

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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Get Immunized

As the County's Health Officer, I issued an order requiring people working in licensed health care settings in Contra Costa who have direct patient contact or work in patient care areas to get vaccinated before the start of the flu season, which goes from November 1 to March 31. Health care workers who decline vaccinations will have to wear a mask in patient care areas or while providing direct patient care until the flu season is over. The order applies to ambulatory and community clinics, hospitals, skilled nursing and other long term care facilities, dialysis centers and any other licensed health care facility.



William B. Walker, MD
CCHS Director

Protect our patients

I have been asked why I am instituting such a countywide order requiring health care workers to be immunized. I issued this order because it provides safety and protection for our patients. Health care workers may be spreading the flu to their patients and co-workers without even realizing it; people with the flu are contagious up to one day before symptoms appear. Influenza kills thousands of people nationwide every year. The most vulnerable—young children, pregnant women, the elderly and those with chronic conditions—are at greater risk for flu-related hospitalization and death. Mandatory vaccination or masking policies have been shown to increase vaccination rates among health care workers to 95 percent.

Regulatory agencies recommend immunization

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Hospital Association, the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the National Vaccine Advisory Council and many others are encouraging a mandatory flu vaccination policy. Nationally, hospitals must begin reporting vaccination rates for 2012-13 on July 1, 2013 to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. In California, acute care facilities have already been doing this. Rhode Island has made influenza immunizations mandatory for all workers, students, trainees and volunteers who may have direct contact with patients at a health care facility. California recently pursued such a bill that failed to get signed by Governor Jerry Brown.

DID YOU KNOW?

Employee flu vaccination rates at hospitals in Contra Costa ranged from 44 to 72 percent in 2010-11.

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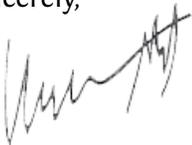
Other cities and counties have issued order

I have chaired the Association of Bay Area Health Officers and Health Directors for the past 17 years. As Health Officers, we coordinate our efforts for regional pandemics and have been discussing the issue of health care worker vaccination policy for the past several years. Other local Health Officers have issued the same order in their counties. San Francisco was the first to institute a county-wide vaccine or mask policy 3 years ago, and Sacramento followed in 2011. This year the counties of Contra Costa, Santa Clara, Alameda, and City of Berkeley and others around the State have issued the same policy. We have had surprisingly little push back and in fact the orders were welcomed by Kaiser, Sutter and others who operate in multiple counties.

Internally, our division directors have implemented policies for all facilities and staff providing direct health care to patients and clients including facilities under the leadership of Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers, Behavioral Health Services, Public Health and Contra Costa Health Plan. To learn more about your division specific policies, please consult your supervisor or division director. Information is also available on [iSITE](#).

I encourage you all to be vaccinated and comply with the countywide vaccination order for your own safety as well as the safety of our patients.

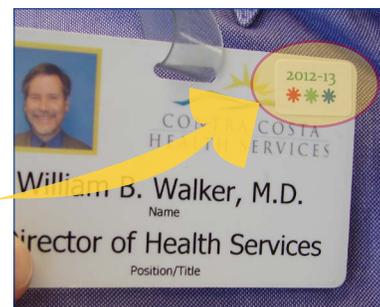
Sincerely,



William Walker, M.D.

A Flu Shot = A Sticker with Three Dots

You may have noticed something new adorning the ID badges of some of our employees: A sticker with three dots. The stickers



indicate that an employee has received his or her annual flu vaccine. To help protect employees and patients, health care workers throughout Contra Costa County were required to get their flu shots by November 1; those who opted not to get vaccinated must wear a mask during the upcoming flu season. In order to help facilitate compliance with the [new vaccination mandate](#), which was ordered by our Health Services Director and County Health Officer Dr. William Walker, free flu vaccines were given to staff who work in patient-care settings such as the Regional Medical Center and the Health Centers. Employees at most Health Centers who missed the deadline should contact their Clinic Services Manager to see if they can still get a free flu shot. Health care workers at the Regional Medical Center and the Martinez Health Center may schedule a flu vaccination after November 1 by contacting Candy Jacobus in Infection Control at candy.jacobus@hsd.cccounty.us

The next Director's Report will be the December issue. Publicize your upcoming events and successes by sending information by November 16 to Kate Fowlie at 597 Center Avenue, Suite 255, Martinez 94553, fax 925-313-6219, or email kate.fowlie@hsd.cccounty.us. The Director's Report is available online at <http://cchealth.org/topics/publications/> and on iSITE at <http://cchs/>



Health Officials Urge Caution After Man Dies from Rabies

Erika Jensen, Public Health’s Communicable Disease Program Chief, cautioned the public not to handle wildlife after a local man died from rabies after likely being bitten by a rabid bat. During an October 5 press conference, Erika (pictured above left) told reporters anyone who is bitten by a wild animal, especially a bat, should immediately seek medical attention. Erika and Dr. Nishant Shah (pictured above right) of Public Health and our Regional Medical Center said it’s critical for people who have been bitten to quickly receive treatment to prevent the disease. Once symptoms begin—often months after the original exposure—rabies is almost always fatal. The man in this case, who died while working abroad, didn’t report being bitten to Public Health or his health providers. After being notified that the man died from rabies in a hospital in Switzerland, our Public Health staff led by Communicable Disease Controller Susan Farley participated in an international investigation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Department of Public Health. They concluded he likely contracted rabies from a bat he handled in the southern part of Contra Costa County. This was the county’s first human death from rabies in nearly 20 years.

For more information about rabies, visit www.cchealth.org/rabies/ To view footage from the press conference, visit <http://vimeo.com/50856304>

Free Lung Tests Offered at Clinics During Great American Smokeout

As part of the annual Great American Smokeout, we will be offering free lung screenings to members of the public and staff later this month at our Regional Medical Center. The lung screenings or “spirometry” tests usually cost hundreds of dollars but will be done for free in the lobby of the hospital on November 14 and 15. (Locations will be added—see iSITE for updates.) The tests provide quick results and can detect the early onset of lung disease, according to Janyth Bolden, Cardiopulmonary Director at CCRMC. The Great American Smokeout, a national event



started by the American Cancer Society more than 30 years ago, encourages smokers to quit for at least 24 hours and make a plan to quit forever. Janyth said the first 24 hours are typically the hardest for longtime smokers. To help tobacco-users curb their cravings, Janyth and her team will distribute “Quit Kits,” which include stress balls, cinnamon sticks and coupons for smoking cessation aids. The Quit Kits will be available at the hospital and our health centers November 14–15. To culminate this event, a celebration reception will be held in the hospital lobby on Friday, November 16 for those who took the 24-hour challenge and made it, as well as others who have quit smoking.

To find out more about what Health Services is doing for the Great American Smokeout, contact Janyth Bolden, RRT, at janyth.bolden@hsd.cccounty.us



Cynthia Belon

Update on Behavioral Health Services Integration

About a year ago, three separate systems of care—Mental Health, Alcohol & Other Drugs Services and the Homeless Program—were combined under our new Behavioral Health Services Division. Behavioral Health Services Director Cynthia Belon said steady progress has been made during the first year of integration efforts. So far, a systemwide transformation roadmap and workplan have been created, and a Behavioral Health Services administrative structure for daily operations of the new division is beginning to take shape. There’s still plenty of work to do in the next year, but Cynthia is proud to say that her team has crafted Mission and Vision statements that will guide them into the future.

To see the Mission and Vision statements, visit www.cchealth.org/bhs/



Emergency Training

Emergency Management Team Workgroup Member Brian Henricksen, left, walks through emergency procedures with Behavioral Health Services staff at the EMT Quarterly meeting in October. The meeting focused on creating good situational awareness between Health Services branches, the Department Operations Center and Emergency Operations Center, as well as effective resource requesting. The EMT meets to strengthen our response to an emergency or disaster.

Art N’ The Lobby

Every Wednesday in the first floor lobby of the new West County Health Center a group of staff and patients get together for 45 minutes to talk about health issues through artworks, which have been created by both the participants and the facilitator. The weekly get-together, known as Art N’ the Lobby, started on July 11. Our Dr. Alan Siegel, co-organizer of the art-focused rap session, said the goal of Art N’ the Lobby is to learn about health issues using various art forms as the media and to encourage creative self-expression. Recently, a painting by Wright Institute student and co-organizer Napoleon Dargan was used as a vehicle to discuss seasonal affective disorder. During another session, personal historian Trena Cleland discussed her “[legacy letters](#)” grant project in which she gathered written testimonials of several HIV-positive women in Oakland.



Art N’ the Lobby takes places every Wednesday from 12:15 to 1 p.m. For more information, contact Dr. Alan Siegel at alan.siegel@hsd.cccounty.us.

New Program Designed to Reduce Hospital Readmissions

Our Contra Costa Health Plan is starting a new program to help patients discharged from hospitals throughout the county to get back into primary care more quickly. Hospital social workers and discharge planners often do not know who a patient's primary care provider (PCP) is, and sometimes patients do not know either. As a result, those patients didn't always receive the needed follow up care and sometimes had to return to the hospital again. CCHP's Hospitals Transition Coordination Program aims to improve the transitional care of hospitalized patients, which can prevent unnecessary ER visits and readmissions. The program will offer providers a "one-stop shop" where they can get assistance planning a county patient's post-hospital care. There will soon be an option on CCHP's 800 Member Line for hospital staff to talk to a nurse who can identify a patient's PCP, offer help with scheduling after-care appointments and link them with case management services if necessary. CCHP plans to have the program up and running by the beginning of 2013.

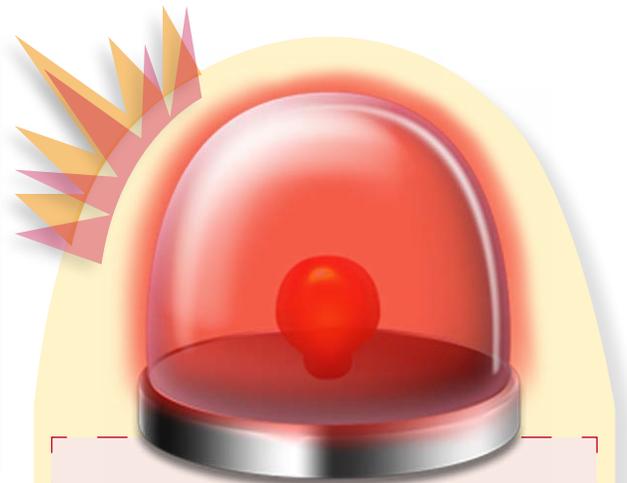
For more information about CCHP's Hospitals Transition Coordination Program, contact Laurie Crider, RN, at laurie.crider@hsd.cccounty.us



From left, Trisha Asuncion, Paul Andrews, Matt Kaufmann and Maria Duazo.

HazMat Takes Top Spot at Urban Shield

Members of our Hazardous Materials Division took home the top prize after completing a battery of training exercises at the Urban Shield competition last month. Urban Shield is a one-day full-scale exercise and competition to assess local HazMat teams in responding to terrorist attacks and disasters. It was the second year our HazMat Division—the only one based in a health department—participated. Last year, the team placed third out of 12 competing teams. Urban Shield provides an objective assessment of the agencies' capabilities to identify strengths and areas for improvement. While promoted as a competition, the real benefit to our HazMat Division is the opportunity to bolster preparedness and validate the benefits of such capabilities to the communities we serve. Assistant HazMat Director Steve Morioka said taking first place is a pretty prestigious honor and says something about the quality of our staff. Congratulations to Paul Andrews, Maria Duazo, Matt Kaufmann and Trisha Asuncion!



WHERE TO GET EMERGENCY INFORMATION

cchealth.org - Health emergency updates from Health Services

cococws.us - Sign up for phone alerts

cccounty.us - Updates from Contra Costa County

Social Media

[f](#) [Contra Costa Health Services](#)

[t](#) [@CoCoHealth](#)

Phone Numbers

1-888-959-9911 - Health Emergency Information Line

925-313-9622 - Community Warning System

211 - General information

Local Media

Tune in to your local media outlets, such as KCBS 740-AM and CCTV Channel 99, 27 or 32

Darius Jones Foundation's Annual 5K Run/Walk

About 260 people came out for last month's third annual Darius Jones Foundation 5K Run/Walk in Martinez. The Foundation is named after a local 15-year-old who suffered sudden cardiac arrest and died during a youth basketball game in 2009. Following Darius' tragic death, his mother, Beverly Bradley of our Public Health Division, started the Foundation to "make sure that a parent never feels as helpless as I did that day." The Foundation provides automated external defibrillators (AEDs) to local schools and has trained more than 10,000 community members on how to save lives using CPR. At this year's 5K event, our Emergency Medical Services Division gave CPR demonstrations, American Medical Response and the American Heart Association had health and awareness booths, and John Muir Health's Chest Pain Center provided educational materials on blood pressure and cholesterol. AED vendors Cardiac Science and AED Authority gave demonstrations on how the life-saving devices work. Race participants included county employees and also some of Darius' former classmates, who are now high school seniors.



Beverly Bradley

For more information about the Darius Jones Foundation, visit <http://www.dariusjonesfoundation.org/>

Annual Charity Drives Highlight the Gift of Giving

The holidays are approaching, which means it's time for the Contra Costa Cares Holiday Food Drive. Over the next few weeks, CCHS and other county employees will have the opportunity to donate money to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. Last year, CCHS raised nearly \$10,000 for the Food Bank or \$7.49 on a per-employee basis, the third most among large departments in the county. In all, county departments donated \$93,000 to the Food Bank. Meanwhile, the 2012 Contra Costa County Combined Charities Campaign is well underway. The campaign, which allows county employees to deduct money from their paychecks to go to selected charities, began October 1. While the official campaign ended November 1, employees will be able to submit their donation pledges to designated coordinators in their office buildings until November 12.

For more information about the Food Drive and Combined Charities Campaign, contact Jackie Peterson at jackie.peterson@hsd.cccounty.us

Panic Attacks are Scary, but Treatable

Early in the 2012 baseball season, Aubrey Huff of the World Champion San Francisco Giants went on the disabled list after suffering panic attacks. Huff, who publicly described his ordeal in the media, was able to return to the field after reportedly seeing a mental health professional and taking prescribed medication. Not everyone is as open as Huff was about his panic attacks, writes Dr. Charles Saldanha in a recent Healthy Outlook column. Many who suffer from what is known as "panic disorder" feel ashamed that they can't always control their feelings and thoughts, and sometimes they don't seek help for this treatable condition as a result, according to Dr. Saldanha, the chief psychiatrist at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center. But Saldanha said there's no shame in having a medical condition and, fortunately, there are many types of help available to people with panic disorder including psychotherapy and medication.



Dr. Saldanha

To read more of this and other Healthy Outlook columns, visit www.cchealth.org/column/



The ccLink Team at West County Health Center

Kellen Affleck, Tanisha Marks, Miekko Windt and Delano (JD) Doelitzsch are on the ccLink team at our new West County Health Center, which officially started serving patients October 9. The transition to the new facility in San Pablo has gone smoothly thanks to the hard work of all staff. See CCRMC & HCs CEO [Anna Roth's blog](#) for more pictures and details.

November Milestones

Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Jessica D. Davison, Elizabeth R. Diaz, Laurinda S. Abena, Erin M. Crowley, Perry O. O'Brien, Charles J. Morales, (10 years); Walter R. Gorski, Kimberlee S. Cox, Lolita B. Lim, Margaret Pytlak, Laura E. Reynolds, Christopher E. Dodd, Anissa Y. Carter, Mary T. Vesey, Denise L. Whittle, Roya Iranpour, Ma Linda H. Siat (15 years); Gail J. Clark (20 years); Marie C. Servantes-Huie, Irmina A. Gonzales, Mary Puruganan, Cynthia L. Cook-Yoell (25 years); Lily Lestage (35 years); and Jerry L. Kothe (40 years).



Perseveranda Macaraeg, RN
Sara Abella, RN
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers

For their dedication and exemplary service while caring for their patients.

◆ Nominated by Jamie Pehling

Arlene Lin
Public Health Nurse Program Manager

Michelle Sharman, RN
Public Health

For demonstrating service excellence, patience and time commitment to help us navigate through the ccLink implementation.

◆ Nominated by Nieves Stupka

Roberta Solomon, LVN
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers

For being supportive and encouraging for the West County Health Center staff during and after the transition to ccLink.

◆ Nominated by Sheila Stelly

Elizabeth Cardoso
Accounting Technician
Finance

For her continued dedication and hard work, especially during the new software implementation in Environmental Health, for spending many hours testing the software and making the transition very smooth.

◆ Nominated by Parna Kamyabfar

Walter Govaer, LVN
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers

For his willingness to always help patients and co-workers even during busy times and for his positive attitude.

◆ Nominated by Shaheena Mufti

Jose Ochoa
Health Plan Outreach Representative
Contra Costa Health Plan

For his superior customer service and performance during a customer interaction, for his knowledge, patience and enthusiasm, and for exceeding the customer's expectations.

◆ Nominated by a customer

Do you know someone going the extra mile?

To recognize a CCHS employee, vendor or volunteer for outstanding Service Excellence performance, submit the commendation form by email to wanda.session@hsd.cccounty.us or fax to 925-957-5401. Forms are on our website (www.cchealth.org on About Us page) or iSITE, our intranet, at <http://cchs/> Nominations are subject to approval by Division Directors.