

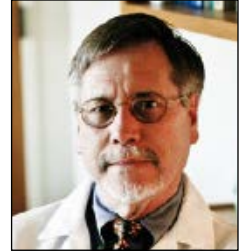
DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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Milestones

It is finally here—Open Enrollment

We are now in the first month of open enrollment for Covered California, the state's health insurance exchange, made possible by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as ObamaCare. Fortunately, the controversy in Washington, D.C. over the ACA and the budget agreement seems to be resolved, at least for the time being. In the meantime, there is a remarkable expression of interest from uninsured residents in Contra Costa County, California and around the country. In the first three weeks of open enrollment, Covered California's website received more than 2.2 million unique visits and 125,000 applications were submitted.



William B. Walker, MD
CCHS Director

Need more outreach, education and enrollment

Although we are off to a good start, what is clear is that a substantial amount of education still needs to happen to help residents understand how this law affects them and their families and how to get enrolled now in order to take full advantage of this historic opportunity. Numerous education and enrollment events are occurring throughout the state and in Contra Costa. Many of these events are attended by representatives from Covered California and the qualified health plans offering coverage through Covered California. These events have given residents the opportunity to ask questions and learn how ACA can benefit them. Still, we know that this is not enough; many residents will need hands on assistance to enroll. This is why Contra Costa Health Services has applied to become an enrollment entity through Covered California and will have employees certified as enrollment counselors. We are also working in partnership with other community-based organizations to plan enrollment events and coordinate outreach efforts to uninsured residents.

Contra Costa Health Plan

Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) also has staff certified to assist individuals and families enroll on CCHP. As I have mentioned in previous messages, CCHP is one of the five plans in Contra Costa that will offer health insurance through Covered California and one of two plans to offer managed care to the Medi-Cal population. CCHP also manages the care of more than 12,000 Low Income Health Plan (LIHP) members. As you may know, this program will end on Dec. 31, 2013, and we are working closely with the state to ensure continuity of care for these individuals. Ten thousand of them will transition to Medi-Cal and the remaining 2,000 will need to choose a health plan

through Covered California with federal subsidies to help make their health insurance affordable. We expect that CCHP will continue to provide managed care services to most LIHP members through Medi-Cal or Covered California.

Covered California's call centers received more than 59,000 calls during the first five days of open enrollment. We are proud of the performance of our county's Employment and Human Services Department staff who operate one of the three call centers in the state. They, along with the other call centers, managed to reduce the wait time on the phones from 15 minutes to less than four minutes by the fourth day of open enrollment.

More to come

You have all received an all-staff email from me with flyers attached to help inform you and your patients/clients about ACA. Our website is a resource for patients and staff and the information offered includes frequently asked questions and links to other sites and resource materials. We are developing a list of agencies and organizations located in the county with staff trained or in the process of being trained to provide application assistance to the uninsured. We will post this information on our website as soon as it is available.

Health Care Reform Resources

As the county health system, we are committed to ensuring the residents of Contra Costa are informed about what the Affordable Care Act (ACA) offers. The ACA, also known as Health Care Reform or Obamacare, means more people will have access to affordable health insurance. For more information and links to helpful resources like Covered California, please visit our website: cchealth.org/aca/

Beginning of a Journey

Despite the ongoing controversy in Washington, D.C., this is the beginning of a long journey. The ACA is now law. When Medicare and Medicaid were established in this country, it took a long time for these programs to reach their full potential and overcome political opposition. The same will be true of ACA. I have every confidence that over the next six months during open enrollment more and more residents will discover they have a secure form of health insurance. They will understand that they can no longer be denied health insurance because they have pre-existing health conditions, or have their insurance terminated because they got sick and cost the insurance company too much in medical care. I am convinced that in a year or two we will see full implementation and acceptance of this long awaited law and a shift in our country to a belief that all of our residents should have access to high-quality, affordable health care.

When that time comes, those of us who spent our professional careers dealing with the consequences of lack of affordable insurance can begin to concentrate our time and energy on prevention, and the health and well-being of our residents and communities.

Sincerely,



William B. Walker, M.D.

The next Director's Report will be the November issue. Publicize your upcoming events and successes by sending information by October 28 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/>



At this year's Project Homeless Connect, people were offered clothing, veterinary services and haircuts.

Project Homeless Connect Serves Hundreds in Need of Critical Services

Our Homeless Program, numerous community-based organizations and public agencies, and scores of volunteers gathered Oct. 9 at the Contra Costa County Fairgrounds in Antioch to deliver a thorough offering of services to our local homeless population through Project Homeless Connect. The one-day event helped hundreds of people, providing access to food, medical and dental services, veterinary service for pets, mental health and substance abuse services, housing programs and legal help. Health Services also accepted about 50 applications for the county's Low-Income Health Program (LIHP). After Jan. 1, many of those enrolled in LIHP will automatically be covered by the Medi-Cal expansion, a key component of health care reform. In addition to the many community groups that supported Project Homeless Connect, state Assembly members Jim Frazier, Joan Buchanan, and Nancy Skinner, along with county Supervisor Federal Glover, played key roles in planning and supporting the event.

A Welcome Change for Patients and Their Families

Our Regional Medical Center has replaced its visitation policy with a new "welcoming policy" intended to encourage the presence and participation of family members and other loved ones in the care of our patients. CCRMC has been open 24/7 to guests of patients since mid-September. The welcoming policy, the result of months of planning and committee work, will help better embrace the communities we serve and enhance care for our patients, who often feel more comfortable when surrounded by familiar faces. In the first month since the new policy went into effect, CCRMC welcomed approximately 400 family members, friends and loved ones of patients during evening hours. Feedback from patients and their guests has been extremely positive. "This is an important step on our journey to cultivate meaningful partnerships with people who receive care in our system and their loved ones," said Anna Roth, CEO of CCRMC & Health Centers. The welcoming policy puts decisions about who is family, a spouse, or a care partner in the hands of patients, not the hospital, and includes specific non-discrimination language for people from all backgrounds, including the LGBT community. This change was made possible by the hard work of staff at CCRMC and Health Centers, Health Services and the Sheriff's Office.

To view the working drafts of the Welcoming Policy, visit [our website](#) and feedback can be sent through the comment feature. There's also more information on Anna Roth's blog: <http://safetynethospital.blogspot.com/>

HazMat Responds to Propane Tanker Rollover in Richmond

Earlier this month, our Hazardous Materials staff and other emergency responders helped safely contain and stop a leak from an overturned trailer carrying propane. The accident happened the morning of October 7 on the on-ramp for eastbound I-80 near Carlson Boulevard in Richmond. A nearby motel had to be evacuated and the freeway on-ramp and off-ramp were closed for hours while crews responded to the incident. The HazMat team made a number of entries into the hot zone to assess the leak and slow it down. Propane got into a stormwater drain, so the HazMat team covered it in order to protect against the possibility of the gas igniting in the drain and causing an explosion above ground. The team also assisted in up-righting the trailer and off-loading the propane contents into another vehicle. HazMat worked closely with Richmond and El Cerrito fire departments in the response to make sure that the response was done safely.



A HazMat team helped up-right an overturned trailer carrying propane in Richmond earlier this month.

Health Care Workers Must Get Vaccinated or Wear Masks for the Upcoming Flu Season

For the second consecutive year, health care workers throughout Contra Costa County are being required to get their annual flu vaccines or wear a mask if they work in patient care settings. Last year, Health Services Director and County Health Officer Dr. William Walker issued an ongoing order mandating vaccinations or masking for health workers during each flu season, which goes from Nov. 1 to March 31. The mandate applies to anyone who works in patient care settings such as local hospitals, ambulances, ambulatory health clinics, skilled nursing and other health facilities. Health care workers who don't receive a flu vaccine must wear a mask while in patient care areas during the flu season. CCHS is offering free flu vaccines to employees subject to the mandate. After the 2012-13 flu season, some facilities reported 30-40 percentage point improvements in vaccination coverage and multiple facilities reported 99-100% of their health care workers were vaccinated.



An order by County Health Officer Dr. William Walker (shown here got his flu shot recently from Public Health Nurse Program Manager Sue Guest) requires vaccinations or masking for health workers during each flu season, which goes from Nov. 1 to March 31.

For more about the flu vaccine mandate, visit cchealth.org/flu. If you are a CCHS employee, find out how to get a free flu vaccine by visiting iSITE.



Ambulatory Care, Public Health and Behavioral Health are partnering at Concord Health Center Building 2 to deliver a new integrated model of care.

Open House for Concord Health Center Expansion Next Month

Please join us on November 18 to celebrate the opening of a second facility at the Concord Health Center. The new facility, which is called Concord Health Center Building 2 or CHC2, is located right next to the existing health center. It contains nine exam rooms, a treatment room, two group rooms, a large provider workstation and several offices for members of the care team. Ambulatory Care, Behavioral Health Services and Public Health are partnering to deliver a new integrated model of care at CHC2. In addition to medical staff, the facility includes two mental health clinical specialists, a half-time psychiatrist, and two public health nurses who will provide community outreach focused primarily on homeless patients. In addition to celebrating the opening of CHC2, we'll also be celebrating the introduction of ambulatory care services at the nearby Adult Mental Health Clinic also in Concord.

The CHC2 Open-house Celebration will be held 4:30–6 p.m. **Monday, November 18, 2013** Concord Health Center Building 2 3024 Willow Pass Rd., Concord



Stephanie Pitman, an IHSS provider, learns to wrap an open-tissue wound.

Pilot Program Trains In-Home Caregivers

Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) is collaborating with the Employment & Human Services Department (EHSD), the California Long-Term Care Education Center (CLTCEC) and the Services Employee International Union (SEIU) in a pilot program that offers training to In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) providers, who deliver much needed care to persons with disabilities and the elderly in their homes. IHSS providers, many of whom are relatives of the person being cared for, often have little or no formal health care experience. A federal grant awarded last year to CLTCEC and SEIU, which represents IHSS caregivers, is providing funding for a comprehensive 17-week training program through the California Long-Term Care Education Center. CCHP and EHSD identified high-risk Health Plan members receiving IHSS in-home care who would benefit from having better-trained IHSS providers. This list was used by EHSD to recruit IHSS consumer/provider teams interested in the training opportunity. The goals of the pilot program are to enhance in-home care, reduce emergency room visits and hospital admissions and improve health outcomes. Contra Costa and Los Angeles currently are the only two counties in the state participating in the pilot. It's expected that Contra Costa will train more than 200 IHSS providers by the end of the three-year pilot.

For more information about the IHSS training pilot, contact CCHP's Laurie Crider at laurie.crider@hds.cccounty.us



Joan McSpadden of Project Linus (2nd from the right, top row) poses with Public Health staff and some blankets donated by her organization to the Nurse-Family Partnership.

Blankets Donated for Babies

Our Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), which provides home visits by public health nurses to first-time mothers, was given a generous donation of receiving blankets and small quilts from Project Linus earlier this month. The infant receiving blankets will be given to mothers to help promote bonding with newborns, and the quilts will be used by NFP nurses to, among other things, demonstrate developmental activities like tummy time. Under the NFP—an initiative funded under the federal Affordable Care Act being run by Family, Maternal & Child Health (FMCH) Programs—nurses provide mothers with health and parenting education, and also serve as life coaches who help clients become more self-sufficient. NFP received the donation after recently establishing a partnership with the Diablo Valley chapter of Project Linus, a nonprofit named after the blanket-toting character in the Peanuts comic.

For more information about the Nurse-Family Partnership, contact Dawn Dailey at 925-313-6325 or visit www.nursefamilypartnership.org

Consider Giving to the 2013 Combined Charities Campaign

We encourage all Health Services employees to consider giving this month to the 2013 Combined Charities Campaign. Each year, county employees donate to several nonprofit groups that help our community by giving to the cause of their choice. This year, several charities could use your help, including the Contra Costa Regional Health Foundation, the Family Practice Residency Program and the Darius Jones Foundation. If you are interested in donating, contact your division coordinator for these materials and more instructions (check iSITE to see a list of division coordinators). Donations may be made by check or online. Last year, more than 600 Contra Costa employees donated more than \$160,000 in much-needed funding to local nonprofits.

For more information, please visit the 2013 Combined Charities Campaign page on the [County's website](#)

Brentwood and Clayton Become HeartSafe Communities

Our Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division has officially designated the cities of Brentwood and Clayton as HeartSafe Communities for their efforts to raise the chances of survival for anyone suffering a heart emergency, which is one of the leading causes of death in Contra Costa County. Both communities have established strong chains of survival, meaning many residents are trained and empowered to recognize the signs of heart emergencies, know how to perform CPR, can use automated external defibrillators and know how to initiate advanced life support by calling 911. Serious injury and death from heart disease can be prevented when a community has a strong chain of survival in place, said Dr. Joe Barger, EMS medical director. Clayton and Brentwood join eight other cities and unincorporated communities that have so far qualified for the HeartSafe designation. Another seven are currently working to meet the standards set by Contra Costa EMS and the American Heart Association.

For more information about the program, please visit www.cchealth.org/ems/heartsafe.php



School-Based Clinic Health Educators (please see iSITE for a list of names)

Public Health

For implementing a series of health presentations for incarcerated youth, presenting health information during 14 high school registration walk-throughs, and for providing counseling services in five school-based health centers.

◆Nominated by Jena Fiel

Ultrasound Staff (please see iSITE for a list of names)

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers

For improving ultrasound care for women in the Emergency Department.

◆Nominated by Amy Buoncristiani

Kelly Riddle

Public Health Microbiologist

Public Health

For taking initiative to come in after hours to perform a lab test that was urgently needed to determine delivery options for a pregnant patient.

◆Nominated by Judy Bliss

Judith Bliss, M.D.

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers

For always going above and beyond for her patients and staff and for her pleasant attitude.

◆Nominated by CCRMC-Healthy Start Martinez Staff

Terrence Brown

Clerk—Senior Level

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers

For his compassion and empathy for our clients, for his willingness to go the extra mile to help them, and for always being courteous and polite.

◆Nominated by Barbara Bain

Rosalyn Pumares, RN

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers

For her calm and compassionate demeanor with patients and staff and for doing an amazing job as a charge nurse and diabetes educator.

◆Nominated by Lisa Mora

Niesha Morris

Clerk—Senior Level

Julian Fill

Donna Stream

Clerks—Experienced Level

Paris Ross

Clerk—Beginning Level

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers

For their outstanding work in presenting the West County Health Center health information management workplace behavior guidelines to staff in an informative and entertaining manner.

◆Nominated by Lavonna James



Gina Soleimanieh

Medical Staff Coordinator
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers

For redesigning the layout of the Medical Staff Office to increase work space and provide efficient traffic flow.

◆ Nominated by Cheryl Goodwin

Joanne Genet

Public Health Program Specialist I
Public Health

For being a fearless pioneer in advocating for policy change for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) clients and employees for over 20 years, including spearheading efforts for CCHS to be a recognized leader in LGBT healthcare equality through the Human Rights Campaign 2013 Healthcare Equality Index.

◆ Nominated by CCHS Pride Initiative Members

OCTOBER MILESTONES

Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Jerry C. Halterman, Mary M.R. Bautista, Liwayway B. Cook, Nicole D. Meyer, Debra G. Cowden, David J. Ezra, Marjorie L. Frank, Melissa A. Bolanos, Domenic J. Cavallaro, Nicolas A. Kenery, Norma I. Erazo, Marison Kimura (10 years); Imtiaz A. Ghorri, Julie A. Vasquez, Rosario B. Abella, Laurie A. Terranova, Akiko Rodriguez, Jana L. Aloo, Penny K. Britton (15 years); Ronnie Marquez, Gary E. Stater, Carolyn D. Rangel, Trent Tate, Cindy J. Collins, Jessica Glasky, Anthony Pizzo, Charlotte I. Adams (20 years); Lynn B. Morgan, Pamela G. Gomez, and Jill A. Miller (25 years).