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State Budget 101: On Shaky Ground

In a recent issue of *Newsweek* magazine, essayist Anna Quindlen wrote a piece called "Summertime Blues" in which she talked about the high gas prices, floods in the Midwest, wildfires in California and home foreclosures. These recent calamities harkened her back to summers in the past: when Martin Luther King Jr and Robert Kennedy were murdered; police and protesters battled in the streets of Chicago; the televised Watergate hearings laid bare the wrong doing of the Nixon administration.

Quindlen says there is a vague and persistent sense that all is not well in the United States and we don't have to look too far to find reinforcement for her feelings. Home prices in Contra Costa have fallen more than any Bay Area county in recent months. "Most of us feel the ground trembling beneath our feet," she said, pointing out that many people think we are in a recession, a word apparently invented by Franklin Roosevelt in 1937 to avoid using the word depression.

Waiting for the budget

While we wait for the State Legislature and the Governor to find a compromise on the State budget, and while they figure out some way to close the \$16 billion state deficit, the shaking is becoming more apparent. It is hard to imagine that in the frenzy of the late hours of negotiations and debate in Sacramento, programs that serve our most vulnerable populations won't be harmed.

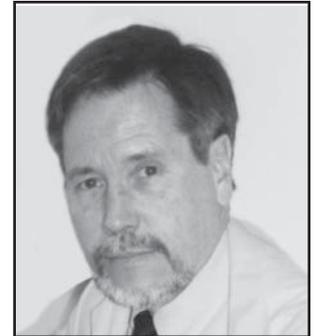
Some of the people served by those programs will be harmed twice or three times over as multiple safety net programs that serve them lose funding.

In the past, when that's happened, our Board of Supervisors has stepped forward to "overmatch" state funds with county funds well above required levels. That can't happen now because the County has no extra funding to fill the gaps and has already made its own significant budget reductions.

Impact worsened by past decisions

The impact of the proposed cuts is worsened by decisions that were made years ago. Providers who accept Medi-Cal have not been given an increase in rates since 2000. If their rates are now cut as proposed by the Governor,

those providers will be even further behind and some of them will probably refuse to see low-income patients. That will further strain our already over-burdened health care system. As the economy worsens, more people will lose their jobs – and their health insurance – and they too must turn to our system.



Dr. Walker

Counties also haven't been given increased funds for administering state-mandated programs, yet their costs keep increasing while regulations and requirements grow more burdensome.

As the Legislature weighs what to cut, each year California adds to its population at a level equal to the City of Long Beach – those are people who need more, not less, services.

Some good news

It's hard to find solace in all this gloom – yet I do have some good news to report. At the end of June, Congress passed a veto-proof bill that extended a moratorium on Medicaid regulations that would have cut funds to public hospitals. For us, it would have meant a staggering loss of \$9 million for Contra Costa Regional Medical Center. Thanks to the efforts of Congressman George Miller and others, we have at least another year before the issue comes up again.

And more positive signs

Being a doctor and not an economist, I can't predict when and whether the stock market will recover, gas prices will fall and home values will rise. But I can say I am heartened by some things I see around me in Health Services.

Continued next page

DID YOU KNOW

Contra Costa WIC has seen an **11% client increase** in the last year, and served **20,802 clients** in July.

Director's Message Continued...

Recently our Public Health and Emergency Medical Services divisions teamed up with the Sheriff's Office to present a Pandemic Flu tabletop. I was impressed and reassured by the level of planning on the local, state and federal level to prepare for a deadly worldwide influenza outbreak (see separate story).

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center continues to involve staff in extraordinary efforts to improve patient safety. Director of Nursing Lisa Massarweh made a compelling presentation to the Board of Supervisors about the progress being achieved (see separate story).

So as the summer comes to a close and we await the final shock waves from the State budget, maybe the best thing we can do is look around us at the positive efforts we're all making to serve Contra Costa. We may face challenges in fulfilling that mission but I continue to believe we'll persevere. Maybe we should keep in mind what Franklin Roosevelt said, "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today."

Sincerely,



William B. Walker, MD

Staff Present Patient Care Update to Board of Supervisors

The Board of Supervisors heard a compelling presentation on patient care including an update from our Transforming Care at the Bedside (TCAB) team. Presenting at the June Board meeting were Dr. Ori Tzvieli, Clinical Pharmacist Karen Finck, Clinical Nurse Specialist Marianne Bunce-Houston, and Chief Nursing Officer Lisa Massarweh. The presentation focused on the multidisciplinary approach to care, engagement of staff and patients, and rapid-cycle tests of change to improve the care we deliver. The presentation included a powerful patient testimonial, and a report on the local, state and national nursing shortage and how it could impact CCHS. The report also outlined our successes, such as efforts to reduce medication errors and improve care. A video of our nurses having some fun through this hard work with their own rendition of the Beach Boys' "Wouldn't it Be Nice" provided a unique feature.



Clinical Nurse Specialist Marianne Bunce-Houston (left) and Chief Nursing Officer Lisa Massarweh at the Board of Supervisors meeting.



The patient testimonial is available on our website: cchealth.org/medical_center/

Environmental Health Improves Food Facility Plan Review

Our Environmental Health Division (EH) has expanded services for people applying to open food facilities in Contra Costa County. There is now a food facility plan reviewer available for walk-in customers at the office front counter 9 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday. No appointment is necessary and the free service is first come, first served. The service includes pre-design consultation at the counter (no longer than 30 minutes), which can help streamline the application process. Arrangements for additional time and appointments may be made. More improvements and services are in the works, such as updated Frequently Asked Questions brochures and a system to allow applicants to review the status of their application online. The EH office is located at 2120 Diamond Blvd., #200 in Concord.



For more information on EH services, visit cchealth.org/groups/eh/ or contact EH Director Sherman Quinlan at squinlan@bsd.cccounty.us or 925-646-692-2500.



Newest 'Fast Facts' Published

The newest edition of "Fast Facts" is hot off the press. The miniature publication is a pocket-sized summary of all our divisions and programs, along with statistics about our work, a list of useful phone numbers and a message from CCHS Director William Walker, MD.



To request a copy or copies of 'Fast Facts,' call the Personnel Office at 925-957-5240.

CCHS Holds Countywide Pandemic Flu Tabletop

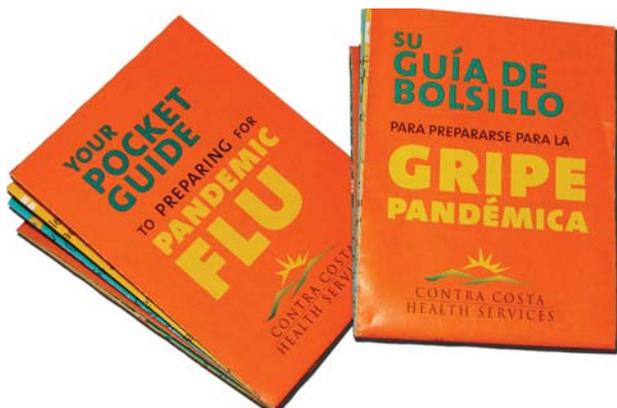
CCHS held a Pandemic Influenza Tabletop recently to discuss how our county would handle a surge in patients needing medical care and a large increase in deaths in the event of a pandemic. Sixty representatives from local hospitals, first responders, other county agencies, faith-based organizations, and other community groups participated in the event as part of ongoing pandemic flu planning efforts. Tabletop planning partners included: Contra Costa Sheriff's Office, San Ramon Regional Medical Center, California Department of Public Health, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, Contra Costa Employment and Human Services Department, County Office of Emergency Services, American Red Cross, Stonebrook Healthcare Center, and American Medical Response.



CCHS Infection Control and Prevention Program Manager Kathy Ferris and Lawrence Moglia with Sutter Delta Medical Center at the tabletop.



For more info on the tabletop and photos, visit [iSITE](#), or contact our Pandemic Flu Coordinator Kim Cox at kcox@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6648.



Pandemic Flu Pocket Guide Created

Our Community Education and Information Unit has created a pandemic flu pocket guide in both English and Spanish to help Contra Costa residents prepare for a pandemic influenza outbreak. "Your Pocket Guide to Preparing for Pandemic Flu" includes information on the differences between seasonal flu and pandemic flu, flu prevention, home care, personal disaster preparedness tips and how to get information in an emergency.



For more information, contact Kim Cox, 313-6648.

Bay Point Health Center Temporarily Closed for Renovations

The Bay Point Family Health Center (BPFHC) will be closed for about eight to 10 weeks for an extensive renovation of the Children's Dental Clinic. All clinical services and staff have been relocated temporarily to the Pittsburg Health Center and patients will be seen there. BPFHC closed July 28 and is tentatively scheduled to reopen in early October. During the remodel, the African American Health Conductors, based at the BPFHC, will temporarily move to the Ambrose Recreation Center in Bay Point.



For more information, contact Jose Saavedra, BPFHC Center Manager, at jsaavedr@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-427-8297.

GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Honor Roll

Linda Bates

*Acting Director of Inpatient Nursing
Operations
CCRMC*

For chairing an extremely efficient meeting with the Inpatient Nursing Unit, Contra Costa Health Plan and Walgreens Pharmacy Managers. The end result is a more workable procedure for handling prescriptions in a timely manner for patients being discharged.

—Nominated by Judi Louro

Suzanne Cade

*Substance Abuse Counselor
Alcohol and Other Drugs Services*

For recruiting potential clients to the Corbin program and offering support, referrals, insightful assessment, negotiating eligibility with caseworkers from all over the county and her invaluable contribution to the Corbin collaborative.

—Nominated by Dorie Klein

Debbie Cho

*Clerical Supervisor
Personnel*

For providing timely, efficient and outstanding service, from navigating me through maternity leave and all the challenges of comprehending how the leave works to a simple address change.

—Nominated by Karin Baker

Patricia Halter

*Pharmacy Department
CCRMC*

For dealing with the toughest, most demanding patients with the utmost of care, patience and compassion. She stays late often, works tirelessly and always is a joy to work with.

—Nominated by Drs. David Pepper and Rich McNabb

Ann Harvey, MD

Richmond Health Center

Anthony Jones, MD

Pittsburg Health Center

For using personal time to appear on CCTV television shows in order to provide information about HIV and AIDS prevention to English and Spanish-speaking residents of Contra Costa County.

—Nominated by Pamela Anderson-Moore

Anisha Johnson

Sylvia Taqi-Eddin

*Senior Health Education Specialists
Perinatal Services Coordination Team/
FMCH*

For exceeding the First 5 Milestones for the Promoting Smoke Free Families Program through hard work, great passion and perseverance.

—Nominated by Itika Greene

Milestones

Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Allen G. Ergo, Sunny J. Boyer, Tammy I. Feese, Elizabeth A. Salomon, Dorothy L. Abenoja, Diana K. Goldbeck, Holly L. Longmuir, Kelly D. Strong, Tina M. Voss, Nora S. Cruz, Carol Lucido, Wendy E. Gollop, Vicki S. Conway, Krista K. Peterson, Kenneth T. Nguyen, Hilary Small, Bobbie N. Brown, Edith C. Nwosu, Carolyn A. Cicotte, Lavonna James, Juleine A. Latteri, Wilfredo P. Manuntag, Sharon S. Sloan, Pamela M. Brock, Liza M. Lai, Maria Espanol, Jaspreet Benepal, Shirlene Jack, Terrina C. Manor, Pamela Davis, Michael J. Gomez, Martha D. St. Pierre (10 years); Vickie L. Watson Erika S. Hoffe, Janet A. Keathley, Helena Odonkor-Martey, Betty J. Kirkpatrick, Marina Shenouda, Patricia A. Glatt, Gigi M. Salvo, Cynthia Flynn, Anna M. Roth, Ada D. Castillo, Rosa E.G. Mendoza, Michele Tomasulo, Laurie Pereira-White, Darryl Smith, Wendy J. Malone (15 years); Ann M. Clough, Melody Chui Ling Hung-Fan, Denise R. Tucker, Johnny L. Shaw, Jeanne M. Conboy, John N. Christolos Jr., Marvis Douglas (20 years); Susan V. Hilbun, Mona Shepard (25 years); Yolanda Rubalcava, Michelle L. Shanks, Deborah Card, Paul Krintz, Steven Tremain (30 years); Mary A. Ferriera and Barbara A. Roark (35 years).

GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Honor Roll

David Martinez

*Environmental Services-Generalist
CCRMC*

For the good job performed and making a difference in the housekeeping of our floor.

—Nominated by Staff of Specialty Clinic 1 South

Norma Martinez

*Medical Social Worker II
CCRMC*

For going the extra mile for her patients every day, having passionate commitment to her patients, and for being compassionate, understanding, intelligent, resourceful, respectful, a team player and an excellent patient advocate.

—Nominated by CCRMC Post Partum Staff

Sue Meltzer

*Medical Social Worker II
Richmond Health Center*

For her skills, love, heart and spirit that she brings to people when they really need her, for arranging a mental health appointment immediately and calling to follow up to make sure I went. Since then I've been fine, happy and spiritually and mentally uplifted.

—Nominated by a patient

Tommy Nunnally

*Substance Abuse Counselor
Health Care for the Homeless*

For collaborating with Public Health workers to provide quality service to clients in homeless shelters and looking out for the safety and welfare of fellow workers in the field.

—Nominated by Lee Woo

Judith Palmieri, RN

*Specialty Clinics
CCRMC*

For her total dedication to the patients and staff at CCRMC, and coming in on her days off and staying late to be sure that everything is taken care of.

—Nominated by Wendy Gollop

Peggy Pflager

*Licensed Vocational Nurse
Martinez Family Practice Clinic*

For assisting a “shut in” patient get set up on her computer equipment so she could be in touch with the outside world, access care and maintain her dignity.

—Nominated by Veda Bhatt

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 925-957-5401. The form can also be downloaded from the Internet (About Us page) or iSITE, our intranet. Nominations are subject to approval by Division Directors.

Finance Staff View *Unnatural Causes*

Continuing their efforts to engage all CCHS staff in discussions about the Public Broadcasting System's *Unnatural Causes* documentary, RHD staff aired the "In Sickness and in Wealth," segment for our Finance Division staff recently. Employees who participated in the event said it brought home to them just why CCHS is so committed to reducing health disparities. "It was eye opening," said Cindy Field, Accountant III. "The video made me realize that middle-income people are also affected." She said she was dismayed to learn that the United States ranks 30th among countries for life expectancy. Her take away message was that policies made by elected officials have a major impact. "Most of us are busy working and raising our families. It brought home the need to get politically active and be aware," Cindy said.

Spreading the Word

Juleine Latteri works in Emergency Medical Services and viewed the *Unnatural Causes* video with Finance employees. She found the information so compelling she went back to her Division and sold her boss on the idea of having EMS staff watch the documentary. Seeing the show also changed her mind about something she thought was true. "I assumed that once a family or individual reached a certain socio-economic level, it was upward and onward from there. It was shocking to realize that isn't so. You don't get a fresh start." Juleine was also excited about how the information could be applied by her Division, which oversees ambulance response for the county. She hopes paramedics, Emergency Medical Technicians and other first responders will be interested in learning more about cultural issues. "People don't remember what is done medically for them. It's how they are treated that really stays in their mind. Hearing about these topics could really help."



Dawna Vann, Beth Balita, Karin Stryker, Juleine Latteri, Connie James (from left clockwise)

 To arrange a showing in your workplace of one or more of the seven-episode, four-hour series, contact Lauren Stoddard at 925-957-5422 or lstoddard@bsd.cccounty.us

Learning and Growing

While our team was developing the exciting new Service Excellence training – called P.R.I.D.E (Pursuing Respectful Interactions During All Encounters) – we learned something important. The team liked the acronym because it described the training and also how we hoped people would feel about CCHS and their jobs. It also fit the P.R.I.D.E. model: Passion, Responsiveness, Inclusion, Dignity and Empathy - important principles for Service Excellence and Reducing Health Disparities. During the pilot of P.R.I.D.E., we asked our RHD Educational Advisory Group for comments on the curriculum. We learned that Pride – and the rainbow flag that symbolizes it — are cherished symbols of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Intersex community. Pride refers to a worldwide movement and philosophy asserting that people have a right to be proud of their sexual orientation or gender identity and to be safe to live openly as they are. We wouldn't have known this if we hadn't asked for feedback and listened. We've added an explanation to the P.R.I.D.E. training manual that acknowledges this meaning of Pride. And we hope our CCHS family will also come to respect our Service Excellence P.R.I.D.E. as much as Pride is valued.—*Dr. William Walker*

Time for Public Health, Public Guardian to Say 'MAA'

September is time survey month for Medi-Cal Administrative Activities (MAA) and Targeted Case Management (TCM). Getting people into and using Medi-Cal is what MAA is all about. MAA includes activities that are performed every day to help clients access our system as a Medi-Cal provider. Both the Public Health Division and Public Guardian Program participate in this very important federal funding source, for which the time surveys are critical documentation. MAA and TCM combined bring in more than \$4 million per year. Public Health and Adult and Aging Services provide comprehensive case management services to target populations under TCM. Both MAA and TCM are funded through the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS).

 For information, contact Sue Guest, Public Health Nurse Program Manager and MAA-TCM Coordinator, at sguest@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6236.



Paul Kraitz (right) is pictured with Supervisor Federal Glover.

Thirty Years of Service

Two longtime CCHS employees, Dr. Steven Tremain, Senior Medical Director for CCHS and Director of System Redesign at our Regional Medical Center, and Paul Kraitz, our Senior Nutrition Program Director who co-founded Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa, were honored for 30 years of outstanding service at the July 22 Board of Supervisors meeting. Video from the board meeting is available on the county website (www.co.contra-costa.ca.us).



Dr. Steven Tremain (center) with CCHS Director William Walker, MD, (left) and Supervisor Federal Glover.

Calling All Artists for Annual Evening of Art

The Third Annual "Healthcare Workers as Creators" will be held from 4 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, September 25 on the lawn at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center. The program features art by county health care workers and will include arts and crafts booths as well as musical performances. It also will feature a BBQ and silent art auction to benefit recent residency graduate Kinari Webb's Health In Harmony program in Indonesia. The event is sponsored by ArtsChange, the nonprofit organization that grew out of the Richmond Health Center's Quilt of Many Colors Project. Performers will include Tommy Nunnally, a substance abuse specialist with our Healthcare for the Homeless Program who was recently named R & B Vocalist of the Year by the Bay Area Blues Society.

 CCHS employees who are visual artists, artisans or musicians and want to participate or those interested in volunteering to help with the event, can contact Dr. Alan Siegel via email: doctoralan@gmail.com or pager: 925-346-4993.



Dr. Wendel Brunner and Dr. Henry Clark

CCHS Honors Longtime Environmental Justice Activist

CCHS Public Health Director Wendel Brunner, MD, presented an award to Dr. Henry Clark for his decades of outstanding leadership and work in environmental justice in Contra Costa and nationally at the July 21 Board of Supervisors meeting. Dr. Clark has been the Executive Director of the West County Toxics Coalition for more than 20 years and also has been a member of the County Hazardous Materials Commission, the North Richmond MAC and Advisory Boards for AB32 and our Center for Health. Dr. Brunner also presented to the Supervisors our Environmental Justice Framework, which is a public health approach guide to working with communities to reduce disproportionate exposure to toxins in their environments. For more information on the Environmental Justice Framework, visit cchealth.org/topics/publications

The Director's Report is published monthly. Deadline for the October edition is September 12. Publicize your upcoming events and successes by sending information to Kate Fowlie at 597 Center Avenue, Suite 255, Martinez 94553, fax 925-313-6219, or email: kfowlie@hsd.cccounty.us The Director's Report is available online at cchealth.org and on iSITE, our intranet, at cchs.