

Maria Lopez Garcia:

Dancing and Laughing to Health

The vibrant Maria Lopez Garcia, nicknamed “JLo” can be easily recognized at the East Oakland PACE Center from her hearty laugh, often from the center of a dance circle. A native Spanish speaker, she discovered a renewed sense of well-being and joy through the innovative healthcare service model called PACE, provided by Center for Elders’ Independence. Maria’s story is a testament to the transformative impact that comprehensive and inclusive healthcare can have on a senior’s life.

“It has been a pleasure to be part of CEI. I give it a 10 out of 10!”

When Maria first joined PACE a year ago, she found a healthcare plan that catered to her language needs. Diagnosed as pre-diabetic, Maria struggled with her medications, exercise, and diet. At her previous clinic, Maria could not communicate with her doctor, and her rising blood sugar levels were putting her at risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. The language accommodations at CEI PACE have made Maria feel more at home, enabling effective communication with her healthcare team. This personalized approach not only eased her concerns but established a strong foundation for trust and understanding.

With the support of PACE, Maria’s diabetes management improved drastically. She no longer needs daily insulin



shots and her medications have been reduced. CEI’s holistic approach provided education on nutrition, exercise, lifestyle changes, and emotional well-being. As a result, Maria experienced a positive shift in her overall health, marking a significant improvement in her diabetes. She attends the center three times a week and has made friends with everyone.

“It has been a pleasure to be part of CEI. I give it a 10 out of 10! I love the attention, care, and respect I receive from my doctors and team. And even though I don’t speak English, everyone is a friend I can hug. I have too many friends!”



More Local Services for Seniors



*It is woven into our Charter: **We stand for access to affordable, comprehensive social and medical care for all seniors and fiercely advocate for healthcare equity.***

As announced last year, CEI is preparing to open two new locations this year: one in West Contra Costa County and the other in the Tri-Valley area. We are committed to expanding our integrated healthcare services to bring local access to the growing senior populations all over the East Bay.

In March, we are opening the Tri-Valley location as an Alternative Care Setting. Participants will still be served by the clinics and medical providers at either Concord or San Leandro, but they will go to the new location for the social day center, maintaining their exercise plans, and nutritious meals. Stay tuned for the PACE Center Grand Openings of both locations later this year.

Growth increases not only access to care, but access to employment opportunities. We are creating jobs and hiring new skilled team members to provide care, providing professional growth opportunities for our current employees and expanding our leadership team.

To prepare us to serve more, we continue to add new technologies, making collaborative work more efficient and improving service delivery. We have implemented numerous technology platforms ranging from transportation route management to on-demand video interpretation in the past year. As we become even more efficient, participant satisfaction is rising.

I am proud of our team members as they adapt and expand their skill sets while they continue to deliver exceptional care to all participants.

Maria E. Zamora, MBA

President & CEO

New Trustee Joins Foundation



Wesley Alexander joins the CEI Foundation as a Trustee bringing his experience as an entrepreneur to the board. He currently is the CEO of CoBiz Richmond, which is a co-working space and business incubator with a mission to build an infrastructure for wellness in marginalized or under-served communities. Prior to CoBiz, Wesley worked for various Fortune 60 emerging technology companies, served as an FBI Special Agent and provided coaching services to other entrepreneurs. Wesley holds a dual JD/MBA degree from American University and currently

is licensed to practice law in Maryland.

Wesley sees elders as a critical part of our families and society and is committed to helping elders in the under-served Black and Brown communities.

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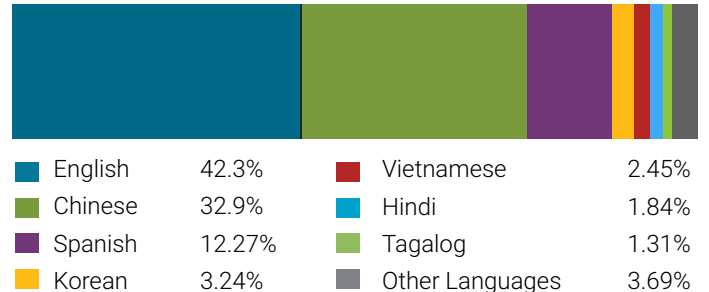
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Delivering Healthcare Equity

We stand for access to affordable comprehensive social and medical care for all seniors and fiercely advocate for healthcare equity.

Health equity is achieved when everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health. CEI welcomes the most vulnerable seniors: aged, low-income people of color with complex medical needs. These people often experience barriers to getting good healthcare.

Language is a very common barrier to daily understanding and communication. In a healthcare setting, it becomes more challenging to express oneself and get needs met if English is not one's primary language. **Currently, over 57% of CEI participants require communications in a language other than English**, such as Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Hindi, Tagalog and many others.



We regularly translate printed materials in six languages as well as provide free interpretation services for all kinds of interactions with our staff. We offer free audio, video and in-person interpretation services depending upon the conversation and care needed.

We Actively Recruit, Hire and Train Diverse Team Members

CEI employees represent a wide range of races, orientations, and languages; it's a true melting pot of many cultures and backgrounds.

- **2/3rds of our primary care physicians and nurse practitioners are non-white professionals who speak other languages.**
- **Nearly 78% of all team members are non-white people.**
- **We mandate implicit bias training for all medical professionals, day center aides, and clinical staff.**

While others may shy away from diversity, CEI embraces it. We celebrate the hundreds of backgrounds, orientations, races, and traditions coming through our doors every day and honor their lived experience. Everyone truly is welcomed, supported and cared for here.

Getting Needs Met

For a Black man, getting healthcare is challenging. Before coming to CEI, Mr. Tillman didn't really trust medical providers as he wasn't taken seriously about the pain he experienced in his left leg. Even though he was missing much of his left leg, it took his previous healthcare company over 2.5 years to get him a manual wheelchair. The manual wheelchair was extremely difficult to maneuver so shortly after joining CEI, Mr. Tillman received an electric wheelchair, making it super easy to get around. "I have improved. I do everything. I clean. I do my laundry. I take care of myself. I do everything I need to do," shared the 69-year-old. "I'm deeply grateful to PACE."



Pictured in the orange hoodie, Mr. Tillman's improved mobility allows him to go out and be with his friends from the PACE Center.

Senior Health Policy Forum 2024: Forging a Stronger Future for Bay Area Seniors

Center for Elders' Independence co-sponsored the 2023 Senior Health Policy Forum, in collaboration with On Lok, on December 1, 2023, at Mission College in Santa Clara. The biennial event invites advocates, policymakers, and thought leaders in the senior health realm to meet face-to-face and discuss the creation of a healthy aging environment in the Bay Area.



CEI's Chief of Human Resources Robert Scott served on the "Creating Rich Career Pathways with Quality Employers" panel, moderated by Director of Government Relations Uche Uwahemu.

Author of "Tears in My Gumbo – the Caregivers Recipe for Resilience" Nadine Roberts Cornish gave the keynote address, sharing her own journey as a caregiver and how lessons can be applied in creating a more compassionate future for eldercare.



"We believe that collectively, we can strengthen the health safety net that more and more seniors will need in the coming years. Together, we are stronger. Together we can cause change." – Grace Li, Chief Executive Officer, On Lok, and Maria Zamora, Chief Executive Officer, Center for Elders' Independence.



How to Support Seniors

Join us in financially supporting and helping expand programs for seniors.



Visit the website: ceifoundation.elders.org to support a specific cause.



Mail the enclosed return envelope with your check or credit card information.



Call the CEI Foundation at 510-318-7162 and speak with us directly about your gift. We can facilitate complex donations such as stocks, IRA or Roth distributions, wills or real property.

We thank you for your support.

SAVE THE DATE!

The next PACE Party
will be on

**Thursday,
May 9, 2024**

and held on the
USS Hornet in Alameda

Quicker Services = Happy Participants

Expanded Services

To provide easier access to dental, vision and hearing care services along with professional foot care, CEI now offers these key services directly at the centers instead of different “out-of-house” locations.

This provides many benefits to participants including:

- Easier accessibility
- More appointments
- Quicker care
- Shorter wait times
- Fewer transportation trips

Dental services are now offered five times a week to accommodate the high demand. Eye care appointments expanded to four times a week in July 2023, and since October 2023, hearing care is now offered one day a week after starting out at twice a month. Foot care is also very important for seniors and this service is also offered at the centers. In 2023, over 3,600 in-house service appointments happened at the centers.



Transportation Improvements

To address the long travel times, more drivers were hired to add more routes and to make current routes more efficient. This reduced the average travel time to 35 minutes. Plus, to accommodate any transportation needs after hours or difficult to route trips, another transportation vendor was added.

At most centers, a new team member was brought on board: a Transportation Coordinator. This important position works directly with dispatchers and serves as a liaison between participant and dispatcher. Breaks and staffing levels are better coordinated to have adequate phone coverage during peak hours.

Center team members are also trained to use the “Where’s My Ride?” app to track vehicles and timing before reaching out to dispatch.

Patient Portal Launches

In addition, CEI developed a “patient portal” allowing participants and authorized family caregivers access to medical records, lab results, list of medications, upcoming appointments, specialist referrals and the ability to message their medical providers. This portal is offered in English and Spanish. Participants can access the portal either online or through a downloaded app.

Participants Reap Benefits

Through the use of technology, hiring key personnel, and bringing services in-house, participants are reaping the benefits of these concentrated efforts. They are getting services faster, getting to the centers quicker and using technology to get questions answered.



Vibrant Lunar Celebrations Mark the Year of the Dragon

In a celebration of tradition and community, CEI ushered in the Lunar New Year with celebrations – in and out of the PACE Centers. On February 16, a group of lion dancers brought smiles and cheer to participants in downtown Oakland. Around 40 attendees enjoyed the event and for many seniors, the performance was a nostalgic reminder of their childhood. It was a fun celebration for the participants who cannot travel or attend events in large crowds.

On Sunday, February 18, CEI participants and staff proudly marched in Oakland's Chinese Lunar New Year parade, marking the second consecutive year of participation – reaffirming CEI's commitment to fostering cultural connection and community building. The parade was sponsored by the Oakland Chinatown Improvement Council.

Events like this help foster a sense of belonging and cultural pride among the diverse community at CEI. Over



Participants and CEI team members are ready to march!

40% of CEI participants speak Chinese, Tagalog, Korean, and Vietnamese languages, representing a sizeable Asian population.



To the delight of the participants, the lion dance is performed to ward off evil and bring good fortune.



Participants enjoy a good photo opportunity!



Proudly representing CEI!



Participant Sally and Account Manager Joanna Li show off their traditional Chinese garb.



One participant places a traditional red envelope in the lion's mouth – symbolizing good luck and health for the year ahead.



Traditional Chinese drum beats filled the halls of PACE Downtown Oakland.



These pandas were a crowd favorite.

Mission Statement

Center for Elders' Independence provides high quality, affordable, integrated health care services to the elderly, which promote autonomy, quality of life, and the ability of individuals to live in their communities.

