

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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What Health Reform Means to Us

It was a historic day when Congress passed and President Obama signed HR 3490, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, followed by a second measure to make various changes. I want to share with you what I think health reform means to an integrated health system like ours and what we can expect between now and 2014 when coverage for nearly all Americans will become a reality. You'll hear much more about this many more times in the months and even years to come.



William B. Walker, MD
CCHS Director

I'm asked almost daily for details and comments on the impact of this dramatic change and that doesn't surprise me. Health reform has been eagerly anticipated by Americans for decades as a way to ensure adequate access to quality health care that isn't dependent on employment status. Now, with continued high unemployment, there is an even greater need for those losing their jobs and health coverage to know when relief will come and what it will look like.

Immediate relief

Let me start by saying there is a lot we don't know. Even though I probably have as much information as any health leader in this country through my involvement with the National and California Associations of Public Hospitals and Health Systems, the task of unpacking the details is considerable. One of the best efforts so far has been done by People Improving Communities through Organizing National Network. We've posted the PICO information on ISITE.

I know that there is certainly a light at the end of tunnel—a beacon in fact and some of the provisions of the new law will be effective immediately and will help some of the most vulnerable people. Seniors who have reached their ceilings (known as the doughnut hole) for prescription drugs under Medicare Part D will receive \$250 to help them continue to get medication. That coupled with a new discount medication card now available in our county (see story on Page 3) will provide some assistance. Children with preexisting conditions who have been denied coverage will now be able to get insurance. Medically uninsurable people will have access to coverage through high-risk pools. Parents will be able to keep their dependent children on their health insurance until the dependent reaches age 26 even if they don't live at home or attend college. There will be no annual or lifetime caps with some limitations beginning this year and fully implemented by 2014.

Continued next page

Prevention gets a boost

Some have called the preventive components of health reform a “game changer.” For starters, insurance companies will not be able to charge co-pays for effective preventive services. Reimbursement to physicians who provide preventive services will be increased. More globally, approximately \$15 billion will be available to expand and sustain national investment in prevention and public health programs over the next 10 years. Immediately, community grants will be used to reduce chronic disease and injury rates and promote equity. We are hoping some of that money might be used to fund our obesity prevention grant, which was approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention but not funded.

Down the road

Obviously covering more people will strain the already over-extended capacity of our system and that of our partner community clinics. Beginning next year, \$11 billion in new funding will flow to Health Centers and community clinics over five years; \$9.5 billion to expand operational capacity to serve nearly 20 million new patients across the country and to enhance medical, oral and behavioral health services; and \$1.5 billion for expanding and improving existing facilities and constructing new sites. This level of funding for community health clinics—we hope that includes our federally qualified health centers—represents an extraordinary level of commitment by the White House and Congress to our model of care.

Impact on our patients

Further down the road is the essence of the reform: Medi-Cal will cover most of the currently uninsured in Contra Costa. That means many of the patients we now cover with County general fund money through our Basic Health Care program will be covered by Medi-Cal, along with others who have no coverage at all now. Our Health Plan will be allowed to offer health insurance coverage to many more residents as well as sustaining the Healthy Families Program. Access to quality care is a critical element in reducing health disparities—a topic I’ll address next month in more detail.

Most of these new Medi-Cal patients will probably use our services because we are one of the few provid-

ers that accept Medi-Cal rates—and those rates are not likely to increase. For others, insurance exchanges will allow Americans to compare private insurance policies in terms of price and defined benefits, choose one they want and receive subsidies to help pay the premiums if they need them.

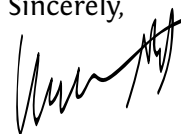
Surviving to serve

The catch in all this is that we have to keep our system healthy and intact so we can be ready to deliver in 2014. More than 15% of Contra Costa residents have no health insurance and that could continue for almost four more years. Our residents are continuing to lose their jobs and with that, their health coverage, their unemployment insurance and COBRA coverage are ending. Most of those people will have no options but to seek services in our system, from the community clinics and local emergency departments until 2014. All that will continue to strain our capacity to deliver primary, emergency and inpatient care. Systems like ours here in Contra Costa are mentioned in the new legislation as coordinated care networks but as yet, there is no funding to enhance our capacity to collaborate and improve delivery and to prepare for 2014.

California’s agreement with the federal government for a package of Medi-Cal funded programs is still being negotiated. This “waiver” establishes reimbursement rates and the scope of services covered. Successful conclusion of this waiver negotiation is critical to our ability to make it to 2014 intact and ready to respond to the expansion.

We have all struggled for years to continue providing services to residents. We’ve never known from year-to-year what the next year will hold. Now we have a date certain—2014—for significant relief for our local obligation. Working in partnership with community clinics, hospitals and many other organizations, with the efforts of our dedicated staff, and the long-term support of the Board of Supervisors, we have been successful in continuing to deliver quality care and services despite reduction in resources and significant increases in demand. We must continue to work together to meet the needs of the residents and prepare for 2014.

Sincerely,



William B. Walker, MD

Health Plan Unveils Free Discount Card to Lower Cost of Prescription Medicine

A new discount card was rolled out last month to help uninsured and underinsured Contra Costa residents afford their prescription medications. The Coast2Coast Rx card is free and covers roughly 60,000 medications with an average savings of 40% at most pharmacies throughout the county and the country. The card also helps those seniors in the Medicare Part D doughnut hole, when a set dollar amount has been spent on medication and the individual must then pay full price for the remainder of the year. Contra Costa Health Plan CEO Patricia Tanquary gave a presentation on the new cards in April to the Board of Supervisors, which approved distribution of the cards. In the first week, there were more than 424 filled prescriptions in Contra Costa County at 57 pharmacies across the county which saved residents nearly \$10,000. As part of the program, Health Services will receive a small royalty on each prescription bought with the card, which could be about \$20,000 to \$40,000 annually and will go toward offsetting the cost of providing medical care to the uninsured. Patricia thanked Judi Louro with CCHP for all her hard work in helping to implement the program.



Health Plan CEO Patricia Tanquary speaks to the Board of Supervisors about the discount medication card.

The cards can be downloaded online and printed in English and Spanish at www.coast2coastrx.com/contracostaca, or picked up at many locations or by calling 1-800-931-8872 for distribution.



Producer Victoria Balladares, left, of our Community Education & Information unit, instructs guests (from left to right) Host Doug Spangler, Dr. Pepper and Pamela Anderson-Moore on the set of Get Ready, Get Healthy. A new show about childhood immunizations airs this month, which is Toddler Immunization Month.

CCHS Staff Fill the Airwaves with Childhood Vaccine Information

Our two award-winning community education television shows, Get Ready, Get Healthy and Vida Sana en Vivo, will debut “Childhood Immunizations” this month, which is Toddler Immunization Month. The 30-minute talk shows aim to inform parents about vaccine safety and the importance of immunization. Featured on the shows are Regional Medical Center Physician Dr. David Pepper, Public Health Senior Health Education Specialist Pamela Anderson-Moore and Community Health Worker Ana Jimenez. The shows include a public service announcement featuring patient and staff sharing their reasons for choosing to immunize. Get Ready, Get Healthy airs on Contra Costa Television (CCTV) 7:30 p.m. Mondays and 10:30 a.m. Thursdays. The Spanish language Vida Sana en Vivo airs 3:30 p.m. Thursdays and 5 p.m. Fridays. CCTV broadcasts on channel 27 for Comcast viewers and channel 32 for Astound.

For more information about the shows and costs, call Vicky Balladares at victoria.balladares@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6817.



In 2010, the Reducing Health Disparities Unit, in collaboration with CCHS Division staff, are working to integrate the core principles and practices associated with the RHD Five-Year Plan and its goals, which include: 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 into the mainstream of existing Division priorities and activities. To view the Five Year Plan, visit www.cchealth.org/groups/rhdi/

Spotlight

This month, the RHD Pages focus on the Reducing Health Disparities Integration Dialogues. Recently, more than 20 Reducing Health Disparity (RHD) Champions participated in a series of four dialogues to address the question: How can we further embed the Reducing Health Disparity lens into the core efforts of our CCHS Divisions? These stories describe highlights from the discussions.

Dr. Walker Describes the RHD Lens



After nearly a decade of excellent CCHS efforts to address health disparities, Health Services Director Dr. William Walker is stressing the need to institutionalize the Department's commitment. He describes institutionalization in terms of a "lens" that will be used by all CCHS employees in performing their regular job functions. That approach will embed and integrate the key reducing health disparity practices into the core efforts of Divisions. "Reducing health disparities is not a special project; it's a way of doing business," Dr. Walker said. RHD Manager Connie James said, "Every time we plan new programs, review policies and procedures, make funding decisions and hire new staff we will be mindful of key practices to assist us in reducing health disparities throughout CCHS." (To view a list of some of the key practices of Reducing Health Disparities 5-Year Plan, see the Health Disparities landing page on ISITE).



Celebrating the Progress We've Achieved

Capturing and highlighting some RHD project successes since 2005 served as the starting point about how to infuse the RHD lens into all Divisions' work. A timeline was made to illustrate the progress and evolution of the work. Some of the successes include Public Health's Life Course Initiative, the Health Plan's all-staff Communication and Respectful Interaction Training, and the Financial Counseling (Finance Division) partnership with Employment and Human Services Department to streamline the processing of Medi-Cal applications. The other successes that were shared can be found on the Health Disparities landing page on ISITE. "The RHD Unit is proud of the success by Divisions in reducing health disparities," RHD Manager Concepcion James said. "There are still areas to improve and we are encouraging programs to identify and utilize factors that led to their success."

RHD Champions who participated in the Dialogues were Dianna Collier of Mental Health; Joanne Genet, Jaime Jenett, Roxanne Carrillo and Sally McFalone of Public Health; Sam Khan and Wanda Session of Finance; Otilia Tiutin of Contra Costa Health Plan; Mitch Applegate, Marianne Bunce, Chinyere Madawaki and Sue Meltzer of Hospital and Health Centers; Greg Lawler of Hazardous Materials; Vanessa Cordier, Kameisha Nichols and William Alejandro of Environmental Health; Juleine Latteri of Emergency Medical Services; Karen Jovin of Personnel; Bob Kajdan and Fatima Matal-Sol of Alcohol and Other Drugs; and the staff of Reducing Health Disparities Unit (Dawna Vann, Tiombe Mashama, Concepcion James and Rossio Aliaga-Caro) and Julie Freestone, Assistant to the Health Services Director.

Introducing a Model for Applying the Lens

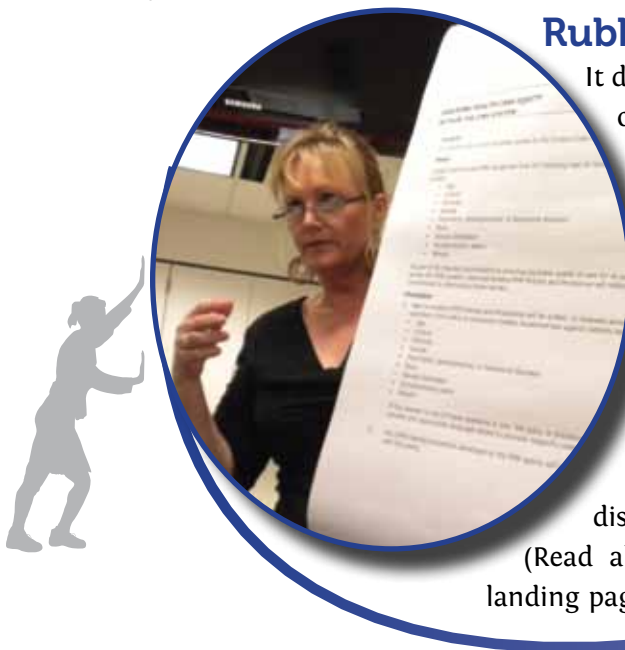
Division RHD Champions explored integration and institutionalization and considered an approach developed by Public Health's Community Health, Assessment, Planning and Evaluation Program Director Chuck McKetney and Assistant to the Health Services Director Julie Freestone to be used by the Public Health Division to explore the institutionalization of tobacco prevention programs. "The Model of Institutionalization provides us a visual framework for what elements we need to move from innovation to formal institutionalization in an organization," said Chuck. The RHD Unit has adopted this model as one that will assist CCHS in moving reducing health disparities from innovation stage to institutionalization and integration. Public Health Manager Sally McFalone brought the model to life by explaining how CCHS' linguistic access efforts moved through the stages, gaining champions, forming policies and developing resources. The innovation began several years ago when CCHS Latino employees identified the need to provide linguistically appropriate services. Resources were developed and Contra Costa partnered with health systems in other counties to form the Health Care Interpreter Network. Now there are formal policies describing CCHS' linguistic access system, written job descriptions and funding to support this function.



Rubber Meets the Road: Each Division's Plan

It didn't take long for RHD Champions to bring the theoretical model of institutionalization to life. In RHD Dialogue #3, Champions reported on ways to deepen RHD principles and practices into their Divisions. Emergency Medical Services' Juleine Latteri explained that her team was so enthusiastic about the approach that they developed a written policy guideline, which highlights EMS' commitment to ensuring equitable quality of care for all patients. This guideline will require EMS to annually review new and old EMS policies and procedures to determine if there is situational bias against patients because of age, culture, ethnicity, gender, psychiatric, developmental or behavioral disorders, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or weight.

(Read about other Division efforts on CCHS ISITE, Health Disparities landing page).



Celebrating and Reporting: Dr. Walker Hears from Champions

At the fourth and—for now—final dialogue, Health Services Director Dr. Walker acknowledged the efforts and sacrifices made by all the Champions and our Division staff to support CCHS in becoming a culturally and linguistically appropriate organization. He listened to the Champions describe their successes and plans for realizing his directive to apply an RHD lens to all CCHS work. He presented the RHD Champions with a Service Excellence award. The RHD unit staff also presented the RHD Champions with a Reducing Health Disparities award. Dr. Walker was presented a Reducing Health Disparities award from the Champions for his continued leadership and support of reducing health disparities. Dr. Walker noted his support for the RHD Champions to meet quarterly to check in and address barriers and find solutions as Divisions move toward deepening RHD principles and practice. He also said meetings to inform Division Directors of what occurred at the RHD integration dialogues would be scheduled. He encouraged Division Champions to continue their efforts and know that they were making meaningful contributions to the well being of all the people we serve.

To find out more about the Reducing Health Disparity Integration Dialogues and next steps contact RHD Manager Concepcion James at connie.james@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-957-5421.





Barbara Danoff
Sue Fuhriman
Betsy Hansen
Margie King
 Lactation Consultants
 CCRMC Nursery

For leadership in promoting breast-feeding through mentoring students, medical staff training, and serving on their own time on hospital and public health committees to improve breastfeeding support in Contra Costa Health Services

◆Nominated by Nancy Hill

Mark Bates
 IT Manager
Louise Britton
 Administrative Assistant
Brenda Lundy
 IT Manager
Susan Richter
 Network Technician I
 Department of Child Support
 Services

For their assistance with audio/visual equipment in the Mount Diablo Room. Their patience and expertise is greatly appreciated!

◆Nominated by Julie Freestone and Kate Fowlie

Karen Jovin
 Personnel Analyst III
 Personnel
Dawna Vann
 Education & Learning Coordinator
 Office of the Director

For providing outstanding and thought-provoking Service Excellence training to CCHS staff. They are helping to transform and improve how we communicate and interact with clients/customers/community/each other.

◆Nominated by Kate Fowlie

Cynthia Carmichael, MD
 North Richmond Center for Health

For creating a relaxing atmosphere with her jovial disposition, helping patients endure health-screening procedures without anxiety.

◆Nominated by Linda Jursa

Leilani Dashner
 Clerk – Specialist Level
Michele Bell
 Clerk – Experienced Level
 Mental Health

For their efficiency and patience when handling multiple concerns and needs of the Older Adult Mental Health Team and the clients we serve. Their collaborative efforts allow the other team members to provide the ultimate care to our clients

◆Nominated by the Older Adult Mental Health Team

Jisel Iglesias
 Clerk– Experienced Level
 Family, Maternal and Child Health
 Program

For streamlining and humanizing the time study process resulting in getting much needed revenues to continue our program services.

◆Nominated by Rusty Keilch



Lorena Martinez-Ochoa
MCAH Program Manager
Family, Maternal and Child Health
Program

For dedication to the oral health of children in Contra Costa County, for implementing systems that make the program more efficient, for securing funding and for taking time with each of her staff to enhance working and personal relationships

◆Nominated by the Children’s Oral Health Program Team

Nicole Sevier
Advice Nurse
Contra Costa Health Plan

For exemplifying service excellence at its best by helping me find and obtain outside urgent medical care attention when I most needed it, and displaying care and empathy by checking up on me the following day. Hers is the voice you want to hear at the other end of the line.

◆Nominated by a patient

Victoria Balladares
Community and Media Relations
Specialist
Community Education &
Information Unit

For creating a compelling video depicting CCRMC’s LEAN management efforts under a tight deadline. Her grace under pressure resulted in an effective tool for showcasing this important work to improve services.

◆Nominated by Anna Roth

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.

Milestones Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Roxanne M. Carrillo, Wendy Cervantes, Kathy E. Johnson, Shahrzad Klingner, Rita V. Perez, Jose C. Saavedra, Lizette A. Trice, Shawna M. Lee, Elena Andreev, Sergio Martin (10 years); Ernesto R. Abejuela, Erik F. Blanek, Howard Shaw, Manuel L. Llamas, Marlene Keys, Jennifer L. Fromme, Latonya Davis (15 years); Leslie L. Lonergan, Donna M. Garro, Rosario Dela Cruz, Joe R. Navarro (20 years); Carol A. Linton (25 years); and Deborah J. Wolfe (35 years).



Scouting for Donations

Boy Scout Justin King, 17, (center) with San Ramon troop 548, collected 380 hygiene kits for the homeless as part of his Eagle Scout project. Justin is pictured here with fellow Boy Scout Braden Dunford (left) and Jonathan Perales (right) with our Health Care for the Homeless Program. Justin distributed fliers at school, church and his neighborhood soliciting soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, and other items for the Homeless Program and the soon-to-open Respite Care Facility for the homeless in Concord. To donate to the Respite Care Facility, bring hygiene items to Dave Shoemaker at 597 Center Ave. Suite 200, Martinez between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. or contact him at dave.shoemaker@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6712

Social Media at Contra Costa Health Services



CCHS Gaining Popularity on Facebook, Twitter

You might use social media websites like Facebook and Twitter to connect with family and friends, but did you know the public could also use those same sites to connect with Health Services? That's right, just over one year ago we created Facebook and Twitter accounts and since then we've attracted more than 850 followers on Twitter and more than 360 fans on Facebook. Every week our Facebook page receives nearly 600 visits—that's more than 2,000 a month! Don't miss out on any of the good work our department is doing, join us on these social media sites. It's now even easier to find us on Facebook, just type www.facebook.com/ContraCostaHealthServices into your web browser's address bar. To follow us on Twitter, visit www.twitter.com/CoCoHealth In addition to our social media outlets, our website, www.cchealth.org, is logging an average 100,000 visitors a month.



To find out more about how we use social media, contact Communications Officer Kate Fowlie at kate.fowlie@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6268.

Fact Sheets Provide Information on Health of Contra Costa's Adolescent Population

To provide a snapshot of adolescent health in our county, Public Health's TeenAge Program is rolling out a series of fact sheets titled "Youth Stats." The series began in April with two fact sheets, one about sexual activity and teen births and another on youth demographics in Contra Costa. Senior Health Education Specialist Kristina Kutter, who is leading the project, said the fact sheets are designed for policy makers, adolescent health providers, community leaders, school districts and others and can be used to help guide future directions for youth services. Kristina said several more fact sheets on various topics would be produced and released this spring and summer. According to the first fact sheet, on sexual activity, the teen birth rate in Contra Costa decreased 28% between 2000 and 2008. From 2006 to 2008, there were 2,622 teen births in Contra Costa. The most occurred in Richmond, where there were 550 during that time.

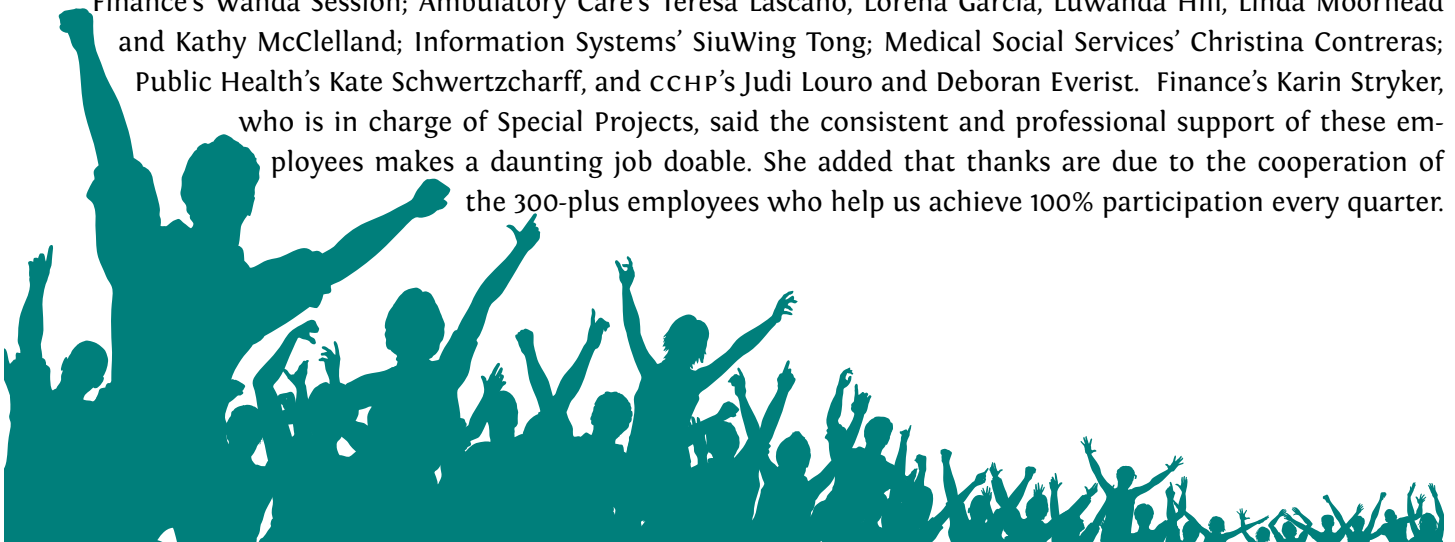


Kristina Kutter

The fact sheets are available at www.cchealth.org/services/teenage_program. To find out more about the fact sheets, contact Kristina Kutter at kristina.kutter@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6355.

Employees' Hard Work Earns Health Services 100% Participation on Time Studies

We have more than 300 employees involved in our Health Care Coverage Initiative and reporting their time spent working on the initiative is no easy task. However, tracking those 300-plus employees' hours can bring hundreds of thousands of dollars to Health Services each quarter. This feat is made possible because of the efforts of Finance's Wanda Session; Ambulatory Care's Teresa Lascano, Lorena Garcia, Luwanda Hill, Linda Moorhead and Kathy McClelland; Information Systems' SiuWing Tong; Medical Social Services' Christina Contreras; Public Health's Kate Schwertzcharff, and CCHP's Judi Louro and Deboran Everist. Finance's Karin Stryker, who is in charge of Special Projects, said the consistent and professional support of these employees makes a daunting job doable. She added that thanks are due to the cooperation of the 300-plus employees who help us achieve 100% participation every quarter.



The Director's Report is published monthly. Deadline for the June edition is May 17. 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 site.



Dr. Johanna Ferman

Ambulatory Care, Mental Health Partnering to Improve Care for Patients with Serious Mental Illness

Our Mental Health and Ambulatory Care Divisions have formed a partnership to reduce a major health disparity for those with serious mental illnesses, who have a 25-year reduction in life expectancy. The idea behind this partnership is to create a medical home for these consumers, a concept embraced by Dr. Chris Farnitano, chair of our Family Medicine Program. Embedding primary care into our Concord Adult Mental Health Clinic will create a



Dr. Chris Farnitano

medical home for our most vulnerable adult consumers, said Dr. Johanna Ferman, Director of Behavior Health for Ambulatory Care. The goal is to create a supportive and trusting environment in which primary care and behavioral health needs are integrated through improved communication between consumers and staff. Ambulatory Care CEO Dianne Dunn-Bowie expects the program to launch in the first quarter of 2011. Dianne said this model could be used to transform services at other Health Centers. Mental Health Director Donna Wigand said this is a very exciting project that has not been seen before in this county or many other parts of the state and nation.

To find out more about this project, contact Dr. Ferman at johanna.ferman@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-957-5555.



Robin Bedell-Waite, center, celebrates with employees from newly certified Green Businesses outside the Board of Supervisors Chambers.

Green Business Program Certifies 60 More Businesses in Past Year

Contra Costa businesses that make wine, raise worms, educate adults and do a host of other things were recognized last month for the one thing they now hold in common: the label of certified Green Business. The Green Business Program, located in our Hazardous Materials Division, added 60 businesses in the past year. Our Pollution Prevention Manager Robin Bedell-Waite said these businesses are the environmental leaders in our communities. Each business had to take measures to prevent pollution, reduce waste, and save water and energy. Robin said there are almost 400 certified Green Businesses in Contra Costa. The result of their combined efforts, she said, is healthier communities for residents to enjoy. A complete list of Green Businesses in Contra Costa and the Bay Area is available at www.greenbiz.ca.gov

To find out more about the Green Business Program, contact Robin Bedell-Waite at robin.bedell-waite@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-335-3213.