

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT



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## Breaking News

There are a number of important developments to announce this month, including the launching of our local efforts to implement Proposition 63 and reorganization of the Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers Division. I also want to share information from the survey we conducted about this Director's Report. Elsewhere in this issue, you'll also read about redesign of the Medi-Cal system proposed in the Governor's budget and tsunami relief efforts.

### **Proposition 63 funds mental health programs**

The voter-approved Mental Health Services Act, Proposition 63, was passed in November with 53.4% of the vote, an historic accomplishment for mental health care in California.

By taxing annual incomes of more than \$1 million at 1 percent, Proposition 63 could raise up to \$600 million the first year in state funds. Because these state funds can be matched with federal funds, the amount of new money to care for people with psychiatric disorders could be as much as \$1 billion per year statewide.

Almost 40 years ago, California nearly emptied its mental hospitals, promising to fully fund community mental health services. That funding all but vanished. As a result, hundreds of thousands of children and adults in California suffer from severe psychiatric disorders and cannot get the treatment they need. The children fail in school. Adults end up on the streets or in jail.

Proposition 63 will fund community outreach and a variety of support services and increase access to medicines for children and adults who suffer from disabling psychiatric disorders. This investment will produce cost savings in other areas by reducing hospitalizations and incarcerations. In pilot projects similar to those that would be funded by Proposition 63, participants had a 56 percent reduction in hospital stays, a 72

percent reduction in jail stays and a 65 percent increase in working full-time.

We are very optimistic about the support the funds will provide, especially because the Mental Health system has been hard hit by recent budget cuts and the need

is so great. It is important to realize, however, that we have a lot of catching up to do. We have cut more than \$8 million from our Mental Health budget since April 2003. We hope to receive about \$12-14 million from this new revenue source the first full year of funding.

I am particularly pleased about the community planning process that is mandated by the proposition. We will begin that process shortly. It will include public hearings conducted in a town hall format by our Mental Health Commission and a process that will also give consumers and other stakeholders a chance to make their thoughts known about how we can best deliver critically needed services. We'll be using our website to create a mailing list of Contra Costa residents who want to get involved and to keep the community informed of important meetings.

### **CCRMC/Health Center reorganization**

While the mental health planning process is fueled by a very welcome influx of new money, the reorganization of the Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers Division is motivated unfortunately by quite the opposite force – the need to do



— Dr. Walker

*Continued next page*

## DID YOU KNOW

The Contra Costa Health Plan is the plan of choice for more than **60,000** people.



## This Month!

We will begin printing fewer copies of this Director's Report. It is available on the internet at <http://cchealth.org> and on the intranet at cchs. If you need more printed copies for your unit, contact Andi Bivens at 925-313-6838 or email her at [abivens@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us](mailto:abivens@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us).

## Director's Report Survey Results

I want to thank everyone who sent in comments in response to the survey we've been conducting the last few months about the Director's Report. I am gratified that virtually everyone who responded was pleased with the publication as a communication tool and that most people read all or some of it each month. I was surprised that half of you thought we should distribute it only by email, primarily to save money and trees. But a significant number of you still wanted to see it printed. "Not everyone has e-mail," pointed out some people, while others said they wouldn't read it if it were emailed. What we've decided to do is to halve the number of copies we're printing and distributing. We'll notify you each month via an HSD All-staff message that the new issue is also available on the Intranet (cchs) and the Internet (cchealth.org). I look forward to hearing about how this new system works.

I was also delighted with the comments people had about my monthly message. Two other favorite features were budget information and information about our programs. As a result of your comments, we'll be giving you less theoretical information about health disparities. Instead, we'll be spotlighting progress and efforts we're making as part of our Reducing Health Disparities Initiative. Last month we described how Emergency Medical Services staff are looking at cultural issues that occur when first responders answer a 911 call. This month you'll read about the Contra Costa Health Plan and some interesting discoveries they made when they began analyzing data to look at health disparities.

Please email me or *Director's Report* editor Julie Freestone with comments about the changes.

### *Director's Message Continued...*

more with less. In a memo explaining the new approach, CCRMC Executive Director Jeff Smith, MD began by saying that our health care system is being "overwhelmed." With fewer and fewer options for health care, more and more Contra Costa residents are turning to us. Visits to our Health Centers are up. So are emergency room and psychiatric emergency service visits, admissions to the hospital and births. To compound the problem, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the federal government are considering Medi-Cal reforms that could jolt our whole system.

There are already a number of multi-disciplinary efforts underway at CCRMC/HC to look at ways to streamline operations and systems. An example is the Patient Flow Task Force, which is charged with developing system changes to relieve Emergency Department crowding and improve the flow of patients throughout the organization. To rebuild our systems of care with state-of-the-art technology, revamp and upgrade information technology and eliminate bureaucracy, Dr. Steve Tremain has been reassigned to the new position of Director of System Redesign. Chris Grazzini has assumed the new position of Chief Officer of Operations/Chief Nursing Officer. With fewer people reporting to her, she will have time to focus on strategic operational planning, patient safety management and regulatory compliance. Ambulatory Care Services are now centralized under Dianne Dunn-Bowie. Stephanie Bailey, as Director of Ancillary Services, will be responsible for coordinating services and overseeing technological improvements in ancillary departments such as increased use of robotics.

We've also moved responsibility for Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES) from the Mental Health Division to CCRMC/HC to better coordinate patient care services with a multi-disciplinary team. That team includes PES, Detention and Inpatient Psychiatry. (You can read more about this and see the new organization chart on the Intranet at cchs.) I'll keep you posted as the reorganization begins to produce changes and improvements.

Sincerely,

William Walker, M.D.

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**The Director's Report is published monthly.** Deadline for the March edition is February 11. Publicize your upcoming events and successes by sending information to Julie Freestone at 597 Center Avenue, Suite 255, Martinez 94553, fax 925-313-6219, email: [jfreestone@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us](mailto:jfreestone@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us). The Director's Report is available online at [cchealth.org](http://cchealth.org) and on the Intranet at cchs.

# GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE

## *Honor Roll*

**Angelo Blancaflor, RN**  
*CCRMC*

For helping a family with a baby on a rainy night. Their car battery was dead. When he couldn't start their car, he drove to a gas station to buy a battery. When that failed, he returned to his unit, collected donations from the night shift staff for a taxi.

—Nominated by Sylvia Luz

**Eve Caminos, MD**  
*CCRMC*

For putting me at ease in the minor surgery clinic. It is very refreshing to have a surgeon with a friendly disposition. I've had my share of medical procedures done over the years and she is the first surgeon I would definitely go back and see again.

—Nominated by a patient

**Joe Gordon**  
*Information Systems Technician / Information Systems*

For going the extra mile to resolve the glitches that prevented me from using my laptop. His expertise is only surpassed by his always joyful attitude. He likes his job, is a happy person and obviously knows the meaning of satisfied customers.

—Nominated by Amalia Gonzalez Del Valle

**Mary Jane Kiefer**  
*Senior Public Health Nutritionist  
Pittsburg WIC*

For donating hours and mileage to collect holiday toys, clothing, food and gift certificates for needy children. She makes a big difference, using her own time and energy.

—Nominated by the Pittsburg WIC staff

**Yolanda Rubalcava**  
*Lead Clerk  
Richmond WIC*

For organizing the distribution of gifts to needy children, coordinating staff and volunteers to serve hundreds of clients in several very busy days right before Christmas.

—Nominated by Jeanne Conboy and Beverly Clark

**Pharmacy Team**  
*Pittsburg Health Center*

For continued dedication and hard work to get prescriptions out in a timely manner. "I received excellent service today. You all deserve a bonus and a raise."

—Nominated by Webb Parker and a patient

# GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE

## *Honor Roll*

### **Lucy Rodriguez**

*Community Health Worker  
Specialist  
Prenatal Care Guidance Program*

For her advocacy on transportation issues and her creativity in supporting families' independence by teaching clients basic literacy and how to ride the bus, and providing strollers and other preparations for newborns.

—Nominated by Jana Aloo, MSW, MPH

### **Dawn Marie Wadle, MD**

*Richmond Health Center*

For always making time to be cordial and caring with all her patients, no matter what they look like. She is an exemplary doctor who is loved by her patients. She always goes the extra mile for her patients.

—Nominated by Mary Diaz and Linda Suiter, patients and county

employees

### **West County CHDP Team**

*Child Health & Disability  
Prevention Program*

For the enthusiastic and outstanding outreach efforts with schools, Head Start, churches, community fairs, group homes, the Teen Resource Center and Rescue Mission during 2004. Their work included education about the importance of health insurance, health access, health resources, health services, dental health, nutrition and obesity, asthma, lice, immunizations and more.

—Nominated by Paula A. Hines

### **Akila Brumfield**

*Environmental Services  
CCRMC*

For her caring and commitment, as a volunteer, to meet the significant needs of women who are positively changing their lives as they recover from alcohol and drug problems. She runs "Just for You," a support group that meets every other Saturday at a local church in El Cerrito.

—Ken Saffier, MD

## **Employee Milestones**

Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Brenda Latimer, Karen Burt, Blanca Brossa, Cindy Howell, Rosaria Redmond, Gayle Surges, Lianne Gill, Gaylene Slocum, Chisara Ohanele, Jonathan Perales, Rosemarie Sandoval, Irma Suniga (10 years); D Michelle Williams, Saleh Al-Harazi, Balwinder Gill, Roberta Martinez, Joseph Stokes, Nancy Baer, Mariano Mendoza, Monalisa Gorman (15); Phyllis Johnson, Richard Gutierrez, Kathryn Grazzini, David Bergesen, Donald Spaugy (20); Vincente Aguigui Jr, Mary Harvey (25); Arturie Rossignon and Patricia Malicoat-Becks (30). *(We know there are lots of other dedicated employees with long years of service. Because of space limitations, we are only reporting those with 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years.)*

# REDUCING HEALTH DISPARITIES

This page brings you news of how the implementation of the CCHS Plan for Reducing Health Disparities is progressing. We spotlight programs addressing health disparity issues and provide information related to enhancing cultural competence.



## Health Plan Looks at Health Disparities

As part of the department-wide Reducing Health Disparities Initiative (RHD) and for the first time ever, the Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) analyzed service data for their Medi-Cal clients by language and ethnicity. Using Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) measures mandated by Medi-Cal Managed Care, CCHP analyzed 19 separate health care quality indicators. They found significant disparities for African American clients for Childhood Immunizations and Well-Child Visits. When they looked at children who should have had six well-child visits between 0-15 months of age, the rate for African American children was significantly lower than that of White children. For Childhood Immunizations, the rate of African American children receiving all the required vaccinations by the age of two, was significantly lower than White children.



(Left to right) Rich Harrison, Pam Calley, Otilia Tiutin and Ken Tilly.

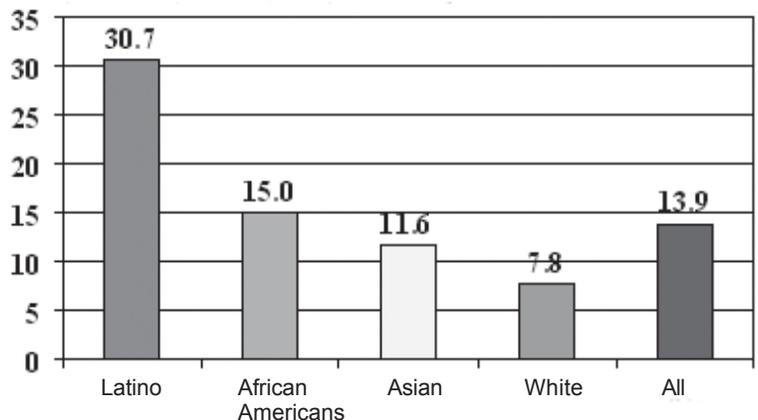
To address these disparities, CCHP has started a quality improvement project. Ken Tilly, Director of Quality Management, and Otilia Tiutin, Manager of Health Education/Cultural and Linguistic Services, will be working with several CCHS Divisions to identify factors that contribute to the disparities. They will pinpoint where clients are geographically located and which providers they see. Strategies to eliminate disparities in health services for all CCHP clients will be developed.

Linguistic access issues are also taken very seriously by CCHP management. Increasingly, a large number of Spanish-speaking members come in to CCHP's office at 595 Center Ave. in Martinez to pay their monthly premium or get other information about services. When CCHP's receptionist position became vacant, Rich Harrison, CCHP's CEO and Pam Calley, Manager of Membership Maintenance who oversees the receptionist, decided to flag the position bilingual. Pam is currently recruiting a Spanish-speaking receptionist.

 For more information, call Otilia Tiutin at 925-313-6063.

## Lack of Health Insurance by Ethnicity in Contra Costa

Among Bay Area residents age 18-64 years old, Latinos are three times as likely as Whites to be without health insurance.



Sources. Estimates were calculated using data from the California Health Interview Survey and scientifically derived multipliers from the California Healthcare Foundation.

## Robots in Contra Costa?

Faced with more than a \$1 million budget reduction, our Detention Health program has created an innovative way to distribute medications to inmates. The Automated Pharmacy Distribution system, which is expected to roll out this month, uses three robotic devices the size of very large refrigerators to pack medication for delivery. Instead of requiring a nurse to count and package pills, the new technology makes it possible for a physician to input prescriptions anywhere in Health Services through our Meditech system, which interfaces with the Pharmacy distribution system. Nurses are freed up to do more clinical activities and the medications are only dispensed if the inmates are actually there. Miles Kramer, our Detention Health Services Administrator, explains that most inmates have serious medical conditions but are often released or moved after medication is prescribed. The old manual system resulted in at least \$10,000 a month in wasted medications that were dispensed for inmates no longer in custody. There will be three devices – one each for the West County Center in Richmond, the Main Detention Center in Martinez and Juvenile Detention. We join San Francisco and a number of other non-California sites using the same technology.



For more information, call Miles Kramer at 925-646-4705.

## CCRMC Participating in Nationwide Quality Program

CCRMC has been accepted by the American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP). The nationwide program for the measurement and improvement of surgical care was started 11 years ago by the Veterans Health Administration (VA). Surgical deaths and complications in the VA hospitals were decreased by 27% and 45% respectively as a result of this program. In 2001, the VA began collaborating with the American College of Surgeons to expand NSQIP beyond VA hospitals. Currently 18 non-VA hospitals across the nation participate. CCRMC will be the second hospital in California to join the NSQIP family (the University of California at San Francisco is the other). CCRMC's Quality Management Department will be sending information about selected surgical cases to NSQIP, which will analyze the information and provide benchmark reports comparing the quality of surgical care we provide to that of the other NSQIP participants. The detailed reports will enable us to identify the areas where we are doing well and where improvements can be made. (Thanks to Kate Mossman for this story.)



(Left to right) Donna Wigand, Linda Kirkhorn and Dr. William Walker

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## Crisis Services Program Chief Recognized

Linda Kirkhorn, Mental Health Program Chief for Crisis Services, was recognized by the Board of Supervisors last month for her 30 years of service. Most recently in the Psychiatric Emergency Service Unit, Linda has also worked for the county's Social Services Department and CCRMC.



## Disaster Medical Team is Recruiting

The Bay Area Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT, CA-6), a fully deployable, all-volunteer medical response team, is recruiting new members. The team has been deployed all over the United States, including New York City after the September 11 attack, Salt Lake City during the Winter Olympics and here in San Francisco for the 2002 World Series. The Team's Administrative Officer is Barb Center, who is an RN in our Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program. Kelley Ashcroft, who is housed at EMS, is the DMAT CA-6 Administrative Specialist. Even with 120 volunteers including doctors, nurses, physicians assistants, nurse practitioners, paramedics, EMTs, pharmacists, respiratory therapists, mental health professionals and others, DMAT is looking for more volunteers, especially MDs, PAs and NPs. Volunteers must commit seven to eight days a year, attend meetings three times a year in San Francisco, and be willing to be deployed. All federal deployments are USERRA (Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act) covered, which avoids work-release problems for DMAT members.



*For more information or to volunteer, call Barb Center at 925-646-4690*

## George Miller Center Transition to ARC Underway

In last year's budget process, the Board of Supervisors approved the transition of the George Miller Center programs, which provide services to individuals with disabilities, to a community-based organization. Although we have operated the Miller Center programs for more than 35 years, the department could no longer continue the increasing subsidy, especially when the provision of services to individuals with disabilities is a state requirement and not a county mandate. A Miller Center Task Force — comprised of disability advocates, staff, parents, service providers and Regional Center of the East Bay staff — has been working to identify community-based disability organizations that would have both the capacity and expertise to assume responsibility for Miller Center Programs. The Contra Costa ARC, a longtime disability organization in Contra Costa, was selected. A transition plan was developed and implementation has been underway for a number of months. The Home Program services have been completely transferred and the onsite early intervention programs are being transitioned this month. Adult and Afterschool Programs will follow in late spring and early summer. Our Personnel Unit is working closely with the County Human Resources Tactical Employment Team to find county positions for Miller Center employees. ARC and the Regional Center have secured about \$2 million in State funds to pay for much-needed improvements at the sites. Thanks to the efforts of the Task Force, the clients, families and the community will continue to have the Miller Centers as a place for support and services.



*For information, call Bill Sorrell at 925-646-5710.*

## Tsunami Relief

CCHS employees are joining others across the world in responding to the Asian tsunami disaster. A number of our physicians — including Mark Stinson, Neil Jaysakera, Kinari Webb, Herb Sigmund and Roger Barrow — were in Indonesia and Sri Lanka with Relief International and Doctors Without Borders. Featured in a recent story in the *Contra Costa Times* was Anthony Keen, an RN at CCRMC. Anthony joined his wife and seven children in Phuket Island, Thailand, where his family lives. He was there when the tsunami hit. Closer to home, our Health Plan Staff Satisfaction and Retention committee thought it would be a good idea to organize a fundraiser for the victims of the tsunami in South Asia. They'll hold a bake sale (with coffee) on Monday, February 14 and a Soup Day (sell bowls of soup) on Wednesday, February 16, both at 595 Center Avenue in Martinez.



## **Faster, Better, Easier: Our Redesigned Website**

If you're a regular visitor to our website, you've probably noticed a significant change in the way it looks and how it's organized. That's because our web team of Shawn Eyer and Shizuko Angel have been working for months to convert more than 2,500 documents on the site to a more consistent and easy-to-navigate format. A particularly exciting development is the addition of a search function. Visitors to the site can now type in keywords describing what they are looking for and get a list of likely matches. There's a page now for health topics and one for services – and lots of room for improvement. Please give us your ideas and suggestions. Each month, the site gets nearly 40,000 visits from people outside CCHS, so we know there are lots of people out there who will welcome our streamlining efforts.



## **Nominees for Employee and Manager of the Year**

This year, Health Services nominated Erika Jensen (right), Public Health Emergency Coordinator, as County Employee of the Year and Patrician Muñoz-Zuniga, Telephone Triage Manager for CCHP's Advice Nurse Unit, as Manager of the Year. The Board of Supervisors recognized all nominees last month.

## **Haz Mat Website Searchable by Incidents**

The Hazardous Materials website (<http://www.cchealth.org/groups/hazmat/>) was expanded recently with a new interactive form that allows users to search for Haz Mat incidents by date, place and facility name. For example, it is possible to ask about all incidents in Pacheco between 1999 and 2002 or to find all incidents at a facility such as a business or processing plant. Haz Mat Director Randy Sawyer says we are one of the very few jurisdictions that have a database on incidents. "We thought this is good information for the community to have access to," he explains. The system was engineered by Peter Chen (Student Intern), Jason Pingol (Information Services) and Shawn Eyer (Community Education and Information).

## **Governor's Budget Names Contra Costa**

Since 1997, we've been working with the County's Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD) to find a way to implement a capitated, consumer-driven system of comprehensive, integrated, long-term care for medical, social and supportive services for seniors and persons with disabilities. Such a system allows people to stay in their homes for as long as possible. In November, we received a state grant for \$474,000 to be used by June 30 to fund the tasks needed for a complex service that wraps medical services around home and community based services, including personal care, nutrition and adult day health. Now our project, along with others in Orange and San Diego counties, could become the gold standard for the state. In Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's budget, the section on the redesign of the Medi-Cal program describes the expansion of managed care and indicates that redesign will include the implementation of acute and long-term care in the three counties. Working with the State's Office of Long Term Care, we expect to have a system designed by December 2006. We'll continue to collaborate with EHSD's Aging & Adult Services as we develop this unique program of care management.



*For more information, contact Pat Sussman at 510-484-6249.*