

The Health Consumer Center (HCC) is an independent consumer assistance program that helps residents of Los Angeles County obtain quality health care from HMOs and other public and private health care providers. In instances where barriers hinder consumers' ability to receive appropriate health care, HCC steps in to advocate on their behalf. Our mission is to ensure that consumers are aware of and utilize all health care programs for which they are eligible.

The Health Consumer Center is a project of Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County (NLS) and is funded through The California Endowment, Department of Managed Health Care and Covered California. Neighborhood Legal Services has been assisting the community with legal concerns for over 50 years.

Who is eligible for help?

HCC helps individuals and families throughout Los Angeles County. If the consumer's case requires other assistance beyond HCC's scope, HCC will make specific referrals to an appropriate agency that can better assist the client.

What type of individual problems can be referred to HCC?

- Problem obtaining health care
- Screening for Medi-Cal, or other government benefit health programs
- Medical debt issues
- Trouble shooting for people already on government benefit or private health programs

How do I contact HCC for help?

You can contact HCC in one of three ways to access free legal services:

1. Email hccreferral@nlsLA.org
2. Call (800) 896-3202
3. [NLSLA Online Intake Application](#)

The HCC Help Line has been operating since November 1998 and is staffed by full-time advocates, attorneys, supervising attorneys. The Help Line operates Mondays through Fridays from

9:00am to 5:00pm, and closed on Wednesdays, 2:00-4:00pm. HCC staff is bilingual in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese. Consumers requiring other languages can be assisted by HCC through the help of a Language Line. In 2019, HCC helped more than 3,000 people get access to health care.

Education and Training

The Health Consumer Center regularly provides education and trainings for both clients and agencies about HCC's services, existing health care programs, and health care laws that might affect consumers. HCC offers direct presentations to consumers, participation in Health Fairs and Trainings, and technical assistance to Community Based Organizations (CBO's). Recognizing the geographic, cultural, and linguistic diversity in Los Angeles County, culturally-sensitive outreach is provided, often in collaboration with CBOs who have particular knowledge or credibility within these distinct communities. HCC is also involved in community forums to educate CBOs, health care providers and consumers on new immigration rulings that make it safe for immigrants to receive health care.

Examples of HCC Cases

A 30 yr old single mother of a 10 yr old child was unable to receive medical benefits because her Medi-Cal card was improperly coded. As a result, the 10 yr old child was not being treated for an ear infection. HCC filed a case complaint with the District Office and the card was recoded. The child saw a physician and received antibiotics for his infection the same day.

A young couple with 3 children was improperly informed by the County Dept. of Public Social Services that if they had children born after welfare reform, they would lose all public assistance. As a result, the couple failed to apply for Medi-Cal for their 1-1/2 year old child who has not received routine check-ups or immunizations since birth. After calling HCC staff and learning about their rights, the couple has applied for Medi-Cal.