Art Lathrop: Emergency Services Director Retiring... Leaving a Legacy of Collaboration and Leadership

As you may have heard there are some major transitions at Contra Costa EMS. One of the most important is the retirement of our EMS Director, Art Lathrop, at the end of this month. Art has been EMS Director for over 25 years, and is passing on to all of us a legacy of collaboration and leadership that has helped make Contra Costa EMS a leader in California. Art has been the steady hand that has guided our county EMS System. The Contra Costa Board of Supervisors will recognize Art at their March 22nd meeting for the following lifetime contributions:

⇒ Implementation of the County Trauma System
⇒ Establishment of county-wide benefit assessment to fund the expansion of paramedic services and EMS system enhancements
⇒ Re-design of county-wide EMS system including fire paramedic response, ambulance transportation and trauma systems
⇒ Presided over the development of programs like HeartSafe Communities, Public Access Defibrillation, STEMI, Stroke, EMS for Children
⇒ Instrumental is creating the county disaster medical response system
⇒ Promoted the development of the Federal DMAT-6 Team in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1997 and the Medical Reserve Corps in 2009
⇒ Co-served as the Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator (MHOAC) with Dr. William Walker since the early 1990’s

Barbara Center RN, Regional Disaster Medical/Health Specialist for Northern California Coastal Region, also retired from EMS after 26 years of exemplary service. Most of you may know Barb as the Coordinator of the Contra Costa Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), but she has filled many roles at EMS including Trauma Coordinator and EMSC Program Coordinator. Barb is continuing to work with the EMS and the MRC to provide for a smooth transition.

Contra Costa STEMI System Performance...2010
The Contra Costa STEMI System has come a long way since our launch in September of 2008. All nine community hospitals are fully collaborating on speeding STEMI patients to intervention as quickly as possible. Contra Costa is fortunate to have 6 outstanding STEMI Centers serving our community and our 3 non-STEMI hospitals routinely transferring their walk-in patients to these intervention centers!

During 2010 there were 194 STEMI activations in Contra Costa. Of those patients, 130 were verified STEMs and 122 went directly to cardiac intervention. Over the last year, the Contra Costa STEMI System has continued to demonstrate performance above national benchmarks and in 2011 we are working to be even better. Presently there is a collaborative project in the works to bring 12-lead transmission from the field to our STEMI receiving centers to make our system more efficient.

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The Crisis in Japan... another reminder that EMS Best Practice Is Being Personally Prepared
⇒ Preparedness begins with personnel preparedness!
⇒ Put together emergency kits for your home & car
⇒ Apart from water, food & first aid supplies, don’t forget prescription medications, eye glasses and wind-up or solar chargers for your radio or cell phone
⇒ Make sure every member of your family is prepared
⇒ Get a Kit....Get a Plan... Be informed! Go to Ready.gov to get started
On Target for Stroke!

Contra Costa EMS has been working over the last 12 months with our Stroke Advisory Committee on our upcoming Stroke System, currently positioned to be launched in January 2012. The Stroke System will work very much like the STEMI System with EMS providers becoming strong partners in the rapid identification and transport of high risk stroke patients to Stroke Receiving Centers for timely intervention. Each Stroke Center must meet Joint Commission Primary Stroke Certification criteria, have a community stroke reduction program and work closely with EMS system first responders and transport providers to improve stroke care. For more information on our upcoming stroke system go to http://www.cchealth.org/groups/ems/stroke.php.

Communities who have stroke systems demonstrate improved survival rates, significant reduction in hospital length of stay, and improved quality of life for stroke survivors. Contra Costa is indeed fortunate to have so many of our hospitals working with EMS on this important program.

EMS Best Practice Projects in Motion….

ReddiNet Performance Improvement: EMS is working with the dispatch agencies and our hospitals to improve the utilization of ReddiNet in our community. ReddiNet (Rapid Emergency Digital Disaster Information Network) is a web-based communication platform that links our hospitals, dispatch, EMS and the field to each other during normal and disaster operations.

MCI Advisory Committee: This important group has reconvened to review our MCI Plan implemented in 2007. As part of that process every MCI is being reviewed and data collected to determine if the plan is working as intended. The group will make recommendations for improvement as needed.

Bariatric Resources Team Takes on Difficult Task: Last August 2010, a CCEMS task team came together to address the problem of matching EMS system resources with the complexities of serving bariatric patients. The team evaluated specialized equipment, coordinated utilization of manpower, enhancements to CAD programs and the use of a “Bariatric” type alert when special resources are needed. The team has been working with vendors and plans to complete its recommendations for improving the EMS system response to bariatric patients by the end of May 2011.

HeartSafe Communities Thrive in Contra Costa: All our community stakeholders have stepped up to the plate when it comes to supporting HeartSafe Communities. Whether it be expanded distribution of AEDs or the teaching of CPR to high school students, the program has been highly effective. If you would like to learn more go to http://www.cchealth.org/groups/ems/heartsafe.php

Rapid Cycle Improvement Goes to Work: Contra Costa EMS has implemented Rapid Cycle Improvement (RCI) as part of our QI program. A recent project was launched to address pediatric medication errors. After two meetings the RCI teams made a commitment to measure and reduce the number of annual field pediatric medication errors to zero for a minimum of eighteen (18) consecutive months.

Save the date... June 2, 2011
The California Neonatal/Pediatric Disaster Conference Alameda Office of Homeland Security
4985 Broder, Dublin
This conference is co-sponsored by Contra Costa and Alameda EMS. The conference will have state and national experts in disaster healthcare preparedness share their experience and lessons learned to meet the special needs of infants and children. For more information go to http://www.cchealth.org/groups/ems/pdf/ce_neonatal_june2011.pdf Cost is $15.