

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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Medi-Cal Expansion

Implementing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is on a fast track in California. The Governor's decision to fully expand Medi-Cal and take advantage of federal funding is exciting, but it comes with uncertainties. There are two options for implementing the expansion: statewide or county specific. Last week the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) released a report recommending the statewide option because it will likely be cost-effective for at least the next 10 years, and could reduce program fragmentation, decrease churning (the need for people to move back and forth between coverage plans if their income level and eligibility changes), and reduce administrative complexity.

Our county has taken a position of supporting the statewide option. The LAO also recommended that the state take back Health Realignment funds from counties. These vehicle license fees and sales taxes have been used to help fund indigent care for almost two decades. Reducing or eliminating these funds now is especially alarming because, unfortunately, not everyone will be eligible for insurance and not all of those who are eligible will enroll right away.

Safety Net Concerns

It is our experience with both the Health Care Coverage Initiative Program and Healthy Families (see a separate story on Healthy Families on Page 2) that those who are eligible will enroll over time. Some will remain uninsured because of their lack of awareness about the programs, challenges in the enrollment process, or inability to afford subsidized coverage. According to a UCLA report, 3-4 million people will remain uninsured after ACA is fully implemented in California and three-fourths of the remaining uninsured will be U.S. citizens or lawfully present immigrants. More than half of the uninsured will have incomes at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (\$44,700 or lower annually for a family of four), the typical income range of those who use safety net systems.

It is premature for the state to propose taking away Health Realignment dollars from safety net systems like ours until we have some experience with ACA. It is conceivable that as more people obtain health insurance the cost of uninsured indigent care will decrease for us, but this will happen over time. Reductions in both Medicare and Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital payments under the ACA and the 1115 "Bridge to Reform" Waiver funding expiring in 2015 should all be considered in any policy discussion related to



William B. Walker, MD
CCHS Director

Health Realignment funds. Loss of these funds can present significant fiscal challenges for our system.

Residually Uninsured

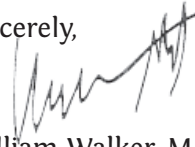
Some uninsured Californians, also known as the residually uninsured, will be ineligible for subsidized coverage due to income or immigration status, while others will be eligible for subsidized plans in the Exchange but still won't be able to afford the premiums because they exceed the affordability standard. Some of the remaining uninsured will lack coverage for short time periods due to life transitions. We know that access to primary care will continue to be a struggle for many Contra Costa residents after ACA, and we have already begun to discuss this shared responsibility to provide access to care with our community clinics and hospital Chief Executive Officers, and other safety net providers. We understand that ACA does not offer health insurance to everyone and when some of our residents aren't able to access care, we are all impacted.

Closer to Implementation

I remember March 2010 when ObamaCare was signed into law and at that time 2014 seemed a long way off. Now we have only seven months before open enrollment and 10 months before full implementation. There are still outstanding policy decisions to be made by our policymakers in Sacramento, and much outreach and education to be done in our communities before enrollment starts in October. We will continue to educate our public officials, reach out to our communities, enroll individuals on the Low Income Health Plan, and prepare our system to meet the challenges.

Stay tuned.

Sincerely,



William Walker, M.D.

Healthy Families Children Begin Transition to Medi-Cal

The first of many changes under health care reform is taking shape this month in our Contra Costa Health Plan with the transition of Healthy Families children to Medi-Cal. This is part of a four-phase statewide effort to move program participants into Medi-Cal managed care plans like CCHP. These children will retain all of the benefits that they enjoyed under the Healthy Families Program, however, dental and mental health care will be provided through Denti-Cal and County mental health programs. CCHP is preparing for other elements of the Affordable Care Act. Last month, it submitted its application to participate in the Exchange, called Covered California, which will offer choices of coverage for patients who earn 138% to 400% of the federal poverty level beginning January 2014.



To find out more about the Health Plan and its role in health reform, stay tuned for updates from CEO Patricia Tanquary on iSITE.

The next Director's Report will be the April issue. Publicize your upcoming events and successes by sending information by March 20 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/>

Soda Tax Favorable if Money Supports Anti-Obesity Efforts, Study Shows

Voters in Richmond and throughout the state would support a tax on sugary beverages like soda if the money is earmarked for improving school nutrition programs and expanding physical activity programs. Those are the results of a recent Field Poll on behalf of The California Endowment that have our Public Health Division encouraged about growing public support to fight obesity. Even after the election in Richmond, more than two-thirds of voters in that city would support such a tax measure if the money was earmarked for combatting childhood obesity. Richmond was included in the poll because the city is among the endowment's Building Healthy Communities initiative. The Field-TCE Survey found statewide support for a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages increases from 40% to 68% when proceeds are used to improve school nutrition and physical activity programs. In a podcast, Community Wellness & Prevention Program Director Tracey Rattray said obesity is endangering children's health and future, and sugary drinks play a significant role. According to a study we conducted in 2011, the average Richmond teen consumes 150,000 calories a year from sugar-sweetened beverages.



Tracey Rattray

To find out more about the poll or the podcast, visit <http://cchealth.org/press-releases/2013/0214-childhood-obesity-survey.php>



Dr. Greta Perez, right, leads a group appointment.

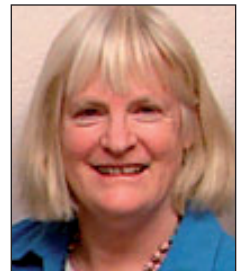
Childhood Obesity Program is Model for Others

A model program six years in the making is getting recognition among organizations statewide. Active & Healthy Families, developed by our Public Health Division's Child Health & Disability Prevention Program in collaboration with CCRMC's Integrative Health Program and the Reducing Health Disparities Unit, is a pediatric obesity medical group appointment program designed to educate families and support obesity prevention. The program currently is available in West County, Bay Point, Pittsburg and Brentwood health centers. The curriculum consists of five two-hour sessions led by a team made up of a provider, a registered dietitian and a community health worker or promotora. The program serves children 5 to 12 years old who are overweight or obese. Though currently it is available only to Latino families, Senior Public Health Nutritionist Annabelle Cadiz expects an English version to be available in late 2013. The group also is developing a web page to highlight the program and a training module for providers that want to replicate it at their facility.

To find out more about the program, contact Annabelle Cadiz at 925-313-6153.

Recess Helps Kids Excel Inside the Classroom

Children who aren't doing well in the classroom may benefit from more time outside of the classroom, according to a recent policy statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics. In a recent Healthy Outlook column, our pediatrician Dr. Diane Dooley said physical activity plays a vital role in a child's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. According to the statement, children who have at least one recess for more than 15 minutes scored higher on the teacher's rating of classroom behavior. Dr. Dooley said parents and schools need to work together to give kids the chance to play actively at least 60 minutes every day.

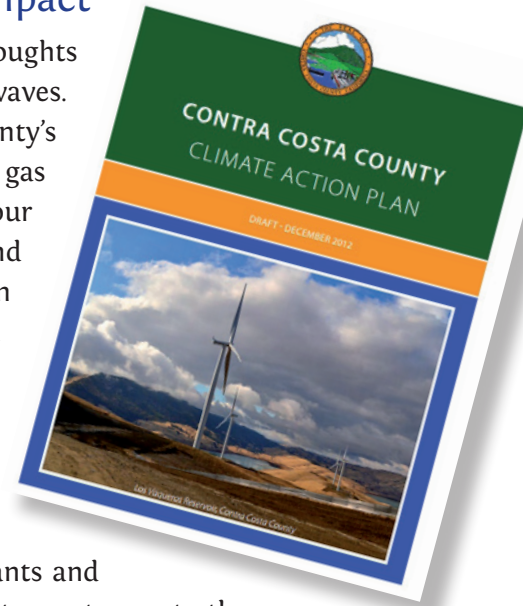


Dr. Dooley

To read more of this column, visit www.cchealth.org/column

Climate Action Plan Assesses Global Warming's Health Impact

Climate change is likely to produce dramatic changes in our environment—from droughts to flooding caused by rising sea levels and extreme weather events such as heat waves. It will also have a significant impact on public health, a fact explored in the county's recently released draft Climate Action Plan, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in unincorporated Contra Costa over the next two decades. Staff from our Public Health Division collaborated with community members and the Public and Environmental Health Advisory Board to analyze the ways in which actions taken to prevent further climate change can immediately improve people's health, a positive side-effect known as a health "co-benefit." According to the draft plan, doing things like making cities more walkable and bike-friendly, improving public transportation and reducing air pollution can produce better health outcomes in the present as we work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The plan also identifies how climate-change prevention can be leveraged to help reduce disparate health outcomes faced by low-income residents, immigrants and communities of color. The Board of Supervisors, which directed county staff last year to create the Climate Action Plan, is expected to review and adopt the plan later this month.



To see the draft Climate Action Plan, visit <http://tinyurl.com/avkqh9a>



Environmental Health to Unveil Eatery Inspection App

Consumers will soon be able to see inspection results for food facilities in Contra Costa on their mobile devices thanks to a new app. The Environmental Health Division teamed up with Information Technology to design the new free app, which they've dubbed "FoodInspector." The app allows Android and iPhone users to search inspection results for 4,200 food facilities in the county. FoodInspector features a "Near Me" button that allow users to virtually inspect eateries close to their current location, as well as view a list of any restaurants temporarily closed to correct health violations. Our Environmental Health Director Marilyn Underwood said the app will help consumers see if restaurants and other food outlets are storing, handling and preparing food in a safe manner. Marilyn will give a presentation to the Board of Supervisors in mid-March and she expects the app will be available to download by the end of the month.



ccLink Training Looks Beyond Orientation to Proficiency

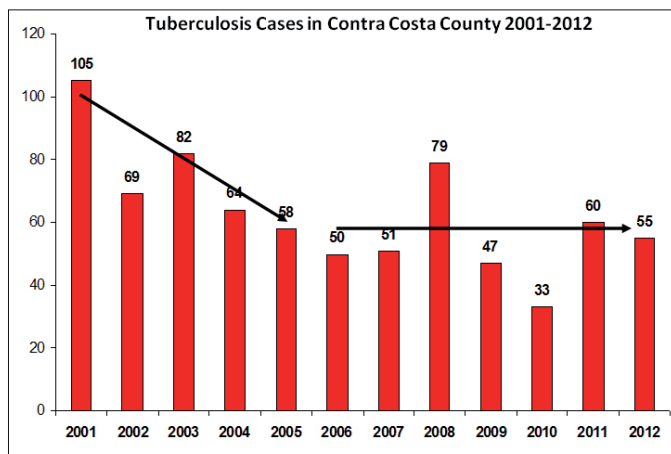
Dr. Ron Cavanagh gets assistance from a ccLink instructor during one of 12 ccLink provider efficiency courses held during three days last month. The courses covered general efficiency tips and advanced documentation and ordering in an effort to optimize user experience. They are part of several efforts occurring now to enhance ccLink training. To find out about other ccLink training efforts, look for the next ccLink Update coming soon on the iSITE ccLink page.

Active Tuberculosis Cases Leveling Off After Decade of Near-Constant Decline

Cases of active tuberculosis in Contra Costa County are leveling off according to a new epidemiology report that our Public Health Division will release this month to mark World Stop TB Day. The shift in cases is causing some concern that the gradual decline of the last 10 years may be coming to an end, according to our TB Program's Medical Director, Dr. Charlie Crane. A robust surveillance effort coupled with ongoing case management brought the number of cases down to 55 in 2012 from 105 in 2001. Dr. Crane said preventing secondary infection and performing routine screenings are critical steps to reducing the number of active tuberculosis cases. For the first time in two years, there were no pediatric cases. Last year also marked the first time in the past six years that more women than men were infected with the disease. Dr. Crane said health care providers should remain suspicious of active tuberculosis when patients present with typical symptoms.



Dr. Crane



To find out more about TB or to read the report, visit www.cchealth.org/tb/

Health Expo Preparations Underway During Black History Month

Black History Month is a time to recognize achievements of our fellow African Americans and efforts ramped up last month to plan the second annual East County African American Health Empowerment Expo. The Expo, hosted by the African American Health Collaborative, provides a venue for recognizing that we have health pioneers in our community who are promoting health empowerment as a pathway for supporting African American well being and achievement. This year's expo is September 21. To host a booth at the Expo, contact Lynnette Watts at lynnette.watts@hsd.cccounty.us

Diabetic Patients Shout '¡Sí Se Puede!'

Collaboration between our Reducing Health Disparities Promotora Program, the Integrative Health Program, Ambulatory Care and Health Plan's Disease Management Program has resulted in a patient group program that helps Spanish-speaking diabetics improve their health. A multidisciplinary team arms 12 patients with health education, peer dialogue, self-empowerment, motivation and health coaching to lower risk factors. In keeping with Cesar Chavez, a labor rights activist honored in March, and his slogan "Sí Se Puede," patients transition from the groups feeling equipped to manage their diabetes. To find out more, contact Dr. Karen Burt at kbburt@gmail.com

Medical Director Retires

After 33 years with Contra Costa Health Services, Dr. Charles Crane is retiring as the Medical Director of our Tuberculosis Program. Though this month will be the last he marks World Stop TB Day in his current post, Dr. Crane says his work with TB is not done. He will continue to work in the TB Program while a replacement is found. After that, he says he may venture into international work. Dr. Crane was in Vancouver this month to receive the prestigious Union NAR Service Award from the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease to honor his outstanding commitment to TB control. During his career at Health Services, Dr. Crane developed the Chest Clinics from being only sub-specialty clinics to being a multidisciplinary model of service excellence for patient-centered care, and for service integration between Ambulatory Care and Public Health. Dr. Crane began his career at Health Services as a staff physician in 1979.

Attend Training and Get the Most from iSITE

Do you wish you knew more about iSITE and its features? Regular and beginning users can benefit from tips and tricks that turn our new intranet into a powerful tool. Our Information Technology Unit provides iSITE training every other Thursday from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the IT Conference Room, 595 Center Avenue Suite 200, Martinez. The class covers general information and topics raised by attendees. Registration is not required. Training classes this month will be held March 14 and March 28. Information Architect Marc Miyashiro said he hopes to cover in-depth the search and document features.

To find out more about iSITE training or to suggest a topic to cover, email Marc Miyashiro at marc.miyashiro@hsd.cccounty.us



Mary Buscaglia
Kim Dao
Wedad Shammas

Accountant III

Tina Matthews

Account Clerk – Advanced Level

Bill Sorrell

Administrator

Public Health

For their assistance and team effort in completing the Public Health and California Children's Services FY13-14 Budgets and Reports.

◆ Nominated by Sherry Martija

March Milestones

Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Sheila S. Del Mundo, Maria N. Espinoza, Hala Fattah, Jasmin R. Faustino, Jane L. Kelsberg, Aide Picazo, Kimberly M. Sanchez, Razhel Y. Sendaydiego, Nicole E. Forrest, Arturo E. Hernandez, Felicia W. Walls, Lucy L. Delos Reyes, Rocio Moncayo, Michael J. Shaw, Kathlene Reiter, Donald P. Dominguez, Audra X. Harvey, Shawn E. Sekel, Iris E. Holland (10 years); Maricel A. Flores, Michelle L. Flores, Alexandra J. Dronkers, Jessica C. Molina, Amelia A. Scudiere, Debra G. White, Gloria J. Quesada, Victor L. Ramirez, Erika L. Barrow, Christine A. Chambers, Josefina L. Pabros, Dominique S. Crawford, Vicky P. DeJose, Kenneth T. Nguyen, Angelica Barragan, Kimberly C. Davey (15 years); Candace K. Tao, Vanessa Cordier, Katherine S. Jackson-Moore, Todd S. Chamberlin (20 years); Theresa A. Horvath, William E. Sorrell, Editha S. Guevarra, Edward L. Henry Jr. and Stacey L. Tupper (25 years).

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.