on uninsured and underinsured patients, regardless of ability to pay was appealing as well. The opportunity to join the project at its genesis was incredibly exciting.”

As the founding Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Benor helped this “labor of love get built brick by brick” creating a team-based model that meets the needs of Achievable’s patients while providing a comfortable and pleasant experience.

“One of the fun things about working here, is seeing new staff come in and really embrace the role of creatively attending to patients,” whether it is managing challenging behaviors, manipulating medical equipment, or working with caregivers. Dr. Benor emphasizes that Achievable staff receive ongoing internal training on skills, techniques, equipment, and supplies needed during patient visits. This helps Achievable doctors, nurses, and support staff rapidly develop expertise and comfort assisting patients and caregivers. “The key is to listen with focus and kindness, and collaboratively create solutions for proficient care.”

“A significant challenge for people with developmental disabilities is access to high-quality care, which was *continued top of next page*

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Foundation Spotlight: Mark Bunin Benor, MD *(continued)*

the starting point for creating Achievable. The issue of access is more severe for those on Medi-Cal and the uninsured, and even more problematic as youth transition into adulthood,” states Dr. Benor. “Navigating specialists, therapists, diagnoses, and resources is always challenging for patients and families. Oftentimes they have to start all over again in early adulthood as they leave schools and change doctors, and unfortunately, clinics that cater to adult patients frequently have limited familiarity with neurodevelopmental disorders or Regional Centers.”

“Achievable’s mission is to step in and fill this void. For Achievable patients, there is complete lifecycle care and no drop-off in access to services because we’re set-up to provide comprehensive medical and mental healthcare for all ages.”

Every day is rewarding for Dr. Benor, “but my favorite is when I meet a new patient and their parent for the first time, especially when the visit goes really well compared to what they’ve experienced in other settings. I enjoy the parent’s sigh of relief that their loved one has found a caring medical home. That never gets old.”

Visionaries Discuss Solving Workforce Shortfalls in Healthcare

Nearly 75 attendees assembled at West L.A. College on October 19th for a Legislative Breakfast presented by Assemblymember Sebastian Ridley-Thomas and The Achievable Foundation. The group of elected officials, hospital and healthcare providers, doctors, social services representatives and educators gathered to discuss workforce shortages facing the healthcare industry.

Ms. Carmen Ibarra, Achievable’s CEO, began “the discussion to address the short-term and long-term challenges.” Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas called on the various “resources in the room” to work together to alter the “disconnect between policy, education and employment.” Dr. Jim Limbaugh, President of West L.A. College, described the role community colleges must play to “produce the future healthcare workforce” through degrees and certifications. Ms. Jan Perry, General Manager, L.A. Economic and Workforce Development Department, suggested that educators and work source centers develop “customized training to meet employers’ needs.”



Pictured: Ms. Ibarra and the Assemblyman

Ms. Ibarra cited a study estimating California will require a 32% increase in primary care physicians by the year 2030, while advocating “the need to recruit physicians that specialize in intellectual and development disabilities” that could serve Achievable’s population. Ms. Maria Callaros, Director, Safety Net Initiatives at L.A. Care, stressed the increased need for clinical and non-clinical workers. She especially noted the demand for case “navigators to help patients through the healthcare beast.”



The general consensus of the conference: recognize the shortages, understand the needs, improve policy, coordinate resources and build creative partnerships that understand the healthcare landscape. One immediate solution was presented: create awareness among our local workforce – and particularly high school students - that high-wage jobs with a strong future for career growth are readily available within the healthcare industry.



The Achievable Foundation's mission is to improve the quality of life for children and adults living in Los Angeles County who have intellectual and developmental disabilities by providing support and healthcare services, allowing them to live healthy, independent, and productive lives.

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The Achievable Foundation Honors Lou Spitz *(continued)*



Pictured: Melinda and Lou Spitz, Anahita Lovelace and Suzanne Spitz

Suzanne lives quite successfully with intellectual disability, and it was the services she received at the Westside Regional Center that brought Lou to The Achievable Foundation.

In 1996, the Executive Director of the Westside Regional Center, Mike Danneker, approached Lou to join the board of a new nonprofit he was forming to help Regional Center clients with services they weren't receiving from the State. Lou became a founding board member of The Achievable Foundation and has been with us since we shifted from a general welfare organization to a first-of-its kind federally qualified health center focusing on individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Lou is a tireless advocate and proponent for Achievable. He has spent many hours raising funds to help Achievable grow into the thriving health center it has now become. The Achievable Foundation thanks Lou Spitz for all his good works!

Pictured: Mike Danneker



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