Safety Net Re-imagined

For more than two years now a group of stakeholders in the County have been meeting and developing innovative strategies to help residents of the community meet needs related to food, shelter, health care and safety. I wanted to share these efforts with you because they embody what a safety net can be and needs to be.

When there is an economic downturn as we experienced in the past few years, more and more individuals and families find themselves in need of basic services. While demand increases, government resources continue to shrink at the federal, state and local levels. With property and sales taxes declining and pension and retirement costs incurred by the County increasing, safety net funding became particularly acute in Contra Costa. In 2009, former County Administrator and EHSD Director John Cullen urged a group of private safety net funders to take a collective impact approach to addressing the needs of individuals and families because the current public safety net (systems and organizations that provide services/basic needs to low-income residents) was eroding and no longer sustainable. This resulted in the formation of a Safety Net Task Force with a vision of having Contra Costa communities united to ensure a just, vibrant and compassionate quality of life for all residents.

Cross-Sector Collaboration

There was no lack of interest in this work as more than 100 stakeholders, community leaders; service providers, advocates, funders, and consumers, attended an initial summit in 2011. Most have remained engaged in four subsequent Innovation network sessions in 2012 and one implementation session last month. The sessions were held to develop collaborative, innovative and actionable short and long term solutions to significantly impact, strengthen and sustain Contra Costa’s safety net.

Innovation

I have been inspired by the energy, passion and innovation of these stakeholders. Strategies generated include using Social Impact Bonds to generate local funds to address social or public health needs of a community. The Richmond Community Foundation will host a summit later this month to bring together experts in this field to better understand how this strategy can help us meet social needs in Contra Costa. Another strategy is to work
Homelessness Down in Contra Costa

Homelessness in Contra Costa is at its lowest point in at least six years, according to a census by our Homeless Program in January. The point-in-time count took a snapshot of people living in emergency housing, on the streets or in an encampment on the morning of Jan. 30. There were a total of 3,754 persons, which is a 12% decrease from 2011 when there were 4,274 homeless persons. Of the 3,754 people tallied this year, 1,350 were living outside when the count took place. Our Homeless Program Acting Director Lavonna Martin said the numbers support what our annual outcome data show: homeless individuals are finding and retaining permanent housing. She said homeless veteran programs, increased units of permanent supportive housing, prevention programs, and rapid rehousing efforts have had a positive impact in Contra Costa County.

Lamar Myers is one of the hundreds of homeless people counted in Contra Costa this year.

To find out more about the Homeless Program, visit www.cchealth.org/groups/homeless

The next Director’s Report will be the May issue. Publicize your upcoming events and successes by sending information by April 19 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/
HazMat Conducts Drill at Former Naval Weapons Station
A team from our Hazardous Materials Division conducted a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) drill last month at the Military Ocean Terminal Concord (MOTCO), formerly known as the Concord Naval Weapons Station. The Haz Mat team collaborated with the California National Guard’s 95th Civil Support Team and the MOTCO Fire Department during the drill. The training exercise required HazMat crews to respond to, investigate, and mitigate a crime scene on the base where unknown chemicals were present in a suspicious and potential WMD circumstance.

New Educational Series Tackles Health Issues
A new video series produced by our Community Education & Information unit offers health tips, highlights programs and provides information on how to access services. The show, which is called yourhealth, features short interviews with CCHS staff about various health issues. In this first episode of yourhealth, Dr. Nishant Shah explains how people can tell the difference between the flu and a cold. In another episode, First Hope Lead Psychiatrist Dr. Nancy Ebbert discusses a new program that aims to prevent psychosis through early intervention. The spots will be appear on cchealth.org, iSITE, Facebook, Youtube, Vimeo, Contra Costa Television and TV monitors in the Regional Medical Center and Health Centers in the near future.

To appear on the show or to pitch an idea for a yourhealth video, please contact the show’s host, Victoria Balladares, at victoria.balladares@hsd.cccounty.us

Host Victoria Balladares, with our Community Education & Information unit, interviews Dr. Nishant Shah for the debut of yourhealth.
Construction of Outpatient Clinic and Residential Center at CCRMC Underway

Those visiting and working at our Regional Medical Center recently may have noticed all the construction going on. Construction crews are busy erecting two new facilities that will help expand primary care access, take pressure off the Emergency Department (ED) and provide critical mental health services. The Martinez Wellness Center, which is being built next to the ED, will offer primary care, fast-tracked urgent care triaged from the ED as well as outpatient mental health services. The mental health portion of the facility will include a community-based assessment center for children and youth that will encourage the participation of family members in the assessment process. The Wellness Center also will offer pediatrics, family medicine and group medical visits to help meet the demand for primary-care services in central Contra Costa. Although 21 parking spaces are being lost to the construction, they will more than be replaced with 80 new spots being added on campus. Meanwhile, builders are also working on the two-story Crisis Residential Facility behind 20 Allen Street, a 16-bed inpatient mental health treatment program where adults can stay voluntarily for up to four weeks. The Crisis Residential Facility is expected to open in the fall; the Wellness Center is expected to open early next year.

Extra Clinic Hours Added at West County Health Center

The West County Health Center (WCHC) has added evening hours on Wednesdays in order to meet the demand for primary care in the area. WCHC will now be open from 8 a.m. to 8:45 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays, and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Two providers will see patients during the added evening hours on Wednesdays. This is the latest service expansion at the West County Health Center, which replaced the Richmond Health Center. Over the last three years, the health center has added Saturdays and doubled the days it offers evening hours.

Celebrating CCRMC’s Volunteers

April is National Volunteer Month! The Volunteer Service Office, which manages our Regional Medical Center and Health Centers’ volunteer program, is planning several activities to recognize and promote the work of those who donate their time to the hospital. On April 16, an Appreciation Luncheon for volunteers who have contributed more than 200 hours will be held at Back Forty Texas BBQ in Pleasant Hill. On April 17, volunteers will be staffing tables in CCRMC’s first-floor lobby from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. to educate people about what they do and provide applications to others interested in volunteering. Doctors, nurses and other hospital staff who want to show support for our volunteers during April are encouraged to wear “We Love Our Volunteers” stickers, which can be obtained from the Volunteer Office.

For more information about the April volunteer events, contact volunteer program coordinator Rhonda Smith at rhonda.smith@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-370-5440.
Gas Station Makes AED Available to Nearby Businesses

Our Emergency Medical Services Division last month celebrated the first placement of an automated external defibrillator (AED) intended to serve a business district. The lifesaving AED was donated by ambulance contractor American Medical Response to a Kensington Chevron station. Most AEDs are placed in a building to be used within that facility, but because the AED at the Kensington Chevron station is intended for public access, it will be available to anyone who suffers cardiac arrest during normal business hours in the general vicinity, said EMS Prehospital Care Coordinator Pam Dodson. EMS made a public appeal in February to assure all AEDs are registered and marked public. Without the public-use designation, owners of AEDs are only notified of a cardiac arrest that occurs at the exact address of the device. Pam said early intervention during cardiac arrest, calling 911, doing CPR and using an AED, can greatly reduce injury and prevent death.

To find out more about public access AEDs, visit cchealth.org/ems/aed.php or contact Pam Dodson at pam.dodson@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-333-9547

Richmond Clinic Seeks Volunteers

The new RotaCare Richmond Free Medical Clinic is seeking volunteer physicians and nurses. The clinic, which is run almost entirely by volunteers, offers free medical care to uninsured adults and children once a week. Located at the Brighter Beginnings Family Strengthening Center, it is open from 1 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays. Volunteers are encouraged to work one shift a month, but the clinic is flexible about hour requirements, said Dr. Francine Jolton, one of our pediatricians who serves as the volunteer co-medical director of the clinic. Dr. Jolton added that volunteers who can’t get there by 4 p.m. can start their shifts later. Malpractice insurance is covered by the clinic, she said.

If you’re interested in volunteering, contact Drea Riquelme, the site administrator, at 510-903-7516 or email Francine at francine.jolton@hsd.cccounty.us

WHERE TO GET EMERGENCY INFORMATION

cchealth.org - Health emergency updates from Health Services
cococws.us - Sign up for phone alerts from Community Warning System
cccounty.us - Updates from Contra Costa County

Facebook
Contra Costa Health Services
Twitter
@CoCoHealth

Phone Numbers
1-888-959-9911 - Health Emergency Information Line
925-313-9622 - Community Warning System
211 - General information

Local Media
Tune in to your local media outlets, such as KCBS 740-AM and CCTV Channel 99, 27 or 32

Connect with Health Services on Facebook & Twitter!

http://cchealth.org/socialmedia/
Awards Recognize People Fighting Alcoholism, Drug Abuse in Contra Costa

Nominations are rolling in for the annual People Who Make a Difference Awards to recognize individuals and groups who are stopping alcohol and drug abuse in our communities. The deadline is quickly approaching and submission forms are being accepted only until April 5. There are six award categories: Volunteer Individual, Volunteer Group, Non-Volunteer Individual, Non-Volunteer Group, Youth Leadership Individual and Youth Leadership Group. Alcohol and Other Drugs Program Manager Fatima Matal Sol said the awards recognize people who are initiating change and encouraging others to contribute to reducing the impact of alcoholism and other drug abuses in Contra Costa County. Awardees will be recognized at the county Board of Supervisors meeting May 14.

To find out more about the awards or to make a nomination, visit www.cchealth.org/groups/aod_board/

California Food Inspector App Released

The California Food Inspector app, created by the Health Services’ Information Technology unit for our Environmental Health division, was officially released for iPhone users last month. The free app, which allows users to see inspection results for thousands of restaurants and other food facilities in the county, is available in Apple’s iTunes App Store now. A version for Android-powered devices is expected to be released soon. Restaurant inspection information is also available on the CCHS website.

Health Column Features Meditation’s Positive Impacts on Mental, Physical Health

For eight years, our Mental Health Clinical Specialist David Ezra has watched participants in his weekly meditation classes at county detention facilities minimize impulsive behaviors and have fewer health problems. In our most recent Healthy Outlook column, he says similar results can be reaped through meditation by people from all walks of life. David said meditation helps control two parts of the brain—the amygdala, which is responsible for primitive or “snap” decisions, and the prefrontal cortex, which makes rational, clear decisions. In addition to reducing stress and improving mental health, David said meditation can lower the risk for hypertension, asthma, allergies, ulcers and many other diseases. Thinking about meditation? David suggests grabbing a guidebook and setting aside 10-15 minutes every morning or evening.

To read more of this and other Healthy Outlook columns, visit www.cchealth.org/column/
Phillip Cooper  
Mental Health Community Support Worker II  
Behavioral Health Services

For going above and beyond to help a patient secure shelter following his discharge from the hospital and for being compassionate and caring with his clients.

◆ Nominated by Thomas Tighe

Vanessa Cordier  
Supervising Environmental Health Specialist  
Donald Hwang  
Environmental Health Specialist II  
Linda Whalen  
Clerk – Senior Level  
Environmental Health

For excellent preparation for and implementation of the new state law titled “Cottage Food Operation.”

◆ Nominated by Marilyn Underwood

Jessica Hamilton, MD  
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers

For her extraordinary care and personal concern that she gave our son during his stay at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center.

◆ Nominated by a patient’s family

Ron Lucchesi  
Information Systems Technician II  
Information Technology

For being very professional, courteous, and efficient in identifying and fixing the problem with my laptop.

◆ Nominated by Esther Gutierrez

Membership Maintenance Unit  
Contra Costa Health Plan

For going above and beyond to maintain members’ eligibility during ccLink’s “Go Live.”

◆ Nominated by Pam Gomez

Sandra Murguia-Gregory, FNP  
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers

For her prompt response and willingness to help a patient, enabling the patient to avoid an unnecessary visit to the Emergency Department.

◆ Nominated by Jenny Miller

Mike Nguyen  
Database Administrator  
Information Technology

For graciously providing technical support with complex processes in ccLink.

◆ Nominated by Pam Gomez
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.

Holly Page
Mental Health Project Manager
Behavioral Health Services

For all of her hard work, countless hours, and dedication to the Behavioral Health administration and MHSA programs and services.

◆ Nominated by The Behavioral Health Research and Evaluation Team

Katy White
Mental Health Program Supervisor
Behavioral Health Services

For her consistent follow through and willingness to collaborate and help patients get needed care.

◆ Nominated by Chris Castro

April Milestones
Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Wanda R. Early, Glenda K. LaFramboise, Dave G. Woodhouse, Analyn M. Hernandez, Danira Oseguera, Angelina V. Salditos, Junar P. Suriba, Regina Parenti, Manojani Vethavanam, Anita L. Green, Jamar J. Moon (10 years); Rosa Linda Aviles, Marcelino G. Matute, Michelle McConnell, Virginia Reyes, Angela K. Cottone, Teresa A. Gregory, Corinne L. Concannon, Charles K. Guthery, Robert C. Stange, Paula K. Zavalal, Dorothy L. Kirkland, Tia P. Valencia, Omar V. Carranza, Norma A. Jimenez, Melissa Sendelbach (15 years); Antoinette I. Yowakeem, Letitia F. Datuin (20 years); Joanne K. Minadeo, Shirley A. Drumin, Lorraine S. Conner (25 years); Kathryn V. Alexander, Christine Brietzke and Arthur Soto (30 years).