Health Reform Already Helping

Last month marked the second anniversary of the historic passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as health reform. The Supreme Court also heard arguments in April on the constitutionality of portions of the law. We have seen many positive results since President Obama signed the ACA into law in 2010 and I want to take the opportunity to share how we as a health system and those whom we serve have already benefited from the ACA.

More residents insured

Many Contra Costa residents are now insured as a result of the ACA. Many young adults are able to remain on their parents’ employer-sponsored health insurance until they turn age 26. Prior to the ACA, young adults were ineligible for their parents insurance at age 19 unless they were full-time college students.

Children with pre-existing medical conditions can no longer be denied health insurance. Children and adults now have access to no-cost preventative care such as wellness visits, immunizations and screening for breast and colon cancer.

In addition, seniors can now receive help with their prescription drug coverage when they reach the “donut hole.” Prior to this assistance, seniors were responsible for paying full cost out-of-pocket after they received a certain dollar amount of medications.

Medi-Cal waiver

Under the Medi-Cal Waiver, low-income adults up to age 65—when most will become eligible for Medicare—can now be enrolled on our Low Income Health Plan (LIHP), also known as Health Care Coverage Initiative. Currently, the County is able to draw down federal dollars at 50% to help pay for the cost of this program. In 2014, approximately 80% of the more than 12,000 individuals currently enrolled in LIHP will be eligible for 100% federally funded Medi-Cal, and the other 20% will be eligible for health coverage with federal subsidy through the state’s health exchange. This will bring great relief to the County’s budget.

Also, as part of the Waiver, we are in the process of implementing our electronic health record, ccLink, and primary care health homes with team-based care. Having ccLink in place July 1, 2012, will be an extraordinary contribution to the quality and experience of care we provide to our patients and especially those who

DID YOU KNOW?

Our health care system will switch to an electronic health record at 12:01 a.m. July 1.
are most vulnerable to health problems in our communities.

This will be the largest single transformational project ever undertaken by Contra Costa Health Services. It involves extensive training by large numbers of our extraordinary staff, including all physicians and nurses. This is a very critical time and opportunity for our system, and we need full cooperation of all staff to successfully make this system change that will benefit the patients we serve. Training is now underway and I will keep you informed about the progress of this effort (see ccLink story on Page 3).

The ACA and the Waiver encourage development of comprehensive systems of care from community prevention to primary care and specialty care, to the hospital and to long-term care. We have the building blocks and ccLink is a crucial part of the infrastructure required to connect patients’ care wherever it is provided.

Health reform and managed care

Our Contra Costa Health Plan has now enrolled all seniors and persons with disabilities (SPDs) on Medi-Cal into managed care and we will likely be a pilot county to enroll dual eligibles—individuals with both Medicare and Medi-Cal. This creates challenges and opportunities for our Health Plan, delivery system and community partners.

I believe it will bring better care to patients with chronic health problems who are struggling to manage their health care in a non-coordinated, fee-for-services environment. Coordinated health care is ultimately the goal of the ACA and, in my opinion, the only way to truly bring costs under control in the United States health care system while increasing quality of care and patient experience.

This vision of what might be is fully dependent on the upcoming Supreme Court ruling in late June and the outcome of the presidential election this fall. I hope our country does not miss this rare opportunity to improve the health of our communities and fix our broken health care system.

Sincerely,

William Walker, M.D.
ccLink Goes on the Road

To update staff on our electronic health record implementation, leadership and ccLink team members have been hitting the road to hold informational meetings at our Regional Medical Center, Health Centers, Detention Centers and other locations. These ccLink “Road Shows” have been held over the past week at the Antioch, Brentwood, Concord, Martinez and Pittsburg health centers and the Regional Medical Center. This week, they’ll be held at the Detention Centers and the Contra Costa Health Plan. Employees who didn’t attend a Road Show event or still have other questions should check out the ccLink FAQs on iSITE. The system goes live on July 1—only two months from now. Training for most Health Services employees who will use ccLink begins May 21. The next few weeks and months promise to be an exciting time as we prepare to launch a system that will help us do our jobs better and enable us to provide better service to our patients. Stay tuned for more information!

To see photos of staff at the road shows and more information on ccLink, visit iSITE

HIGHLIGHTS...

Administrative Services Officer Larry Carlson, second from left, joins Contra Costa Certified Farmers’ Market staff at the inaugural CCRMC farmers’ market, which will continue as a pilot through the end of May. The market is held from 3 to 7 p.m. on Tuesdays.
National Data Show Strides Made in Cardiac Arrest Survival for Contra Costa

Our Emergency Medical Services Division is encouraged by recent data that show marked improvements in how people fare after suffering cardiac arrest in Contra Costa. The data, collected by Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival, demonstrate the importance of calling 911 and using an automated external defibrillator or starting CPR when someone suffers cardiac arrest. In 2011, a person who suffered cardiac arrest outside the hospital had an 11.7% chance of surviving to discharge. If that person had a shockable rhythm and the cardiac arrest was witnessed, the chance of survival jumped to 35.5%. When those conditions were met and the witness called 911 and began CPR or used an AED, the chance of survival increased to 38%. In 2009-10, overall survival was 9.4% and survival with shockable rhythms in those that were witnessed was 27%, so the 2011 results show significant improvement. EMS Medical Director Dr. Joseph Barger said while Contra Costa’s survival rates are higher than average, he said there should be a push to continually educate people about cardiac arrest and to perform the best CPR possible.

To find out more about Emergency Medical Services in Contra Costa County, visit www.cchealth.org/ems/ or call 925-646-6490.

Generosity Recognized at Hospital During National Volunteers Week

For nearly five decades, volunteers have clocked countless hours enhancing the quality of care for patients and families at our Regional Medical Center and Health Centers. In April, our Regional Medical Center Auxiliary took a week to recognize the many contributions of those volunteers. Since 1965, volunteers have provided services to patients and visitors throughout our facilities, from Richmond to Brentwood and from the information desk to the emergency department. In addition to assisting patients and providers, volunteers play a critical role in raising funds, supporting our programs and soliciting patient feedback. In 2011, 246 volunteers contributed 26,343 hours.

To find out about the generous work of our volunteers, visit http://cchealth.org/topics/volunteer/ or contact Volunteer Program Coordinator Rhonda Smith at 925-370-5441.

County Supervisors to Recognize People Who Fight to End Alcohol, Drug Abuse

Individuals and groups who have made a difference in the fight against alcohol and drug abuses will be recognized this month by the County Board of Supervisors. The annual People Who Make a Difference awards, sponsored by the Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Board, will take place Tuesday, May 8 at the regularly scheduled Board of Supervisors meeting in Martinez. To win an award, nominees must have initiated, contributed to or produced a significant shift in alcohol and other drugs awareness and use.

For more information, visit our website at www.cchealth.org/groups/aod_board/
Grant Aims to Recruit Students from Local Schools into the Mental Health Field

A new curriculum will be developed in partnership with three high schools to support students interested in a career in mental health services. The curriculum will be created with $14,325 in funds from a mini-grant awarded to the Mental Health Program of our Behavioral Health Division from the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development. The curriculum is expected to further integrate core mental health education in high school health academies. The participating schools are Dozier Libbey Medical High School, Vicente Martinez High School and Pinole Valley High School.

To find out more about the award, contact Mental Health at 925-957-5150

Annual Project Homeless Connect Event Needs Volunteers to Assist for a Day

Are you looking for a rewarding way to give back to the community this summer? The Homeless Program in our Behavioral Health Services Division is looking for volunteers to help out during its eighth annual Project Homeless Connect. The one-day event provides homeless people with food, medical and dental care, substance abuse programs, shelter and job assistance, among other things. Volunteers are needed June 13 and June 14 to help set up, greet and direct people, distribute goods and foods, assist service providers and offer general assistance at the event. The event is held in a different part of the county each year. This year, the event will be held at the Willow Pass Center in Concord. CCHS employees who will not be representing their organization as a service provider, but wish to volunteer must use approved time off.

To volunteer, visit www.cchealth.org/services/homeless or call 925-313-6124.

Our Promotoras’ Pioneering Work on Display at National Conference

Our Promotoras recently presented at the National Promotora Conference, Mind, Heart and Action, organized by Vision and Compromiso, a statewide network for Promotoras and Community Health Workers. The Promotoras—Coordinator Estela Cerda, Miriam Medina, Nuria Jovel and Elizabeth Luciano, educated other Promotoras on the role they’ve pioneered as co-facilitators of patient group visits and how this new role has increased patient enrollment, resulted in more patients completing the program and improved clinical outcomes such as weight loss, decreased BMI, and lower blood pressure among other things. They also discussed the history of how their work began in hopes that their efforts will be replicated by other health systems. Promotoras are patient advocates who help their communities improve health outcomes through education and increased access to services. In 2011, the Promotoras participated in a total of 14 patient groups, benefitting 159 patients. A video produced by our Community Education and Information Unit was shown at the conference.

For more information about the Promotora Program, contact Concepcion James with Reducing Health Disparities Unit at connie.james@hsd.cccounty.us
Healthy Outlook Columns Cover Raw Milk, Allergies
Certain misconceptions about milk and some other dairy products can have unfortunate consequences, according to a recent Healthy Outlook column by Michele DiMaggio. Milk must undergo a heating process called pasteurization to kill harmful germs ensure safe consumption, according to Michele, an Environmental Health Specialist. Another recent column covered the late March rain and what effect it would have on local allergies. Dr. David Pepper said the best approach for allergies involves reducing exposure, reducing allergens and taking medication.

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

Health Services Pediatricians Help Victims of Child Abuse
Health Services and our partners work together to care for victims of sexual assault and abuse, which affects one out of three females and one out of six males under 18. When patients are referred by law enforcement to our sexual assault response team, specialized examiners evaluate the patient in addition to treating any medical conditions and making medical referrals, if necessary. The sexual assault response team works in partnership with law enforcement, the District Attorney, Children and Family Services and Community Violence Solutions. Our Dr. Jim Carpenter, who is a pediatrician that specializes in child abuse, says these compassionate, multi-disciplinary and coordinated interventions are the best approach to community problems like child abuse. He said child abuse has been associated with increased risk of adulthood diseases, including obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, substance abuse and mental illness. April was Child Abuse Prevention and Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

To find out more about how we respond to cases of child abuse, contact Dr. Carpenter at Jim.Carpenter@hsd.cccounty.us or read a Healthy Outlook column about child abuse by Dr. Carpenter at http://bit.ly/HU215n

New iSITE Launch Successful
Our Information Technology Unit last month successfully rolled out an updated iSITE to all Health Services locations throughout the county. Built on Microsoft’s SharePoint, the new intranet is meant to serve as the go-to site for CCHS employee information, Department and Division news, staff contact information, work-related documents, data and much more. Information Architect Marc Miyashiro said the home page was accessed more than 2,000 times per day in the month following its launch and users have been sending in suggestions and comments. The site will continue to be fine-tuned and improved over time. Employees who have questions about the new iSITE should attend one of the training sessions this month, scheduled for 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. May 10 and May 24 in Suite 200, 595 Center Avenue, Martinez. Marc said registration is not required, but recommended sending an email beforehand if there is a certain topic you’d like to discuss. There also are online help files with simple explanations of basic procedures. To access the help files, click the support link in the bottom right corner of any iSITE page.

For more information about the new iSITE, visit http://cchs/ or contact Marc Miyashiro at marc.miyashiro@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6420.
Chief Nursing Officer Selected for Health Leadership Fellowship

Our Regional Medical Center and Health Centers Chief Nursing Officer Jaspreet Benepal has been selected as one of the 2013 Leadership Fellows of the California Health Leadership College. This fellowship brings together health executives from across the Western states to strengthen their skills through a curriculum tailored on the latest research and expertise of The Center for Creative Learning. The 10-month fellowship began in April and Jaspreet looks forward to learning from a wide variety of colleagues.

Aneela Ahmed, MD
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center
For consistently providing outstanding service to our most vulnerable and elderly patients.
◆ Nominated by Suzanne Davis and Terrie Kent

Brandi Draper
Community Support Worker II
Mental Health
For going above and beyond to support a family during difficult circumstances to achieve a positive outcome. For her unwavering commitment to her clients.
◆ Nominated by David Matz

Cheryl Goodwin
Jeanette Peel
Sue Pfister
Linda Thomas
Medical Staff Coordinators
Catherine Zonfrello
Medical Staff Services Manager
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center
For scheduling mandatory training for the medical staff in a manner that minimized patient care disruptions. For their willingness to dedicate the time above and beyond their normal work schedule to achieve this goal.
◆ Nominated by Chris Farnitano

Clayton Johnson
Community Health Worker II
Public Health
For consistently going above and beyond the call of duty. For stopping everything to assist for four hours in a major office supply clean out and overhaul.
◆ Nominated by Jaime Jenett
Service Excellence
You’re a GEM for Going the Extra Mile

Chiyo Shidara, DDS
Mireya Gutierrez
Registered Dental Assistant
Pittsburg Health Center

For doing such a great job extracting my split wisdom tooth, I did not even need an aspirin during the healing process.
♦ Nominated by a patient

Leandra Turner
Health Conductor
Reducing Health Disparities

For helping to recruit and retain patient participants in Centering Pregnancy groups. For contacting hard to reach patients and for helping patients navigate the system and access community resources.
♦ Nominated by Malaika Scott

Hoot Awardee of the Month

Dr. Troy Kaji, March

See “past recipients” of Hoot award.

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.cccouny.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.

May Milestones

Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Mary L. Langlois, Shannan W. Moulton, Rolando R. Abejuela, Curtis C. Christy, Margaret R. Linde, Marie L. Mann, Monica Gutierrez, Ricardo W.G. Carranza, Susan M. Wilcox, Bluford B. Hestir III, Barbara C. Swarzenski, Vicente I. Inciong (10 years); Robert J. Thomas, Sara P. Fitts, Vera J. Ash, Marybeth Ruiz, Rhonda J. Garner, Estelle C. Hellums, Anges T. Vinluan, Raquel M. Gomes, Michelle R. Lembeck (15 years); Maria C. Cuevas, Peter A. Del Fiorentino, Pamela Witherspoon, William C. Alejandro, Deanne S. Bologna, James G. Koll, Bienvenido F. Marcelino (20 years); Comfort E. Nwamu (25 years); Sandra Mesa (30 years); and Sharman Wong (35 years).