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Evaluating Our Success

We're a public agency, so we're in the news a lot – whether we're encouraging people to get immunized against a disease, describing what happened during a refinery accident or appearing at the Board of Supervisors to talk about an urgent issue.

Sometimes, when a story appears in the local paper that isn't especially complimentary to some part of our operation, I get questions from people about "what's going on over there." Those conversations make me think about how we evaluate our very complex operation, which includes a broad range of programs and services.

Looking at the numbers

In a story in this issue, you'll read about how well our Health Plan did this past year when national standards called Health Employer Data Information Set (HEDIS) were applied to their efforts. We have a number of very concrete measures that we use to judge our performance. In the past year, we've described the 100,000 Lives Campaign that many of our staff at the Regional Medical Center are participating in to improve performance in nearly a dozen areas. We've dramatically changed some of our operations and we can see the results in reduced response time, fewer infections and similar statistics. At the Health Centers, we've reduced "cycle time," resulting in shorter waits for patients. As a provider, I get lots of numbers from the Diabetes Registry showing how my patients are doing compared with others in the system.

Visits from outside

A number of our divisions – especially CCRMC and the Health Centers, the Health Plan, Alcohol and Other Drugs, Mental Health and Public Health – have regulatory agencies that prescribe standards for them. Nationally, there are efforts underway to reward providers and health systems financially for high quality service delivery. And the Joint

Commission on the Accreditation of Hospitals and Health Systems has new performance and compliance measures, which we welcome to help us measure our effectiveness in achieving our mission.



Dr. Walker

Many of those regulatory agencies aren't content just to track the numbers. They make site visits, sometimes for days or even weeks, pouring through records, walking around and observing. Those reviews are anxiety producing for staff. Often, in spite of the anxiety, the outcomes are delightful. Last month you read that CCRMC's cancer program received seven commendations from a recent review. This month, our Health Emergency Response Unit in Public Health had a site visit from the Centers for Disease Control and the State Department of Health Services and received compliments for their efforts.

It is rare, not just here in Contra Costa but anywhere where regulators visit, for them not to find some areas where improvement is possible. Often those improvements can be made quickly. Sometimes they require a significant restructuring. We're engaging in a major redesign at CCRMC in connection with a survey performed last spring by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Our colleagues

Some "evaluations" are informal and come from our colleagues. When I go to meetings of the California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems, which I chair, I get compliments from my peers and

Continued next page

DID YOU KNOW

According to the new HEDIS, 79% of MediCal-enrolled children in CCHP get on-time immunizations.

questions about some of our unique strategies and programs. Division directors also participate in statewide organizations and get kudos for their innovative approaches. Sometimes those compliments come from state or federal officials, and the Pandemic Action Kit for Schools, which we created with the Contra Costa County Office of Education, is even getting international acclaim.

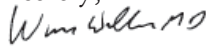
Other significant voices

Month after month, I read the Service Excellence nominations and see how many of you are “evaluating” and noticing the exceptional work your colleagues are doing. You commend them for their dedication and commitment, for going the extra mile to help someone, finding a new way to solve a problem, cheerfully and professionally conducting their day-to-day efforts. Those standards are very important and they are the behaviors we try to acknowledge – not just on the Honor Roll and through certificates, but through other recognition efforts and in annual performance evaluations.

Nearly every division has a feedback process that helps us measure how we’re doing. In a future issue of this newsletter, you’ll read about what that process shows and what we’re doing about some of the areas that need improvement.

Sometimes evaluations tell us what we’re doing exceptionally well. I hope we are celebrating those successes and I encourage you to share them with me. Sometimes evaluations point the way to areas where improvement must be made. I hope you will join me in learning from those improvement suggestions so that we can continue to have a high quality operation that delivers excellent service with respect and responsiveness to all.

Sincerely,



William Walker, MD

Forum on the Built Environment Planned in San Pablo

On April 6, Public Health’s Injury Prevention and Physical Activity Project is hosting a forum on the “built environment” for West Contra Costa elected and appointed officials and community leaders. “Planning Communities: What’s Health Got to Do with It?” is about the way communities are built and how that affects the health of residents. Pre-registration is required. The keynote speaker is Richard J. Jackson, MD, Professor of Health and Urban Planning at the University of California, Berkeley and former Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Environmental Health. Taking place at Maple Hall in San Pablo, the forum is co-sponsored by County Supervisor John Gioia; West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee; West Contra Costa Safe Communities Project; Moore, Iacofano and Goltsman Inc.; Urban Habitat; and PolicyLink. Those in attendance will hear engaging speakers, participate in dialogue and take home best practices and policies for health-promoting land use and transportation planning.



To register for the forum or get more information, contact Shannon Ladner-Beasley at sladner@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6813.

Looking for Something?

Most of us are pretty familiar with search engines like Google and Yahoo on the Internet but we have an excellent searching tool on our iSITE, our Health Services intranet. Want to know about how to handle a combative patient? Interested in doing a survey of the safety culture in your program? Want to know about issues related to pregnancy? Just type cchs in the address field of your browser on a CCHS computer, log-in and type your search term. If you don’t know your user name and password, call Information Systems Help Desk at 957-7272 for assistance.

Employee Milestones

Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Karen Sandri, Erlyn L. Mambretti, Claudia A. Lawrence, Katherine V. Reece, Debra J. Stewart (10 years); Irene E. Paynter, Kerry E. Butler, Deann D. D’Emidio-Lund, Fernando R. Mendoza Jr. (15 years); Frances L. Smith, Kattie L. Thomas, Sheila M. Lenzi, Gloria M. Alejandre, Nenita D. Dacorán, Maria C. Liberato (20 years); Rosemarie A. Zombrano, Linda E. Bates, Julia Pacheco (25 years); Michael E. Arnold and Editha C. Pablo (30 years).

The Director’s Report is published monthly. Deadline for the May edition is April 12. 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.cccounty.us The Director’s Report is available online at cchealth.org and on iSite, our intranet, at cchs.

GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Honor Roll

Jim Tatum

*Manager
CCRMC Materials Management*

For a wonderful job helping the social work department discharge a patient, being incredibly friendly, professional and going the extra mile to help make this a safe and successful discharge.

—Nominated by Brian Copperstein

Marlena Hartley

*Administrative Services Assistant II
AIDS Program*

Marlena went the extra mile for the AIDS program by working to coordinate the movers, painters, carpet layers and staff in providing a wonderfully smooth transition in our office.

—Nominated by Bud Getty and the AIDS Program Staff

Josafina Ramos

*Nutritionist
Public Health*

For all her hard work throughout the years at the Richmond WIC office, and for her unending dedication to provide electric breast pumps and breastfeeding education to our premature moms.

—Nominated by Jeanne Conboy

Charles Penafior, RN

CCRMC 4B

For his dedicated and outstanding work in providing CPR to a patient for whom a Code Blue was called. Charles re-activated her pulse and saved her life.

—Nominated by Reed Graner

Sonya Jacoby, RN, Donald Maree, LVN, and Kevin Friend LVN

Martinez Wound Clinic

For working tirelessly to make a huge difference in our patients' lives by providing excellent, complete and personalized care.

—Nominated by Dr. Lara Wright

Margarita Maciel

*Clerk-Beginning Level
Public Health Clinic Services*

For her professionalism and resourcefulness, always being respectful towards clients and staff, being helpful and willing to work on any assignment, and going out of her way to ensure staff members received schedule changes.

—Nominated by Cristina Perez

Albert Flanagan

*Program Supervisor
Conservatorship/Guardianship Program*

For being helpful and patient with an elderly woman. His counsel provided comfort to her daughter in an unfamiliar and distressing situation and helped her to understand the situation and organize an appropriate-response living situation.

—Nominated by Joseph Goglio
AFL-CIO Community Services

Andi Bivens

*Graphic Designer
Community Education and Information*

For always being responsive, diligent and creative and for going out of her way to make sure that work requests are completed on time. Her skill is a great asset.

—Nominated by Dola Macaulay

Kate Fowlie

*Public Health Educator/Risk Communicator
Community Education and Information*

For her enthusiasm, writing ability and follow-through in writing and editing columns for the *Contra Costa Times'* Healthy Outlook column. She comes up with good ideas, finds an author and helps make the column a success.

—Nominated by Dr. Steve Daniels

Do you know someone who's going the extra mile?

To recognize a CCHS employee, vendor or volunteer for outstanding Service Excellence performance, submit the "Going the Extra Mile" commendation form, available from every CCHS Division Director, or email your commendation to ServicEX@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us or fax it to 925-313-6219. The form can also be downloaded from the Internet (About Us page) or iSite, our Intranet.

As part of our Reducing Health Disparities Initiative (RHDI), our divisions are working on three key areas: improving linguistic access, implementing educational activities on diversity and cultural and linguistic competence, and developing an organizational climate that values patient, customer and employee diversity. Each month, this page highlights what CCHS is doing to address health disparities and what still needs to be done.



Reducing Health **Disparities**



Reaching the Spanish-Speaking Latino Community

How it all started

Addressing linguistic access dates back even before our Reducing Health Disparities Initiative. Nearly eight years ago, CCHS Director Dr. William Walker, responding to employee concerns about how we were communicating with the Spanish-speaking Latino community, formed the Latino Outreach Committee. The group's charge was to recommend how we could improve our efforts.



The Latino Outreach Committee came up with the idea of CCHS and CCTV producing a television talk show.

Committee members – employees from our various Divisions - agreed that Spanish-speaking Latinos preferred to receive critical health information in their native language, and research showed television was a highly popular medium among Latinos. The group's brainstorming led to a collaboration with Contra Costa Television and gave birth to Vida Sana en Vivo, a professional, culturally competent, Spanish-language health education show. The first production hit the airways on June 21, 2001. Since then, we have produced more than 40 shows with topics ranging from violence and childhood obesity to pandemic flu and bioterrorism. (A complete list of shows is available on our website, cchealth.org)

● Challenges we've faced

Now in its sixth year, Vida Sana en Vivo airs twice a week. In 2002, the show won the National Association of Counties Achievement Award and has placed as finalist and received honorable mention in several other award competitions throughout the years. Keeping the show on the air has not been easy. Securing funding for the show has always been a challenge. We've learned to do most of the production work in-house and have reduced costs from \$1,500 to \$900 per show. Much of the funding in recent years has come from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and many of the programs focus on health emergency issues.

Convincing the community to watch was another challenge. Contra Costa Television was not a station with Spanish programming and we knew it would take time for the community to tune in. Careful thought was put into the scheduling of the show to avoid competition from other stations. We continually promote the show through press releases, flyers and on our website. To reach a larger audience we've expanded the show to air on KCRT, the Richmond city TV station, and we're working to get it on other stations in the county.

A new look

The Vida Sana en Vivo of today has a different look than the original. The cultural segments that once ran in the middle of the show have been replaced with short, on-location interviews with our programs and other providers. The original program ran announcements of upcoming events; now we provide phone numbers and websites for viewers.



Elizabeth de Dios is the host of Vida Sana en Vivo and Vicky Ballardares is the producer.

The show also went from two hosts to one, and our current host, Richmond Firefighter Elizabeth de Dios, began hosting the show in the winter of 2004. We now produce an average of four new shows a year and have created an English version, Get Ready, Get Healthy, hosted by West Contra Costa Unified School District staffer Doug Spangler.



Both shows air on Contra Costa Television, which is Channel 27 on Comcast cable and Channel 32 on Astound cable. Vida Sana en Vivo airs every Thursday at 3:30 p.m. and Fridays at 5 p.m. Get Ready, Get Healthy airs Monday at 7:30 p.m. and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.

Tapes of Vida Sana En Vivo on a variety of health topics are available to CCHS programs.

To order, call Fowzia Younos at 925-313-6823.

CCHP Aces Testing of Medi-Cal Service

Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) recently received good news in the results of the 2006 Health Employer Data Information Set (HEDIS), an annual report compiled for the California Department of Health Services and designed to measure the quality of care being provided to the state's Medi-Cal beneficiaries. For the 2006 report, CCHP saw statistically significant improvements from the 2005 report in three categories: childhood immunization status, chlamydia screening and use of appropriate medications for asthma. In addition, none of CCHP's scores for the 16 categories decreased statistically from 2005 or was significantly below average. Rich Harrison, CEO of CCHP, said, "I believe these results reflect our staff's dedication to delivering high quality, affordable health care. It's very rewarding for staff to see their hard work praised by an independent survey, and we will continue to focus on finding ways to improve service quality." HEDIS is a set of standardized performance measures designed to ensure that purchasers and consumers have the information they need to reliably compare the performance of managed health care plans. A total of more than 20 Medi-Cal managed care organizations in California participated in the survey, for which data was pulled from services received in 2005 and earlier.

Environmental Health Specialists Challenged by Situational Awareness Training

Specialists and Technicians from our Environmental Health (EH) Division recently received Situational Awareness training to prepare them for potentially threatening situations they encounter when doing inspections. Michael C. Kimball and Associates provided the two-day training, starting with a day spent in a classroom reviewing the basics of effective communication, dealing with difficult people, resolving conflict, and surviving possible violent encounters with angry people. The second day was hands-on physical training covering awareness, evaluation and response to potentially harmful conditions. Staff learned about safe interviewing positions and postures, and tactical retreat from hostile clients to safer areas. "The overall experience was very effective in raising our awareness and improving capabilities and confidence for handling threatening situations," said Michele Dimaggio, Senior EH Specialist. "It was two days of great teamwork and camaraderie."



For more information about the Environmental Health training, contact Michele Dimaggio at mdimaggio@bsd.cccounty.us or 925-646-5225 ext. 229.

Ride Along with Haz Mat

Sometimes you see our Hazardous Materials team on television responding to an incident and you get a sense of their jobs. If you want to get a real feel for what it's like being in their shoes, visit our website and go on a 3 minute, 30 second ride-along, compliments of radio station KGO. Reporter Brett Burkhardt went out recently with Scott Hanson, Maria Duazo, Paul Andres and Eric Jonsson and got a first-hand look at what their day is like. Complete with sirens, ringing cell phones, hissing barrels and more, the "edgy" piece is entertaining and informative.



From left, Haz Mat staff that took a KGO reporter on a ride-along included Paul Andrews, Scott Hanson, Maria Duazo and Eric Jonsson.



See and hear more about the "environmental cops" online at cchealth.org

Taking Control of Chemo


Contra Costa Regional Medical Center now offers a new class for cancer patients who will undergo chemotherapy treatment in our oncology clinic. Lead by Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist Marianne Bunce-Houston, the "Taking Control of Your Chemotherapy" class is starting April 6. Marianne said the class aims to help patients prepare for and cope with the possible side effects of the treatment, which can be a frightening process to face. Millie Prieto Ruiz, Latina Program Coordinator for the Women's Cancer Resource Center, provides Spanish interpretation at the classes. Only CCHS patients being seen in the oncology clinic are eligible for the class. They are automatically enrolled before their first treatment.



For more information, contact Marianne Bunce-Houston at mbunce@bsd.cccounty.us


Grant to Address Pediatric Obesity

Kaiser Permanente has awarded Families CAN, a community-wide coalition that includes a number of our programs, a grant of \$96,000 to address obesity in young children. We will be partnering with Families CAN, First Five Contra Costa and Kaiser. The collaborative effort, called Healthy and Active Before 5, is designed to develop a countywide action plan to prevent pediatric obesity in children ages 0-5. Community leaders will form a Leadership Council and use community forums to hear concerns and suggestions from residents. Dr. Diane Dooley, one of our physicians and co-chair of Families CAN, says in the last 25 years, the national prevalence of overweight 2- to 5-year-old children has more than doubled, and 48% of children seen by us last year were either overweight or at risk for being overweight. Other CCHS staff working on the project include Public Health Divisions' Charlotte Dickson and Nancy Hill.

 *More information about Healthy and Active Before 5 is available online at cchealth.org by clicking on Health Topics, Obesity and then Child Obesity.*

Mental Health, Probation Get Grant for Children's Program

Our Mental Health Division is working with the county Probation Department to launch the Children's Alternative Treatment Project (CAT), funded with a Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction grant from the state Corrections Standards Authority. The project is designed to strengthen our assessment capabilities and expand best-practice mental health treatment resources for juvenile offenders. It creates a CAT Team located at Juvenile Hall consisting of a licensed Mental Health professional as team leader, one parent partner, three Probation Officers (one for each region of the county), a part-time Public Health Nurse and a part-time Educational Liaison. The team will provide comprehensive assessments and gather information to create a Community Treatment Plan for juvenile offenders. The Probation Officers will carry a specialized caseload composed only of youngsters participating in the CAT Project and will work closely with community-based organizations to support the families' participation.

 *For more information about Mental Health participation in the CAT Project, contact Sandy Marsh at smarsh@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-646-2224.*

Public Health Director Appointed to State Panel

Public Health Director Dr. Wendel Brunner has been appointed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to the Tobacco Education and Research Oversight Committee (TEROC). The Committee is a legislatively mandated body charged with overseeing the use of Proposition 99 tobacco tax revenues for tobacco control and prevention education and for tobacco-related research. The Committee provides advice to state agencies, publishes and updates a state master plan for tobacco control and tobacco-related research. It also makes recommendations to the State Legislature for improving Proposition 99-funded tobacco control and tobacco-related research efforts in California. Dr. Brunner's term is for one year.



Dr. Wendel Brunner

Second Annual Count of Homeless Completed

Public Health's Homeless Program held its second ever Homeless Count on January 30 and has issued a pamphlet summarizing the valuable data collected. The Count, first held in 2005, is part of the County's 10-year plan to end homelessness. This year 117 volunteers helped the staff, including seven who themselves were homeless. The Count took place from 6:30-8 a.m., during which 1,749 unsheltered homeless were found, including some in every city in Contra Costa. Thirty-five were children under 16 and another 24 were under 25. In addition, 2,695 "sheltered" homeless were identified in shelters, transitional housing and other facilities for a total of 4,444. Cynthia Belon, Program Director, said comparing that number to the 7,231 identified in the 2005 Count, a decrease of 2,787 is an encouraging indication that the 10-year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness is proceeding as anticipated.

 *For more information about the Homeless Program call 925-313-6124.*

CCHS Programs Being Sought for Health Fair in Pittsburg

CCHS and County Employment and Human Services Department are participating in the third annual Fit Fest! health fair being planned for May 19 at Los Medanos College in Pittsburg. It is sponsored by Los Medanos Community Health Care District, with participation by the Ambrose Recreation and Park District and several private health care providers. The event is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the soccer field in back of the college, 2700 E. Leland Road in Pittsburg. Activities will include a farmer's market and demonstrations of healthy food preparation, fitness activities and CPR. There will also be snacks, games, prizes, health screenings, faith-based resources, a walk/fun run on the Delta De Anza trail and field events for children.

 *To sign up your program to participate in Fit Fest! 2007, call Marilyn Condit, PHN at 925-522-7484.*




Dr. Mark Stinson

CCRMC Mourns Loss of Dr. Mark Stinson

Staff at CCRMC held a service there March 12 for one of its most beloved and widely traveled physicians, Dr. Mark Edward Stinson. Dr. Stinson died March 2 at his Oakland home. He was 49. He did his residency at the old county hospital, Merrithew, in the late 1980s and early '90s after graduating from the University of Texas School of Medicine in 1987. In addition to his service to hundreds of Contra Costa residents over his 20 years with us, he was executive director and chief executive officer of Medicine International, a nonprofit dedicated to international humanitarian relief. He traveled to deliver medical services in Nepal, Ghana, Bosnia, Kosovo and India as well as the sites of the 9-11 attacks in New York, the 2005 tsunami in Asia and Hurricane Katrina. He also served as assistant clinical professor in the UC Davis School of Medicine Affiliate Program and was an avid outdoorsman. Dr. David Goldstein, chief of the CCRMC Emergency Department where Dr. Stinson worked full time, told a local newspaper, "He was just an incredible guy, the most positive, hardworking and dedicated person. He was a doctor's doctor, he was one-of-a-kind and

Pandemic Flu Kits for Childcare Providers Go Out Through Mail, Web

Public Health's Communicable Disease Programs and Community Education and Information unit partnered with several other local agencies last month to mail out more than 1,000 kits designed to help childcare providers throughout the county plan for and handle a pandemic flu outbreak. The kit, which is available online in English and Spanish, features fact sheets, posters, a brochure, lesson plans, checklists and lists of health tips and information resources. Other partners in the project include the Contra Costa County Office of Education and Employment and Human Services Department; Contra Costa Child Care Council; California Department of Social Services; Diablo Valley College Child Care Program; First Five Contra Costa; Local Planning Council for Child Care and Development; and San Ramon Valley Child Care Association. Last spring we worked with the County Office of Education to produce a Pandemic School Action Kit for Schools that has become very popular across the country. The latest kit is the first in a planned series of communications with providers about communicable disease.

 For information, contact Julie Freestone at 925-313-6268, or to access pandemic flu materials for schools, childcare providers and other businesses, visit cchealth.org/topics/pandemic_flu/online.

Rich Harrison Saying Goodbye After Nearly 32 Years

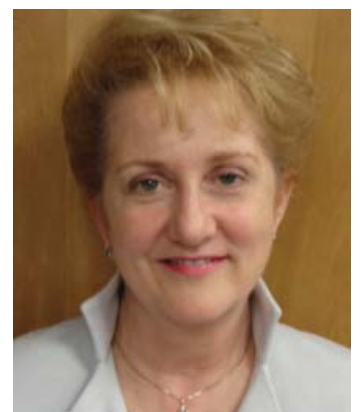
March 30 was the last day after nearly 32 years with us for Rich Harrison, CEO of Contra Costa Health Plan, whose career dates back to before the consolidation and creation of CCHS. Rich announced in February that he is retiring to spend time with "my best friend" – his wife of 38 years, Georganne – and their growing brood of grandchildren. He is also looking forward to more time to golf and travel. Rich started with us in 1975 as a general administrator with the old Public Health Department. He later was director of the Richmond Health Center before coming to the Health Plan in the mid '80s. He worked for two decades with Milt Camhi and succeeded him as CEO in 2004. "I can't tell you how proud I am to have been a part of the Health Plan team," Rich wrote in an email announcing his decision. He noted with pride the growth of CCHP since the '80s, adding, "The number of lives we are responsible for more than doubled from under 25,000 to over 65,000 today." CCHP staff planned a farewell reception for Rich the afternoon of March 30.



Rich Harrison

Patricia Tanquary Named New Head of Health Plan

Patricia Tanquary has been appointed to the position of Executive Director of the Contra Costa Health Plan. Patricia has been Deputy Executive Director of CCHP the past two years. Prior to being recruited to Contra Costa, she spent 18 years with Kaiser Permanente in a variety of capacities. She also had previously been the Associate Administrator for French Hospital and Health Plan in San Francisco for five years, assisting them in implementing one of the four first Medicare Risk Demonstration Projects by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Patricia has a Masters in Social Work from San Diego State University and both a Masters in Public Health Administration and a Doctorate in Social Welfare from U.C. Berkeley. "We are happy to have such an experienced and well-qualified person on staff to succeed Rich Harrison," Dr. Walker said.



Patricia Tanquary