

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

INSIDE

- 2 Director's Message (cont.)
- 3 H1N1 Flu Clinics Vaccinate Thousands
ISO Report Highlights Successful Year
- 4 Reducing Health Disparities
CCHS Vital Partner in HCIN
Cardiopulmonary Unit Provides Interpretation on Wall-Mounted Screens
- 5 Reducing Health Disparities (cont.)
Interpretation Services Go Mobile in ED
Instructional Video Educates Staff About Many Tools
- 6 Honor Roll Milestones
- 7 User Group Aids Collaboration on Hospital Computer System
EH Staff Receive Kudos
Annual Holiday Food Drive
- 8 EMS Plan A National Resource
Dr. Barger Takes State Honor
Major Overhaul Coming to iSITE
Health Plan Loses Colleague

Doing the Right Thing

In the last few weeks, I've been getting mail from all over the country—and from other countries—and it hasn't been holiday cheers people are sending. The messages—mostly emails—were sent by doctors, nurses, parents and others who heard about the press conference a group of our doctors and I held at the end of October to announce that we canceled our membership in the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). (You can see video of the press conference and read some of the messages on our website at www.cchealth.org). I want to share some of my thoughts about this extraordinary situation because I think there are many lessons to be learned—probably the major one being how simple it is sometimes to do the right thing.



William B. Walker, MD
CCHS Director

An unholy alliance with Coca-Cola

When I learned the AAFP recently had agreed to an alliance with Coca-Cola to promote healthy eating for children, I was flabbergasted. It seemed that the lessons we all learned during our tobacco prevention work in the last two decades were being ignored. As I said at the press conference and in many interviews with the media since then, having a reputable medical organization work with a company that thrives by selling unhealthy food to our children is like the fox guarding the hen house. The fact we are in the midst of a staggering obesity epidemic whose future costs can literally bring down our health care system makes this alliance all the more appalling.

To my amazement, when I wrote AAFP—and I learned later that I wasn't alone—and told them I was resigning to protest their deal with Coca-Cola, they fired back an email explaining that I would surely like the website they were putting up with their new partner. Referring to Coca-Cola as "a major consumer products company," they claimed they weren't endorsing any specific product but that the new information would help consumers make better beverage choices.

Calling attention to the obesity epidemic

Other physicians—especially Family Practice residents—in our system were equally incredulous and we decided that if we had a press conference, we would

DID YOU KNOW?

Soda serves up 17 teaspoons of sugar in every 20 oz. serving.

Continued next page

be able to focus some much-needed attention on the obesity epidemic and specifically the shocking role that sugared soda plays in negatively impacting the health of our children. What we didn't count on was the Bay Bridge to close and the media—except for the Contra Costa Times—to be tied up covering that and unable to get to CCRMC to cover our protest, although we did have Contra Costa Television filming.

Then an extraordinary thing happened. Between our website and Facebook postings, emails, Twitter and blogs, the story of the deal and our protest spread across the country. Pictures of us in our white coats giving a “thumbs down to Coca-Cola” were widely distributed. News outlets nationwide began to pick up the story. Messages poured in. Reporters called. Petitions sprung up in other states. Other physicians resigned from AAFP.

The California Academy of Family Physicians (CAFP) asked to meet with the physicians who resigned. Their representative attended our noon conference at CCRMC. Instead of persuading us to change our minds, the CAFP agreed to take a resolution asking for an end of the alliance to their chapter. When they met, they not only approved the resolution but took it one step further: They volunteered to grant \$100,000 to AAFP to partially offset Coca-Cola's funding if AAFP canceled the alliance.

Getting the point

This has all been very gratifying—as have been the messages. “I hope that action knocks some sense into the AAFP,” said the Executive Director of the Washington-based Center for Science in the Public Interest. An executive with the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood wrote, “There are far too many people who stay silent when their public health organizations are corrupted by corporations that go against everything their organization should stand for.” A physician in Texas said, “I am absolutely ashamed of this whole scenario. I'm glad Coca-Cola has decided to give them some money...because they will never see another cent from me. Resignation on the way. I spend a good part of every day trying to get people to be healthy and keep

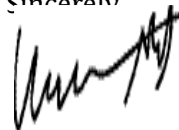
this poison out of their bodies.” And a diabetes educator who said she sees too many people drinking too many sugar-sweetened beverages said, “If the AAFP does not ‘get it,’ they are walking around either with their eyes closed or their wallets open.”

I am delighted that the protest we did here in Contra Costa seems to have sparked a nationwide awareness of the role sugared soda plays in the obesity epidemic. I appreciate all the good wishes. To me, it doesn't seem that it was an act of courage. It was the right thing to do. I'm a family physician. I see people in my practice every day who are already suffering from profound life-changing impacts related to obesity and others who will. And make no mistake about this: Although I am disgusted that my professional organization didn't have the good sense to see the potential leadership role they could play in turning this around, the real culprit is the industry that makes a profit, as does the tobacco industry, on making the consumption of dangerous substances look glamorous and healthy and appealing to our children.

We do it every day

Having a press conference to protest a wrong isn't something all of us will do but this is the time of year when many of us think about doing the right thing—whether it's supporting someone who is struggling emotionally to get through the holiday season, helping a poor family put food on the table or making a child's life a little brighter. Each day in our work in every part of our organization, hundreds of us are doing the right thing—listening to our patients/consumers/clients and the community; providing critical services and information; helping residents get what they need. I thank you for your commitment to doing the right thing with respect and responsiveness every day of the year.

Sincerely,



William B. Walker, MD.

The Director's Report is published monthly. Deadline for the January edition is December 18. 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 www.cchealth.org and on iSITE

Community Flu Clinics Vaccinate Thousands of At-Risk People in Contra Costa

This month culminates the mass-vaccination portion of our Public Health Division's broad H1N1 vaccination effort. Other H1N1 flu clinics will continue to be held throughout the county on a smaller scale. The fourth—and final—mass-vaccination clinic will be held Sunday, December 6 at the Pittsburg Health Center. Other clinics were held in Richmond, San Ramon and Concord, serving thousands of our county's most at-risk individuals. Public Health has also vaccinated more than 13,000 children at 54 schools throughout the county. Dr. Wendel Brunner, Director of Public Health, said the goal was to make sure priority groups were first to be immunized. More vaccine continues to arrive in Contra Costa and the priority groups have been expanded to include more individuals. The state Department of Public Health also is shipping vaccine directly to local hospitals, community clinics, pediatricians, ob/gyns and family practice doctors, and Kaiser. CCHS employees who have yet to receive the vaccine should check first with their health care provider or check the CCHS website for information about upcoming clinics.



Thousands of people received H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccine at our Richmond community flu clinic. Right, a child receives flu vaccine at the clinic.



To find out more about flu and vaccine priority groups, visit www.cchealth.org or call 1-888-959-9911. Additional photos on [iSITE](#).

Annual Report Highlights Year Free of Major Chemical Accidents and Releases

Our Hazardous Materials Division continues to have tremendous success protecting workers and residents from accidents at refineries and chemical plants. In the past year, there was not a single major accident or release at any refinery or chemical plant in Contra Costa—a first since the county's Industrial Safety Ordinance (ISO) was passed 11 years ago. In addition, it was the second straight year in which there was not a major accident or release at a facility covered by the ISO. HazMat Director Randy Sawyer and Accidental Release Prevention Programs Engineer Supervisor Cho Nai Cheung presented the 2009 ISO report to the county Board of Supervisors last month. Randy said by keeping with the ordinance and by strengthening its requirements, Contra Costa will continue to increase its chances of preventing accidents that affect public health and employee safety.



Cho Nai Cheung, left, and Randy Sawyer present the 2009 ISO Report to the Board of Supervisors in November.

To read the entire 2009 Industrial Safety Ordinance, visit www.cchealth.org/groups/hazmat/

RHD SPOTLIGHT

This month the RHD page showcases our Linguistic Access Unit, based in Public Health and available to all CCHS programs. Under the direction of Communicable Disease Programs Chief Francie Wise and management of Linguistic Services Director Sally McFalone, the unit responds to more than 2,000 interpretation calls per month. Providing linguistic access is a key operating principle and practice for reducing health disparities.

CCHS Vital Partner in Health Care Interpreter Network

The Health Care Interpreter Network (HCIN) is an innovative system that allows access to language interpreters at any point of care within minutes. CCHS has been a network partner since the program began and currently employs 12 interpreters who spend all or part of their day on the network assisting patients and health care providers within CCHS and 10 other hospital and health care systems throughout California. Languages spoken by our 14 CCHS interpreters (some of our interpreters are not on HCIN) include: Spanish, Mien, Lao, Thai, Khmu, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Dari, Farsi, Russian, Ukrainian, Bosnian and Croatian. Recently, some of our interpreters have started taking calls from Mt. Sinai Hospital in Chicago and George Washington University Hospital in Washington, D.C. The system works by routing CCHS' calls—either telephonic or video—first to our own interpreters then to other interpreters on the network. If no interpreter can be found, the call then “rolls over” to a contracted language service provider. In all, more than 170 languages are available through HCIN.



Back row, left to right, HCIN Interpreters Margarita Allen, Paloma Mahani, Lilian Recinos, Lizette Duran, Steven Lam. Front row, left to right, HCIN Interpreters Faiza Issaq, Galina Genina, Yvette Mesa, Mouang Saeturn, Faye Choy, Loan Hoang, Maggie Nguyen.

Cardiopulmonary Unit Provides Interpretation on Wall-mounted Screens

Video interpretation units have recently been wall-mounted in the Regional Medical Center's Cardiopulmonary unit to better serve patients being assessed for heart conditions or pulmonary function. The new wall-mounted units now allow our providers and staff to speak directly with their patients in their preferred language and to better understand how the patient is fairing with the test. Quality-of-care issues are directly related to the ability of medical providers to communicate with their patients effectively. Cardiopulmonary Manager Bob Harrison noted staff are thrilled to have this communication enhancement.



Respiratory Care Practitioner Mary Langlois, left, and Cardiopulmonary Manager Bob Harrison.



The DIRECTOR'S REPORT RHD PAGE showcases 2008–09 Division strategies and activities to address four CCHS Reducing Health Disparities goals. The goals are: Improving consumer/client/patient/customer experience; Engaging and Partnering with community and public entities; Improving staff respect, responsiveness and cultural sensitivity; and Creating systems that support and promote access and respectful delivery of services. The complete CCHS RHD plan is available at <http://www.cchealth.org>

Interpretation Services Go Mobile at Regional Medical Center's ED

CCRMC Emergency Department registration staff now utilize cordless telephones on neck-lanyards to make language access more portable to Emergency Department patients. Although Spanish is spoken by several of the ED registration staff, non-Spanish-speaking staff can now communicate with Spanish-speaking patients and all staff can provide the menu of 170 language options to patients. Acting Clerk Supervisor Lorena Garcia said the new technology makes it possible to get critical information like medical records numbers quickly and accurately. She said, "The phones are small and the interpreters answer in seconds." The mobile phones allow registration clerks to easily collect information from a patient's bed side. For increased confidentiality, patients can also wear a headset or use a portable phone to speak with the interpreter and the Emergency Department registration clerk. Lorena said all registration clerks are very excited about the change.



Back row, left to right, Registration Clerk April Roberts and Clerk Senior Level Phil Harrington. Front row, left to right, Registration Clerks Evelyn Leon and Carmen Cisneros.

New Instructional Video Educates Staff on Interpretation Tools

There are multiple linguistic-access tools available to serve our CCHS patients/consumers/customers/clients. Video interpretation units, which can be either wall-mounted or mounted on wheeled carts, are available throughout the Regional Medical Center and Health Centers. Additionally, telephonic interpretation is available via portable conference phones, cordless phones and cell phones, as well dual headsets phones. Thanks to the Linguistic Access Unit all of these options are now demonstrated in an training video filmed in part at CCRMC. The training video is available at www.hcin.org and short, how-to videos covering the use of video units are available at <http://ccrmc.wikispaces.com/Video+translation+phone+guides>

Language Access Resources Available to CCHS Staff:

To find out more about video, telephonic, translation or other language-access resources, contact Sally McFalone at smcfalone@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6242.





Honor Roll

GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Bob Antony Frank Pinter

Department of Information Technology
For dedication and hard work getting 55 grant-funded radios installed, coordinating with many non-county agencies and installing coaxial cables through attics, under buildings and other places.
◆ Nominated by Dan Guerra

Amy Buoncristiani, MD

Emergency Department
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center
For improving and standardizing pediatric patient care, providing education and equipment and consistently going above and beyond the call of duty in her commitment to providing quality care rapidly and safely to address children's acute care needs.
◆ Nominated by David Goldstein

Bill Bunting

Probation

Patrick Wilson

Information Systems Project Manager
Information Systems
For creating access to probation records and health and education information on children in Foster Care saving time and money.
◆ Nominated by Laurie Terranova

Milestones Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Lucy Bermudez, Sheilah A. Zarate, Paula J. Banks, Olga R. Arzaga, Blanca E. O'Connor, Emilita A. DeLaCruz (10 years); Paulette Saum, Craig Desoer (15 years); Pramila D. Gaunder, Julie Turner, James W. Kenshalo, Alexandra Cons, Evelyn Sunga, Beckie Gomez (20 years); Linda S. Moorhead, Victoria L. Seay, (25 years); Fara J. Villa and Charles M. Crane (30 years).

Rodney Chan, MD

Podiatry
Martinez Health Center
For being a very caring provider, listening, following up after appointments and always going above and beyond for his patients, ensuring their needs are met. He's one of the best doctors I have ever seen in the County system.
◆ Nominated by Laura Garcia

Pat Burke Chris Verdugo

Contra Costa Television

Vicky Balladares

Community and Media Relations Specialist

Andi Bivens

Graphic Designer

Oliver Symonds

Community and Media Relations Specialist
Community Education & Information

Christye McQueen

Emergency Planning Coordinator
Public Health
For their help in producing the Community Emergency Response Team Pandemic Flu module.
◆ Nominated by Kim Cox

Holly Longmuir

Charge Nurse, 4B
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center
For clinical expertise, commitment to CCRMC and for authoring a policy and nursing documentation aid titled "Ring of Knowledge."
◆ Nominated by Ria Brandenberg

Bob Proctor

Special Projects Coordinator
Office of the Director
For solving the after-hours access problem to the Department Operations Center in a creative, timely and effective way.
◆ Nominated by William Walker

Marylou Tafoya

Clerk—Senior Level
Appointment Unit
For always being friendly, patient and going beyond her role to assist with finding and scheduling appointments for children.
◆ Nominated by Martha Flores

Do you know someone who's going the extra mile?
Service Excellence nomination forms are available at www.cchealth.org and <http://cchs/> from any CCHS computer.

Users Group Aids Collaboration on Hospital Computer System

Contra Costa Health Services held its first Keane Northern California Regional User Group Conference recently with Northbay Healthcare System in Fairfield and San Joaquin County Healthcare Services. CCHS, Northbay and San Joaquin County all use Keane, a hospital billing and admitting computer system we employ at our Regional Medical Center and Health Centers. Our Patient Accounting Director Kathryn Leppert helped spearhead the effort to hold the conference, which serves as a way for the health systems to share ideas on how to best use and improve the system. The three health systems could collaborate to share costs for Keane upgrades. The conference was so successful that the user group will meet every six months. CCHS staff participants included: Kathryn, JR Ang, Mary Duckworth, Deb Ferrara and Jennice Hagen from Patient Accounting; Shannan Moulton, Lorena Garcia and Luwanda Hill from Registration; and Jerry Jett from Information Systems.

For more information, contact Kathryn Leppert at kleppert@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6513.

Environmental Health Staff Receive Kudos from Waste Management Board

Two of our Environmental Health Staff members were honored recently at the annual California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB)/Local Enforcement Agency Conference in Sacramento. Senior Environmental Health Specialist Lori Braunesreither, left, received this year's Ralph Hunter award from the CIWMB Enforcement Advisory Committee. This statewide award is given for outstanding accomplishments in the solid waste field. Lori was recognized for her hard work, dedication and the excellent solid-waste training she provided to regulatory agencies throughout the state. Environmental Health Technician Jose Avila, right, and Contra Costa County also received honors from the CIWMB for successfully working with Officer Felipe Monroe of the Sheriff's Department to issue citations to dozens of illegal waste tire haulers and illegal dumpers in North Richmond.



Public Health employees Cheri Webster and Chandra Gottschall sing during last year's food drive.

Annual Food Drive Fights Hunger in Contra Costa, Solano Counties

The Holiday Food Fight between Contra Costa and Solano counties is back in full swing. Donations can be made until December 24 and help feed thousands of hungry people in both counties. To make a donation, contact your Division's Food Fight Coordinator (see [iSITE](#) for contact list) or contact Jackie Peterson at jpeterson@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-957-5240.

EMS Toolkit Now a National Resource

Our Emergency Medical Services Division's Quality Improvement Plan and Toolkit is now listed on the National Association of State EMS Officials' website. The Continuous Quality Improvement Committee (CQI)—made up of fire departments, John Muir Health, American Medical Response and EMS—created the toolkit in 2007. Its goal is to ensure quality services are available for all Contra Costa residents. Assistant EMS Director Patricia Frost said the kit is instrumental in continually improving quality of care. EMS Prehospital Care Coordinator Pam Dodson and EMS Medical Director Dr. Joe Barger.

For more information or to see the Quality Improvement Plan and Toolkit, visit www.cccems.org

Dr. Barger Takes Statewide EMS Honor

Congratulations to Dr. Joe Barger for being selected as the 2008 California Emergency Medical Services Medical Director of the Year. Dr. R. Steven Tharratt, director of the California EMS Authority, said Dr. Barger was chosen for the state award because of his excellence, motivation and service to EMS efforts. Dr. Barger has worked as EMS Medical Director since 1996. He has also served as Chief of our Emergency Department and Assistant EMS Medical Director. He currently serves as backup Health Officer on Call.



Dr. Barger



IS Supervisor Mike Dickson, left, and IS Information Architect Marc Miyashiro discuss the future of iSITE, our intranet, with Division leaders on December 1.

Major Overhaul Coming to iSITE

You might have heard talk about changes that were coming to iSITE, our intranet. This month the wheels of change were set in motion when Division leaders met to launch what is expected to be a major makeover. Our Information Systems Division has contracted a consultant to produce a new user interface that will improve the user experience and increase the usefulness of iSITE. IS Director David Runt said the consultant will bring an unbiased perspective to analyzing needs of our department. IS also is soliciting feedback from current iSITE users regarding problems, desired features, and existing features that you can't do without.

To find out more about the upcoming changes to iSITE, contact the iTeam at iteam@hsd.cccounty.us

Health Plan Loses Colleague, Friend

Our Health Plan suffered a great loss last month with the passing of Troy Lam. Troy, who was the Manager of Marketing and Member Services, was a true asset whose policies and leadership resulted in record levels of service and increased morale, said CCHP Director Patricia Tanquary. Troy was the Health Plan's 2008 Manager of the Year, spoke seven languages and was known for his fabulous cooking of many ethnic varieties. He will be missed but not forgotten. Troy's family has set up a memorial website. Visit www.mem.com and search for "Trung Chi Lam" or visit Facebook: www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/In-memory-of-Trung-Chi-Lam/177623879887?ref=sgm



Troy Lam

For more information, contact Teresa O'Riva at toriva@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-957-7221.