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It will take all of us

Last month, I attended the annual fundraiser organized by the Contra Costa Regional Health Foundation. Against the backdrop of all the bad news happening around us – foreclosures, a faltering economy, continued homicides in certain areas of our County, budget reductions at federal, state and local level – I was reminded that night of the power of people coming together to support communities.

A number of us – Frank Puglisi first and Lynda Gayden more recently – have been working for the past five years to launch the Contra Costa Regional Health Foundation (CCRHF). Hospital foundations aren't new phenomena. Most local public hospitals have had them for many years. Many of them are well funded and it's been a struggle to launch a new one.

Celebrating our success

Held at the Veterans Building in Lafayette, the event was attended by a number of our employees – physicians, nurses and others – and by an even larger number of people from the broader Contra Costa community. It was a sold-out event with silent and live auctions that raised a substantial amount of money to support the Foundation's goals: more medical equipment, continuing education for the Family Practice Residency and funding for the Nursing National Certification Program. It may have been tempting to bemoan our budget woes and appeal to attendees to give to save us, but the event instead was to celebrate our proud history and successes in pursuing our mission.

Football icon Jerry Rice was the featured guest. He spent time meeting one-on-one with guests, providing his autograph and photo opportunities for this memorable occasion. Many who were there were impressed by his charismatic presence. His appearance in support of our mission was one of the highlights of the evening. And there were other VIPs there as well, including Congressman George Miller, Supervisor Gayle B. Uilkema and longtime health leader Dr. Mervyn Silverman.

The Chairman of the Board of the

foundation, Dick Blair, partner in a prominent Walnut Creek law firm, and past Chair Bette Felton., professor emerita at Cal State University East Bay, were among the many representatives from corporate industry, banking, business and service interests in Contra Costa. None of them receives health care from us but all volunteer generously to support the Foundation in fundraising and also as ambassadors for our crucial role in the broader community.

Volunteering our time

Seeing our guests at the gala reminded me that many of us spend our after hours, non-working time volunteering for many good causes in our communities. One recent example comes to mind and there are many others: Not Today, an anti-violence effort in Richmond (see separate story on page 8). Public Health Director Dr. Wendel Brunner and I were asked by Drs. Gina Perez-Baron and Kim Duir to open our North Richmond Center for Health and roll our mobile van to provide health care for this 24 hours-long faith-based effort. Kim and Gina promised to bring out the volunteers – and our physicians and other staff came forward and worked on their own time – indicating the respect and commitment our employees have for the community in which they work in a time of great stress for that community.



Dr. Walker

Continued next page

DID YOU KNOW

Our Health Centers provided
404,500 medical visits
in 2007.

At the end of the day, many of the hardest hit in our communities need us and also the support of volunteers and supporters. There will never be enough funded support to meet all the needs. In these troubled times, people will depend on the good will and generosity of their neighbors – and strangers who open their hearts and their wallets because it's the right thing to do. Now more than ever, we must remember how valuable that support is.

For more information about the "Unnatural Causes" series and the local efforts related to it, log on to iSITE, the CCHS intranet, or cchealth.org or call Concepcion James at 925-957-5421.

Sincerely,



William B. Walker, MD

New Site for Richmond Health Center

Some months ago I told you about the efforts over the last decade to replace our deteriorating Richmond Health Center with a new building to better serve West Contra Costa County. We know that the Health Center stands in a place that could be generating much needed revenue for city services through commercial development. A number of locations in Richmond were identified as potential new sites for the Health Center.

For various reasons, none of those sites are available at this time or in the near future.

Recently, Supervisor John Gioia and I talked to the San Pablo City Council about another option: building a state-of-the-art Health Center on the campus of Doctors Medical Center in San Pablo – just a few miles from the current site of the Richmond Health Center. We have worked hard for the last year to save Doctors Medical Center. Locating the Health Center on the Doctors campus will make it possible to share services like x-ray and laboratory testing. That will bring revenue to Doctors and improve patient access to those services. The new Health Center will be reachable by public transportation for patients and employees from all communities in West Contra Costa. If all goes well, it will be about three years before the new Health Center opens. I recorded a podcast on our website about this, and I'll keep you posted on the progress. – WW

Milestones

Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Jonathan E. San Juan, Michael T. Pfister, Denise M. Stepp, Jeanette L. Newton, Elio R. Bracho, Cheri A. Pies, Belva J. Lorrekovich, Steven P. Garcia, Jeff Edwards, Catherine A. Brandt, Rachael M. Bailey, Judy T. Pearl (10 years); Suzzette C. Johnson, Sandra Gholson, Fowzia Younos, Cynthia J. Sook, Barry M. Miller (15 years); Kathleen C. Ferris, Korinne Ternes, Odessa M. Stone, Elaine C. Glimme, Araceli L. Cruz, Yamini Shah, Tamara Angel (20 years); Ronald Power, Diane Dooley and Mary C. Matteson (25 years).

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.cccounty.us or fax it to 925-313-6219. The form can also be downloaded from the Internet (About Us page) or iSITE, our intranet. Nominations are subject to approval by Division Directors.

The Director's Report is published monthly. Deadline for the June edition is May 12. Publicize your upcoming events and successes by sending information to Dan Smith at 597 Center Avenue, Suite 255, Martinez 94553, fax 925-313-6219, email: dsmith@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

Betty Anne Carpiso, CCRN
CCRMC

For the excellent judgment she demonstrates when caring for patients and their families and for recently obtaining National Certification in Critical Care, becoming a CCRN, and sharing her knowledge with coworkers by volunteering to teach.

—Nominated as April CCRMC Employee of the Month

Patricia Creel
Community Health Worker Specialist
Prenatal Care Guidance/FMCH

For her compassion and diligence in assisting a client with low literacy to navigate the Medi-Cal and health care systems, gain housing rights and utilize community resources.

—Nominated by Jana Aloo

Nancy Hill
Senior Public Health Nutritionist

Suzette Johnson
FIMR and PSAP Program Manager

Itika Greene
Perinatal Services Coordinator
FMCH Programs

For their leadership and innovation in promoting education, understanding and service improvement on perinatal depression by organizing and hosting an outstanding conference for perinatal providers, home visitors, mental health specialists, community outreach workers and others in Contra Costa County.

—Nominated by Cheri Pies

DeDee Jeffrey
IS Technician II
Health Services Information System

For consistently going out of her way to help, being pleasant and willing to assist with lab instrument interface programs and recently working with the manufacturer to help a therapist adjust the blood gas analyzer.

—Nominated by Julia Machado

Lynn King
Specialty Clinic
CCRMC

For continuing to do “the impossible” in helping me in a difficult time to get appointments and approvals for other services.

—Nominated by Roger Case

Natalie Koffi
Catherine Nwosu
Certified Nursing Assistants
CCRMC

For assisting nursing staff in turning patients, incontinent care and transports. They are self-directed, willing and always there with a smile.

—Nominated by Holly Longmuir

Teresa Lascano
Ambulatory Care Clinical Coordinator
CCRMC

For assisting staff in getting ASL video translation for a deaf and hard-of-hearing family who arrived unexpectedly at the clinic during lunchtime.

—Nominated by Krista Peterson

Hazel Maldonado
Central Supply Technician
Pittsburg Health Center

For always looking out for us and for our patients.

—Nominated by Carolina Ambriz

Not Today Volunteers
—Nominated by Gina Perez-Baron

For your participation in and contribution to Not Today, a very successful anti-violence intervention campaign conducted March 15 in Richmond and North Richmond. It would not have been as successful without your efforts.

Dianne Rohde
Clerk-Experienced Level
Public Health Administration

For organizing a very successful blood donation effort and helping bring the mobile van to Center Avenue. Many who donated had not done so for years.

—Nominated by Dave Shoemaker

CCHP Good Health Program Wins Honorable Mention

Contra Costa Health Plan gained a feather in its cap with the recent announcement that the National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems awarded CCHP's Good Health Program an Honorable Mention in the category of Reducing Health Care Disparities. CCHP will be recognized on June 26 at the 2008 Safety Net Awards ceremony in Santa Fe, N.M. for its exceptional work.

The Good Health Program serves three groups of CCHP members: pediatric Medi-Cal members, Special Needs Population members and county uninsured members. The three programs were developed separately over the past few years and have started to produce statistical and anecdotal evidence of improved access to services by all three groups.

For example, figures from the 2007 Health Plan Employer and Data Information Set (HEDIS) show improvement in the rate of CCHP Medi-Cal members receiving adolescent well care, well child visits and immunizations.



For more information call Laurie Crider at 925-957-7264.



The staff and managers of the Good Health Program are, from left, Nora Carmenate, Lenell Anderson, Lynn Grassano, Chris B. Johnson and Laurie Crider.

Community Shares Experiences in LEO Session

Participants in April's Learning from Each Other (LEO) forum heard firsthand from community groups about the challenges and rewards of working with CCHS. The topic was "What's the Community Got to Do with It (Part II)."

Arturo Castillo with La Clinica, Barbara Becnel of Neighborhood House of North Richmond, and Naomi Smith with Ujima Family Recovery Services each did a presentation on their organization and spoke about their experiences working with the county health system. Barbara said her current good relationship with CCHS took much work and several years to create. While it definitely wasn't easy, it was worth it, she said, and persistence in working through problems and communication were key to success. A dozen people attended.

The forums are led by our Reducing Health Disparities staff and meet every other month to share successes, lessons learned and resources. The May forums will be used to show selected segments of "Unnatural Causes" to CCHS staff at noontime on Tuesdays in Martinez, Wednesdays in Richmond and Thursdays in Pittsburg.



Nursing student intern Cherinna Simbillio (left) attended the March LEO event with Perinatal Services Coordinator Itika Greene (right). Lauren Stoddard with RHD is pictured in back.



Information about LEO forums with dates and topics is available on iSITE. For more information contact LEO Coordinator, Dawna Vann at dvann@bsd.cccounty.us or 925-957-5436.

Martinez Community Academy Students Training at CCRMC



Outside their workplace at CCRMC are, from left, Pamela Webb, Charmayne Okina, Corbin Macias, Skyley Tonti and Louise Lawson.

Students from the Martinez Community Academy are volunteering at CCRMC in the mailroom to learn vocational job skills. The Martinez Community Academy is the Martinez school district's transition program for students ages 18 to 22 with learning disabilities, said Pamela Webb, who coordinates their work at the hospital. The Academy's goal is to provide students with the skills necessary to transition from high school to adult life so they may live and function as independently as possible in our community. The Academy provides

instruction in the areas of functional academics, daily living skills, vocational training and social skills. Their classroom is located at Martinez Adult Education Facility, where the students have access to the adult education classes, vocational training jobs and community activities.

 For more information about the Martinez Community Academy, please contact Sandra McMillan at smcMillan@martinez.k12.ca.us or 925-228-3276, extension 238.

Author to Speak on Link between Tobacco Marketing, Health Disparities

Systematic targeting of inner-city populations with menthol cigarette marketing has contributed to health disparities among African Americans, according to a leading researcher who will speak to the Contra Costa County Tobacco Prevention Coalition (TPC). Dr. Valerie Yerger will be the guest at TPC's May 22 meeting, scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. at the George Miller Center, 300 27th Street in Richmond. Dr. Yerger is co-author of an article recently published in the Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Uninsured titled "Racialized Geography, Corporate Activity and Health Disparities: Tobacco Industry Targeting of Inner Cities." "The overall smoking rate for Californians has decreased dramatically since 1988, but tobacco-related health disparities continue for the poor, less educated and underserved populations," said Denice Dennis, Manager of our Tobacco Prevention Project, which staffs TPC. "The paper written by Dr. Yerger and her colleagues is important new evidence about the link between health disparities and tobacco marketing. We want to hear about it."

 For more information about the coalition, its monthly meeting or the county's Tobacco Prevention Project, visit the website at cchealth.org or call Denice Dennis at 925-313-6825.

Beverly Clark Receives Award from State

The longtime manager of our Women, Infants and Children program (WIC), Beverly Clark, is being honored this month with a Career Achievement Award at the annual conference of the state WIC program. "We literally created WIC here," Beverly said recently, reflecting on a career that started after earning an MPH in nutrition at UC Berkeley. In helping start the WIC supplemental nutrition program in Contra Costa in 1974, she recalled, "We came up with our own forms. We came up with our own handouts. We had zero. And today we have manuals, lots of manuals." After working a year with CARE in the Phillipines, she worked for Alameda County before returning to CCHS in '94. "I really like my job. I like the variety and I like helping people," she said in explanation for her longevity with Contra Costa WIC. Beverly said our WIC staff has expanded from three to 50 since being created 34 years ago and currently sees more than 20,000 children and pregnant women each year.



Beverly Clark

 For more information about WIC, visit cchealth.org and click on Services, then WIC.

Health Plan Cooks Up a Breast Cancer Fundraiser

The smell of sizzling bacon and fresh golden pancakes wafted through the air the morning of St. Patrick's Day in the courtyard at 595 Center Ave. Staff at Contra Costa Health Plan came in early to help serve more than 80 people pancakes, bacon or sausage, eggs (cooked to order) and juice or coffee. CCHP donated the \$360 in proceeds to the Avon Walk Against Breast Cancer. Pam Calley of CCHP is also participating in the walk. Charitable contributions to all different types of organizations has always been a staple of CCHP.

 For more information call Pam Calley at 925-957-7264.

Collaboration Produces Big Drop in Pedestrian Injuries

Public Health Division's Injury Prevention & Physical Activity Promotion Project reports some spectacular results from a pedestrian and bike safety effort in Richmond that concluded recently. The final report on the Richmond Pedestrian Project, delivered to the Richmond City Council, documented a dramatic decrease in pedestrian injuries in Richmond as a result of collaborative enforcement, education, and engineering ("the 3 E's") effort that involved CCHS and the City's Police, Engineering, and Planning Departments and the North and East Neighborhood Council. Since 2005, pedestrian injuries for those 15 and under went down 70%, and for the overall population, 52%. Nancy Baer, project manager, said the tremendous improvement is a tribute to the strength of the 3E's approach, and to the strategy of identifying and focusing on key injury "hot spots." The Injury Prevention & Physical Activity Promotion Projects are part of Public Health's Community Wellness & Prevention Program.



For more information, contact Nancy Baer at nbaer@ccccounty.us or 925-313-6837.

Sharon Hiner Named a Liaison Physician

Dr. Sharon Hiner, Medical Director of the Cancer Program at CCRMC, was appointed recently to a three-year term as a Cancer Liaison Physician by the American College of Surgeon's Commission on Cancer. Dr. Hiner has been at CCRMC since 1982 and has served as Cancer Committee Chairperson since 1986, when we became an accredited cancer program through the Chicago-based Commission on Cancer. She is now part of a national network of 1,600 Liaison Physicians who spearhead quality improvement initiatives by using the Commission's National Cancer Database and partnering with agencies such as the American Cancer Society. The Regional Medical Center was accredited once again in 2006, with no deficiencies cited and seven out of eight possible commendations received. "I am privileged to work with an incredibly gifted and dedicated group of doctors, nurses, social workers and registrars who care deeply about our patients and ensure that we provide state-of-the-art care," said Dr. Hiner, responding to the announcement by the Commission.



Dr. Sharon Hiner

211: Get Connected and Get Answers

There's a new resource for program staff who are trying to connect patients/clients and community members with help. Just by dialing 211 from any Bay Area prefix – and many across the state and country – callers can talk with someone who will provide information about and referral to all kinds of local health and social services. 211 is a national, toll-free, easy-to-remember three-digit phone number. In Contra Costa County, calls are answered 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by trained specialists at the Contra Costa Crisis Center. Funding from United Way of the Bay Area, John Muir Health, First 5 Contra Costa, the Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department and others makes it possible. Some county phones don't yet allow users to dial 211 directly so people who are unable to dial 211 directly, should call 1-800-830-5380.



For more information, go to www.211contracosta.org



Francie Wise

MRSA Infections Topic of Health Column

Our Communicable Diseases Program Chief Francie Wise writes about the increasingly common bacterial infection MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) in a recent installment of our "Healthy Outlook" column, which runs in the Contra Costa Newspapers chain. In the past, people were most likely to be infected with MRSA in the hospital. More recently people have been getting this infection in community settings, such as schools and group housing. MRSA is a particularly troublesome type of staph bacteria that is resistant to antibiotics and can cause aggressive skin and tissue infections. MRSA skin infections often look like any other infection: a small bite, pimple or scratch that may become red, warm, swollen and painful. Community-acquired MRSA can be treated and is fairly easy to prevent. MRSA is spread primarily by direct skin-to-skin human contact or by direct contact with wound drainage. Frequent handwashing and not sharing personal items like bath towels, razors or soap can help prevent its spread.



To read more of this and other Healthy Outlook columns, visit cchealth.org and click on the Healthy Outlook link in Items of Interest or on the Publications page.



The Board of Supervisors recognizes Employee of the Year Neil Price, center.



Cynthia Belon

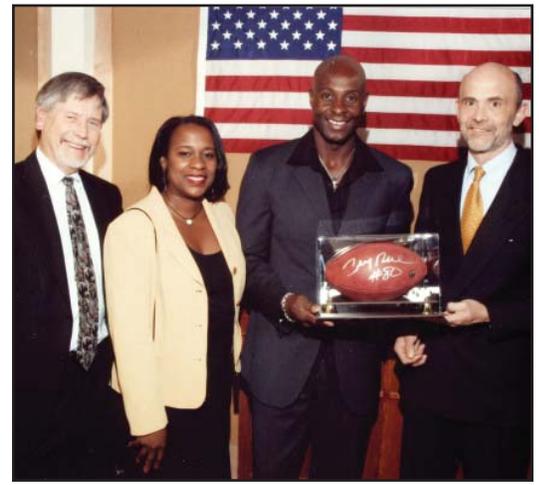
Price Wins County Employee of the Year, Belon Nominated as Manager

Congratulations are in order for Cynthia Belon and Neil Price, CCHS' respective nominees for Contra Costa County Manager and Employee of the Year. Neil, in fact, was selected as the top employee in the county for 2007. Cynthia is manager of Public Health's Homeless Program and Neil is a Hazardous Materials Technician with the Hazardous Materials Division. "Neil is very effective at seeing the big picture related to HazMat response issues, focusing on what impacts the county as a whole... He has made Contra Costa a safer place because of his efforts," stated his nomination form. "Cynthia is unstinting in advocating for people who are homeless. She never lets the welfare of the homeless fall off the agenda of any agency in the county," said hers. All nominees were honored by the Board of Supervisors at a ceremony April 8 in the Board chambers.



Out and About

At left, Dr. Wendel Brunner, Director of Public Health, and Nutrition Educator Gwenn White share a smile at the information table before a presentation to the Board of Supervisors by the Community Wellness & Prevention Program staff on the "Eat Fresh, Buy Local" campaign. At right, Drs. William Walker, Sonia Sutherland and Keith White share the spotlight with Jerry Rice and the autographed football he gave to Contra Costa Regional Health Foundation at its April 5 gala.



CCHS Staff, Volunteers Help Richmond Make Peace

The Richmond community – and nearly two dozen of our staff – came together recently for a citywide anti-violence intervention campaign called Not Today. Organized by local churches, this 24-hour ceasefire event took place March 15 at eight community sites, marked "lighthouses," throughout Richmond and North Richmond. Thanks to the generous volunteer work from community members and numerous CCRMC and Health Center staff, as well as behind-the-scenes effort by many others, health screening was offered at four lighthouses for eight hours during the event. About 120 attendees were screened for diabetes and hypertension, 13 received rapid HIV tests and Alcohol and Other Drugs staff were on hand to provide information and referrals. North Richmond Center for Health served as command post for coordination of this multi-site all-day event, while Richmond Health Center provided testing equipment. Health education and insurance information was provided by Public Health staff.



If you are interested in community outreach work happening in West County, contact Frontline Richmond at frontlinrichmond@gmail.com or 510-272-2430. For more information on the Not Today campaign, visit not2day.org