The Making of Our Integrated Health System

Had you asked me 40 years ago how we should meet the demands of healthcare reform four decades later, I would have pretty much described the system we have today in Contra Costa.

Of course, our current health system wasn’t created overnight. It took the dedication and vision of many people through the years.

In 1974, we started our vibrant Family Medicine Residency Program. Our Residency Program is now one of the most highly sought after programs of its kind in the nation with over 700 applicants for the 14 slots that are available annually. Our program is recognized for training superb doctors who serve not only Contra Costa County, but other rural and underserved communities around the world (see story about the Global Health Fellowship on page 3). It has been and continues to be the heart and soul of our delivery system and remains a huge contributor to our ability to recruit and retain qualified physicians to meet the demands of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The First Health Plan of its Kind

In the 1970s, the Board of Supervisors established a Medi-Cal only health plan, Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP). In the 1980s, we became the first publicly sponsored, federally qualified health plan in the nation, enabling us to not only enroll Medi-Cal members, but Medicare and commercial members, including county employees. This put us in an ideal position when the California Department of Healthcare Services started to require Medi-Cal beneficiaries to join a managed care plan, starting with families and children in 1995. Unlike other counties that had to create local initiatives to respond to federal and state policy changes, we had CCHP, and it has been critical with implementation of Medi-Cal expansion and other provisions of ACA. Its membership has grown by nearly 100,000 since ACA implementation and boasts almost 200,000 members today.

Obviously, the health department doesn’t have capacity to care for all of the lives managed by CCHP. To meet demand, CCHP has partnered with community clinics, private physicians and Kaiser, which accepts Medi-Cal members who were recently enrolled in their plan. The role and importance of CCHP as part of Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) cannot be overemphasized. It is essential to our success as a public healthcare delivery system.
A Hospital is Born—and Reborn

In the late 1880s, the first County hospital was built and in 1997, the current 164-bed hospital, Contra Costa Regional Medical Center, opened its doors to patients. We have always understood that when patients are very sick or injured they need emergency or inpatient care. But we’ve also understood that the availability of primary and preventative care is essential to the health of a community. ACA shines a light on primary care that is integrated with behavioral healthcare, and having 11 Federally Qualified Health Centers geographically dispersed throughout the County has prepared us to be responsive to this demand for patient-centered outpatient care.

Last month, we opened the expanded Antioch Health Center in its new location, doubling the primary care capacity and adding children’s behavioral health services. In the last few years, we have expanded clinic hours and added wellness centers that integrate behavioral health and physical health, and we continue to improve processes that include non-traditional methods of delivering healthcare.

The Importance of Community Health

In addition to healthcare, ACA requires patient and resident engagement to address the social determinants of health. Having Public Health as a division of the Health Department positions us to be responsive to these requirements. We have always known the importance of community health, and our many partnerships with the community over the years has positioned us well to meet the new demands of ACA.

As the director of CCHS for the past 20 years, I appreciate the visionary, forward thinking of the leaders who preceded me. We have the ideal infrastructure to provide world-class healthcare and be the provider of choice for those who live and work in Contra Costa. The journey continues as we work together with the community to build upon our successes and improve and change as needed to address the health needs of the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

William B. Walker, M.D

Contra Costa CARES Enrolls 2,300 Members—and Counting

A new pilot program that offers primary care to uninsured adults in Contra Costa County has enrolled nearly 2,300 residents in its first few months.

Contra Costa CARES provides health coverage to undocumented adults who are ineligible for Medi-Cal or Covered California. Program participants can access primary care services, including basic laboratory and radiology services, at La Clinica, Lifelong, and Brighter Beginnings. Specialty care, dental, vision, emergency care and hospitalization are not covered under the program.

The goal is to enroll up to 3,000 residents during the pilot. Contra Costa Health Plan has been providing valuable technical assistance to the program, which was developed through an extensive planning process with leadership provided by Contra Costa Health Services, Hospital Council of Northern & Central California and the Community Clinic Consortium of Contra Costa.

The $1 million pilot program was approved last fall by the Board of Supervisors and is being funded by the county and local hospitals. CCHS Director Dr. William Walker said he hopes the state or federal government will eventually provide a permanent funding source for the program.

For more information on Contra Costa CARES, contact the Community Clinic Consortium of Contra Costa at 510-233-6230.

To publicize upcoming CCHS events and successes, contact Will Harper at will.harper@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6903. The Director’s Report is available online at cchealth.org/newsroom and on isite at http://cchs/
Fundraiser on March 14 to Help Global Health Fellowship Continue its Work Abroad

Staff and community members are invited to attend a fundraising event on Monday, March 14 to support our renowned Global Health Fellowship.

The event will take place at the Pleasant Hill Community Center from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is $35, although residents and global health fellows get in free. The fundraiser is being hosted by the Contra Costa Regional Health Foundation (CCRHF), a nonprofit agency that supports Contra Costa Health Services. There will be complimentary wine—donated by Sky Terrace Vineyards—and free appetizers provided by caterer Lovable Feast. Proceeds from the event will help purchase lifesaving medical equipment, such as point-of-care ultrasound devices, for use in disadvantaged countries. Funds will also pay for the fellows’ travel expenses.

The Global Health Fellowship Program, an initiative of the Contra Costa Family Medicine Residency Program that works in partnership with UCSF, is one of only six family medicine global health fellowships in the country. Fellows provide training to family physicians in other countries to help enhance care in their communities. Our global health fellows have worked overseas training local doctors in Kenya, South Sudan, Malawi, India and Mexico. If you cannot attend the event but would like to support you can make your tax-deductible donation at http://bit.ly/DonateGlobalHealth.

For more information about the Global Health Fellowship fundraiser, contact Rhonda Smith at Rhonda.Smith@hsd.cccounty.us.
## All Contra Costa Emergency Departments Agree to Safe Prescribing Guidelines for Opioids

To help address the epidemic misuse and abuse of prescription pain medications, all emergency departments and urgent care clinics in Contra Costa County have adopted a set of safe prescribing guidelines for opioids.

The number of deaths from drug overdose has risen sharply over the past decade, and has now overtaken motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of accidental death in people aged 24 to 64, a trend reflected in our county. The guidelines were developed by the East Bay Safe Prescribing Coalition, which includes Contra Costa Health Services, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency and the Alameda-Contra Costa Medical Association. The guidelines include general advice about when and how to prescribe painkillers, an agreement to avoid prescribing long-acting drugs such as OxyContin and Fentanyl, and recommended security practices to reduce abuse, such as limiting amounts prescribed and using the California Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (CURES), which tracks prescriptions for opioid pain medicine and other controlled substances. Local participating healthcare systems include John Muir Health, Kaiser Permanente, Sutter-Delta, San Ramon Regional and Contra Costa Regional Medical Center & Health Centers.

For more information about the coalition or its guidelines, visit eastbaysaferx.org

## Board of Supervisors Considers Environmental Health Placarding Ordinance

The Environmental Health Division (EHD) introduced an ordinance to the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors this week that would create a new tool to help the public assess food safety at county restaurants and other businesses that sell food. If approved, the ordinance will require retail food permit holders to publicly display green, yellow or red placards indicating the number of major health violations found during their most recent inspections beginning this spring.

Green placards indicate a passing grade; yellow placards indicate a business was found to have two or more food-safety violations that needed to be immediately corrected; and a red placard means inspectors have ordered a business to close until a health hazard has been abated. Affected permit holders would include restaurants, retail food facilities and mobile food vendors. Most other Bay Area counties already use or are planning to add a similar placarding system.

The Board is scheduled to continue its hearing about the ordinance and decide whether to implement it at its March 15 meeting.

For more information about the placarding program, contact EHD Director Marilyn Underwood at Marilyn.Underwood@hsd.cccounty.us.
Growth of Contra Costa Health Plan Membership Continues in East County

Recent data show that a commanding plurality of Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) members live in East County, continuing a population shift that calls for renewed emphasis on recruitment and retention of healthcare providers in the region. The plan has more than 195,000 members, 43% of whom now live in East County, compared to 29% in West County and 27% in Central County. The age distribution of membership is shifting as well, with the recent Medi-Cal expansion bringing many more adults into Medi-Cal Managed Care.

The majority of our patients were younger than 18 a few years ago; now 62% are adults and 38% are children.

To accommodate growth and change, CCHP is focusing on recruiting and retaining primary care providers in East County, particularly those who see adults, and is now paying higher rates to East County providers in the Community Provider Network who increase capacity for adult patient visits. CCHP is also working with Contra Costa Regional Medical Center & Health Centers to increase provider recruitment and retention in East County Clinics.

Public Concerned About Zika Virus as State Confirms its First Travel-Related Cases

The Public Health Division and our prenatal care providers across Health Services have fielded many questions recently from patients and the public about Zika, the mosquito-borne disease spreading rapidly in parts of the Caribbean, Central and South America. While Zika usually causes no or mild symptoms, researchers are studying a possible relationship between the disease and microcephaly, a serious birth defect, in infants born to infected mothers.

Much is still unknown about this virus, and there is new information weekly. There have been no documented cases of the Zika virus being transmitted within California, but cases have been documented in the state—including two in Contra Costa County—involving people returning from Zika-affected countries.

Our Public Health Laboratory is working with the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention to facilitate testing, and Contra Costa Public Health has issued an advisory for local providers with information about who should tested and how to submit samples. Providers with questions are encouraged to get in touch with our Public Health Communicable Disease programs at 925-313-6740.

Visit cchealth.org/mosquito-borne-illnesses for more information and links to resources.
Construction Begins on CCRMC Emergency Department Redesign

Work began last month at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center that will eventually add eight additional licensed clinical beds in the Emergency Department. Construction is expected to conclude in the early fall. There should be no impact on current capacity during the construction, although things will be noisier for a while. The project includes the redesign of the old diagnostic imaging film room and remodeling of the cardiopulmonary area.

The new layout will improve the ED’s ability to provide timely and resource-appropriate care, particularly for less sick patients, said Chief Medical Officer Dr. Samir Shah. The new treatment spaces will also improve the patient-care experience, with a focus on privacy, comfort and efficiency, Dr. Shah added. This project has been a collaborative effort between nursing, physicians, patients, registration, facilities, social work, utilization review, diagnostic imaging, cardiopulmonary and administration.

Outpatient Breastfeeding Support Program Wins Award

Congratulations to our Breastfeeding Task Force for winning this year’s Golden Nugget Award for health services from the California Breastfeeding Coalition (CBC). The CBC recognized the task force, for its work to build “sustainable lactation support that is integrated into the health care system, particularly for the African American population.” The task force—which includes representatives from Contra Costa Regional Medical Center (CCRMC) & Health Centers, WIC, public health nursing and Contra Costa Health Plan—began its work in 2012 after receiving grant funding. It has since developed a sustainable funding stream to support six new outpatient lactation clinics, the establishment of an African American breastfeeding support group and the hiring of several lactation consultants and peer counselors, including the first African American lactation consultants to work in the county. Initial tracking data show that mothers who give birth at CCRMC are exclusively breastfeeding their babies for longer since the lactation support program was launched.

For more information, contact Pediatric Department chair Dr. Francine Jolton at Francine.Jolton@hsd.cccounty.us.

For more information about the project, contact Dr. Shah at Samir.Shah@hsd.cccounty.us or Chief Operating Officer Timothy Thompson-Cook at Timothy.Thompson-Cook@hsd.cccounty.us.

CCRMC Gift Shop Needs Volunteers

Due to staffing issues, the Helping Hands Gift Shop at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center (CCRMC) has reduced its hours on Mondays and Friday. The gift shop now closes at 12 Noon on those days. It will remain open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday. The CCRMC Auxiliary is looking for more volunteers to staff the gift shop. Volunteers are entitled to discounts at the gift shop and free beverages during their shifts. They also receive free annual flu shots and a letter of recommendation after completing 200 hours of service. Proceeds from the gift shop benefit patient care in the hospital.

If you know someone interested in volunteering, have them contact volunteer coordinator Rhonda Smith at Rhonda.Smith@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-370-5440.
You’re a GEM for Going the Extra Mile

Jesse Parks, RN
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers
For quickly responding and assessing the needs of a patient and getting them the appropriate level of care. For demonstrating great leadership skills and professionalism while providing excellent care to a patient.
♦ Nominated by Brenda Simmons

Gregory Garcia
Information Systems Assistant II
Information Technology
For providing support to a team of 20 during a temporary office relocation. For helping us continue our work during the move without interruptions. For his pleasant attitude, smile and team spirit.
♦ Nominated by Maura Hoag and Stephanie Haley

Teresa McGowan
Environmental Services Supervisor
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers
For her 30 years of service, dedication and commitment to CCHS and the patients we serve. For her enthusiasm, knowledge and pursuit of excellence. For chairing the EVS Engagement Committee, conducting compliance checks to keep us audit ready and completing surveys with patients. For positively impacting the lives of thousands, and being a pleasure to work with over the years.
♦ Nominated by Richard Mentze

Jean Moss
Clerk-Senior Level
Behavioral Health
For being a tremendous asset to Mental Health and Probation Services. For her hard work, attention to detail, and positive attitude. For always going the extra mile to support the team.
♦ Nominated by Daniel Batiuchok

Patricia Limon
Clerk-Senior Level
Public Health
For managing a large volume of fast paced schedule changes to keep Public Health clinics staffed. For her positive attitude and excellent customer service to her coworkers and the public.
♦ Nominated by Ashley Carrion

William Adamo
Mobile Clinic Operator
Public Health
For going above and beyond on a daily basis to help coordinate our mobile clinics and team. For keeping us ready to serve our patients.
♦ Nominated by Ashley Carrion

Fadua Galdamez
Health Promoter
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers
For always helping patients as a navigator and advocate. For providing service with excellence.
♦ Nominated by Norma Martinez and Sue Meltzer

Roberta Martinez
Clerk-Specialist Level
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers
For being the go-to person for staffing services that everyone can depend on.
♦ Nominated by Sue Hilbun

Juliette Manry
Ambulatory Care Registration Manager
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers
For being conscientious, caring, and a pleasure to work with. For always going the extra mile and having an open-door policy.
♦ Nominated by Sue Hilbun

Tami Sloan
Medical Staff Coordinator
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers
For being the heart of the residency program, and for showing that she cares. For her strong work ethic and being fun to work with.
♦ Nominated by Joann Valencia
You’re a GEM for Going the Extra Mile

- **Kristin Moeller, MD**  
  Residency Director  
  Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers  
  For her tireless work to maintain and improve the Residency Program. For being our super person whom we respect and admire.  
  ♦ Nominated by Joann Valencia

- **Lorea Salcedo-Alvarado**  
  Clerk  
  Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Center  
  For being amazing with such a great attitude, incredible work ethics, and attention to detail.  
  ♦ Nominated by Joann Valencia

- **Patricia Harris-Spruell**  
  Clerk-Experienced Level  
  Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers  
  For having a very strong work ethic, great attitude, and always being willing to help others.  
  ♦ Nominated by Joann Valencia

- **Ernestine Cuyler**  
  Clerk-Experienced Level  
  Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers  
  For her impeccable organizational and creative skills. For being very conscientious, detail oriented and a true pleasure to work with.  
  ♦ Nominated by Joann Valencia

- **Simret Nanda, PhD**  
  Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers  
  For contributing her lunchtime to promoting self-care, stress reduction and fitness for West County Adult Mental Health staff.  
  ♦ Nominated by Saraphi Chawengchot

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 cchealth.org on the About Us page or on iSITE, our intranet, at http://cchs/  
Nominations are subject to approval by Division Directors.

**MARCH MILESTONES**

Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service:  
- Courtney J. Bowers, Marzieh A. Shafii, Blesilda M. Surio, Tanisha Marks, Andrew Lee and Don H. Weinreich (10 years);  
- Michael Y. Lacuesta, Jennifer E. Wood, Brett M. Horton, Nenita T. Roldan, Chiye Avila, Ward Smedt, Cherese S. Burnley, Araceli J. Trejo, Hope L. Tucker, Joemely C. Delatorre, and Maribel A.D. Ochoa (15 years);  
- Elizabeth A. McCoy, Lorene J. Bunting, Toni Philbrick, Phyllis Howard, Christopher M. Fiso and Martin F. Lynch (20 years);  
- Virginia Ruiz, Nancy Hendra, Raquel Lochhead and Darrell L. Pierce (25 years); and Suda Paul (30 years).