Survey Results Are In

I am appreciative that more than 1,000 employees took the time to respond to our online survey. The survey was comprehensive with 42 questions on topics including knowledge of and commitment to the Department's mission, team work, management and supervision skills, communication, respect for employees and their opinions, diversity, safety and comfort, and a number of other questions that delve deeply into the day-to-day work of our Department. We posted the responses to the questions on iSITE and I encourage you to view them.

I am very pleased that overall most of you enjoy working for Health Services and are enjoying a positive work experience. I am however concerned and paying very close attention to all questions in which 20% or more of you expressed disagreement or strong disagreement with our performance. Two areas of concern noted were lack of sufficient training for employees and effective communication at all levels of the Department. During this time when we are experiencing momentous change, I am particularly concerned that more than 44% of you don’t feel that strategic changes are well planned and communicated. I take your feedback seriously, and I will work with our Division Directors to address all of your concerns. I am already in discussion with our Personnel Unit about ways to provide appropriate and timely training through our online employee e-Training Center and other mechanisms.

Your feedback is important to me

The survey also included the ability for comments and suggestions, and many of you expressed—in detail—areas of concerns and suggested improvement, along with what we are doing well. I am personally reading all of your responses. I know that you invested a great deal of time and thought responding to these questions, and I am committed to understanding your needs and finding ways to address them.

Change is never easy

As I have said in many of my Director’s Report messages, change is stressful. The health care industry as a whole is undergoing tremendous transformation and we are certainly experiencing change within our system. We are preparing to implement our electronic health record—ccLink, developing...
patient health home models of care, integrating primary care and behavioral health care, while also undertaking numerous quality improvement initiatives and increasing enrollment in our Contra Costa Health Plan. Unfortunately, we don’t have the luxury of taking on these projects one at a time. In order to meet the needs of those whom we serve and in preparation for health reform, we must prepare our system now.

I understand that salary reductions, increased employee benefit contributions, increased workloads, and an inability to fill vacancies in a timely manner compound the daily stress that we are all feeling. Many of these things are beyond my ability to control, but I hear your concerns and I will do all that is in my power to help us through this challenging time. I am clear that not all of the issues you shared are due to system changes and distressed economic times, and we cannot provide the care our clients, patients and communities deserve without paying particular attention to the needs of the employees providing the services.

Better days ahead?

My hope is that better days are ahead. The installation of ccLink, further enactment of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the improvement in county revenues and the improvement in our statewide economic distress can, in fact, provide opportunities in the future for more appropriate compensation, less stressful and better staffed environments to meet our mission of caring for all people in the County with special attention to those most vulnerable to health problems.

In a department with seven divisions spread geographically throughout the County and more than 3,000 employees, it has always been a struggle to create effective means of communication. We will continue to use the Director’s Report newsletter, All Staff email messages and our intranet, iSITE, to communicate. I also heard from you loud and clear about the need for more effective communication from top leaders to managers and supervisors to line staff and that the communication must move up and down the line of authority. We need your ideas and opinions and must create effective mechanisms for you to freely express your opinions, ideas and constructive feedback. Some of you expressed an inability to share your concerns without retribution and this is not acceptable to me.

Together we can make a difference

Many of you shared that you enjoy working for CCHS because of our mission. Although we do many things well, and that was expressed in the survey, my job is to praise you for what we are doing well and take the time to improve those areas needing attention. Continue to share with me as we make this journey together to improve the health of the communities in Contra Costa and take care of each other in the process. I look forward to seeing and hearing more from you during one of our brown bag meetings. See iSITE for a complete schedule and check back often as we continue to update the schedule.

Sincerely,

William Walker, M.D.
Go-Live Date for ccLink Fast Approaching
We’ll launch our electronic health record (EHR) system, ccLink, in less than a month on July 1 and implementation efforts have kicked into high gear. Training started last month for the more than 3,000 employees who will use ccLink—from care providers and registration clerks to Health Plan staff and more. Installation and testing of new equipment is underway and when completed, we’ll have had more than 4,000 pieces of new equipment installed including wall mounts, hard drives, monitors, keyboards, scanners and printers. A “Resolution Center” is being set up at our Regional Medical Center to serve as operations headquarters where employees and teams from Epic (the company that created the technology) will support the roll-out of ccLink. July 1 is only the beginning of our EHR implementation and we’ll continue to fine tune and improve the system as needed.

For more information about our electronic health record, visit the ccLink page on iSITE.

Telephone Clinic Helps Patients While Clearing Appointments in Health Centers
As part of a pilot project, we’ve been testing a telephone clinic model a few days a week with excellent results. When our advice nurses receive a call from someone they determine needs medical attention in the next several hours to several days, the person is referred to our Telephone Consultation Clinic. This new clinic, which is staffed by physicians and nurse practitioners, receives up to 15 referrals a day and is able to meet most patients’ needs over the phone without a face-to-face appointment. Care delivered by the Telephone Consultation Clinic includes ordering prescriptions, labs or X-rays, and giving expanded medical advice. Through this model, more than 100 appointments have been freed up for more urgent visits. Surveys from the Telephone Consultation Clinic have returned very positive results, with most patients giving it a full five out of five rating. The Clinic was developed from a Kaizen workshop last fall that focused on appointment access and will be expanded this month. Kaizen workshops are part of an ongoing improvement effort spearheaded by our Regional Medical Center and Health Centers to make our health care system more efficient, timely, safe, patient-centered, equitable and effective for patients.

To find out more about the Telephone Advice Provider Clinic, contact Dr. Chris Farnitano at chris.farnitano@hsd.cccounty.us
Several key staff participated in a conference last month to discuss how to best integrate behavioral and physical health in our county. Several integration efforts are already underway in our county—including within our health care delivery system. With a special focus on integration efforts in the Affordable Care Act, the New Frontiers in Healthcare Integration conference hoped to educate, involve and plan next steps for these efforts locally. Our Regional Medical Center and Health Centers CEO Anna Roth joined Behavioral Health Services Director Cynthia Belon and Contra Costa Health Plan CEO Patricia Tanquary for a panel discussion that covered patient and family involvement, the importance of integration and current integration efforts, as well as experience with managed care for seniors and persons with disabilities and the coming dual-coverage program. Our Reducing Health Disparities Manager Concepcion James also held a workshop during the conference about the roles and responsibilities of peer providers.

To find out more about the conference, visit www.rubiconprograms.org/newfrontiershome.html

Contra Costa Ready for Health Reform
Contra Costa is one of five study counties in California featured in a report about an assessment of safety net integration efforts and to determine how to transform local health care safety nets into seamless systems of care. The goal of the report is to evaluate how counties are doing in laying the groundwork for health care reform. So far, the assessment shows progress is being made in ours and other counties. A report on the assessment by the Universities of California at San Francisco and Berkeley notes that our system “has many integration activities underway and proposed, with consistently high involvement by county and non-county stakeholders.” The report goes on to say partnerships within our county greatly allow us to undertake expansions or fill gaps in access. Our Health Services Director Dr. William Walker says the report underscores the importance of our integration efforts and offers a look at what is working in other counties.

Employees Put Healthy Options to the Test
Cucumber water was flowing, Hula-Hoops were twirling and the aroma of fresh cooked rice and veggies filled the air. Staff at 595 and 597 Center Avenue in Martinez got a taste of the healthy life last month in honor of Employee Health and Fitness Day. The event, organized by our Public Health Division’s Nutrition Program, encouraged people to try more nutritious alternatives to sugary beverages and food filled with fat, sugar or salt, and to join the Rethink Your Drink campaign, which asks people to give up their sugary beverages and pledge to be healthier. For details, call 925-313-6829.
An event that took place more than 40 years ago and sparked the modern movement for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights is still creating ripples today at Contra Costa Health Services. Every June, now recognized as National Pride Month after the Stonewall Riots, Health Services has an opportunity to recognize efforts in reducing health disparities for our LGBT population as well as to renew our commitment to LGBT staff and service recipients through our PRIDE initiative. Here is a look at what has been accomplished this year by the PRIDE Committee:

- More than 500 of our “We Embrace Diversity” posters distributed throughout Health Services.
- More than 1,000 LGBT resource brochures distributed.
- More than 500 LGBT story booklets distributed.
- Draft of a Health Services non-discrimination policy developed and now under legal review by County Counsel.
- Grant secured from Contra Costa LGBT youth collaborative to have Groundspark Train the Trainer—resulting in our providing more than 100 CCHS and Probation staff with personal and organizational techniques and ideas that could make our service centers and providers more open to listening to and meeting the needs of LGBT youths.
- County Board of Supervisors’ 2012 PRIDE Month proclamation wrote in partnership with Supervisor John Gioia’s office. The proclamation will be presented to the CCHS PRIDE Initiative and its PRIDE community partners June 5.

In addition to the efforts of the PRIDE Initiative, our Behavioral Health Services Division continues to address LGBT consumer needs and sensitivity through its monthly PRIDE electronic newsletter and resource site, collecting LGBT data in their client/consumer intake/assessment process, and ongoing LGBT cultural competency staff education efforts.

To learn about how you can participate in Pride Month activities, visit iSITE or contact our Reducing Health Disparities Unit Administrative Support Rosemarie Velez Gonzalez at rosemarie.velez-gonzalez@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-957-5422.

Stay Up to Date!
Have you received an email or phone call from the California Health Alert Network (CAHAN)? This web-based system broadcasts alerts of impending or current health emergencies. Periodically, test alerts are sent to ensure your information is current. It is important that you confirm these test alerts to ensure you receive notices during an actual emergency. If you would like to register to receive these alerts or for more information about CAHAN, contact Christye McQueen at christye.mcqueen@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6744.
First Responders Share Limelight with Cardiac Arrest Survivors to Mark EMS Week

Three residents who beat the odds and survived sudden cardiac arrest in Contra Costa County were reunited with their rescuers on May 22 to mark Emergency Medical Services Week at the County Board of Supervisors meeting in Martinez. The event recognized the work of all EMS personnel, including fire and ambulance agencies.

Column Urges Parents to Take Child Abuse Reports Seriously

Secrecy often surrounds the sexual abuse of children. In fact, it’s estimated that only one in 10 children reveal when they have been victimized, according to our Dr. Jim Carpenter. That’s why when children tell someone they’re being abused, adults need to listen and take appropriate action, Dr. Carpenter wrote in a recent Healthy Outlook column. Dr. Carpenter, a pediatrician at our Regional Medical Center who specializes in treating survivors of abuse, stresses the importance of adults notifying authorities rather than keeping the problem “within the family.” While some parents or caretakers may worry that involving the authorities will subject the victim to more distress, Dr. Carpenter said the system is more sensitive than ever about protecting a child from further trauma.

‘Walking Hazards’ on a Journey to Raise Funds for the American Cancer Society

This July, members of our Hazardous Materials Division will lace up and prepare for a shift in what could save a life. The shift won’t be in response to a chemical spill or accidental release, however—it will be in the annual 24-hour Relay For Life, which raises funds for the American Cancer Society. The group, called the Walking Hazards, is hoping the Relay will double as a team building event for staff. The Walking Hazards are planning a picnic and other group activities to strengthen staff bonds. The Relay For Life will take place Saturday, July 28th at Las Juntas Elementary School in Martinez. Organizer Devra Lewis encourages interested Hazardous Materials employees to contact her for information about how to register. There is a $10 registration fee to participate. If you are interested in starting a team for your Division or Program, visit www.relayforlife.org/martinezca.

To find out more about the Walking Hazards, contact Devra at devra.lewis@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-335-3222.
Les David
Institutional Services Worker – Specialist
Brentwood Health Center
For taking much pride in caring for the Brentwood Health Center by keeping it clean and looking great.

◆ Nominated by Isela Bautista, Tiawna Dominguez and Angie Lazo

Pam Dodson, RN
Emergency Medical Services
For going above and beyond to connect a client with his hospitalized loved one and for consistently being a team player and providing excellent customer service.

◆ Nominated by Jeanne Kerr

Faye Ny
Administrative Services Assistant III
Public Health
For her patience and responsiveness while teaching me (a grantee) about budgeting.

◆ Nominated by Blanca Campos, Cambridge Community Center

Denise Peschel, RN
Contra Costa Health Plan
For one of her clients expressing how Denise helped their whole family and doesn’t know how they would’ve made it without her, and for her caring and excellent bedside manner with her clients.

◆ Nominated by Wendy Mailer

Robin Wallace, MD
Richmond Health Center
For her rapid, professional and courteous accommodation of a patient added to her recent clinic. For meeting the patient’s healthcare needs without any additional visits.

◆ Nominated by Jamie Pehling

Gwenn White
Health Education Specialist
Public Health
For producing a creative bulletin board display for Employee Health Month that encouraged staff to walk and take the stairs by including facts about distances.

◆ Nominated by Jaime Jenett

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.
Service Excellence
You’re a GEM for Going the Extra Mile

Supervisors Honor Those Working to Fight Alcohol, Drug Abuse in Contra Costa
Congratulations to the winners of the 2012 People Who Make a Difference Awards! The Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Board of Contra Costa presented its annual awards last month to five individuals and one group. The honor is given to those who have made a significant contribution in the battle against alcohol and drug abuse. Winners included April Rovero, Sergeant Tom Fuhrmann, Detective Berch Parker, Jan Steed, the Richmond Police Department Regulatory Unit and Jaron Leaks.

Hoot Awardee of the Month

Rosemary Ramirez, April
See “past recipients” of Hoot award.

June Milestones
Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Mary R. Azzopardi, Somchith Phongboupha, Teri A. Williams, Susan K. Wetzler, Adeebeh Fakurnejad, Alexandra R. McMullen, Nora J. Meadows, Barbara A. Sheehy, James L. Lee, Paul R. Manaut, Danielle R. Brodus-Zamora, Edward F. Donnelly Jr., Regina G. Mabolo, Sherrill M. Shamblin, Sandeep K. Dosanjh, Kennisha A. Johnson, TaiYun Roe, Nalini Singh, Jose I. Yasul III, Sheryl A. Wiseman (10 years); Rofel Mitra, Suzanne K. Tavano, Christina M. Reed (15 years); Mario V. Orlina, Cynthia Cook, Gloria J. Ousborn, Soheila R. Chanadan, Vernon C. Hampton, Sherrill B. Harris, Bonnie N. Bartlett, Eve D. Cominos, Denis J. Mahar (20 years); Alfreda King, Susan S. Bongalos, Nikita A. Hughes (25 years); Eva L. Lodetti and Theo W. Durden (30 years).