

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

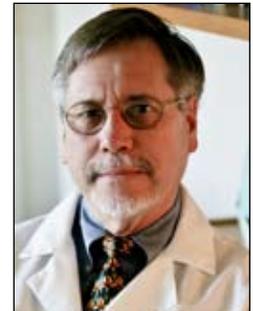
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Your Highest and Best Protection

Recently the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced priority groups for the soon-to-be released H1N1 swine flu vaccine. It is certainly good news that the vaccine may be available so soon. It should be even better news that health care workers are among the groups who will be given first opportunity to get the protection during what is now officially a worldwide pandemic.

What isn't such good news is there is every indication that health care workers—including many of you who work here in our system—will pass on this opportunity to get vaccinated. Last year, for example, even after I appealed to everyone to have the seasonal flu vaccine, the percentage of employees at CCRMC/Health Centers who were immunized only increased from 43% to 44%. That's a minimal improvement for a critical group of workers and a disturbingly low percentage for those of you who represent our first line of defense. It doesn't bode well for what is facing us with a possible double whammy of seasonal flu and H1N1 flu.



William B. Walker, MD
CCHS Director

This year more than ever

CDC's inclusion of health care workers as a priority for the H1N1 vaccine acknowledges how important you are to our ability to respond effectively if the pandemic gets worse. We got a little glimpse of the issue when the H1N1 outbreak began and emergency departments were besieged—fortunately for only a matter of days. As of August 25, the relatively mild pandemic has been responsible for 128 deaths and 1,400 hospitalizations in California (in Contra Costa, there have been six deaths and 138 hospitalizations as of August 28). But moving into the fall and winter, even if H1N1 is only as severe as seasonal flu, there could be 1.8 million California cases, 24,000 hospitalizations and more than 4,000 deaths. To prepare for that onslaught, we must be at full strength. All the planning and preparation we have been doing could be undermined by lack of staff. There is only one sure way to ensure that our system can respond: everyone who can be immunized must be, for both seasonal flu and H1N1 when that vaccine arrives.

DID YOU KNOW?

CCHS gave out
31,561 flu vaccines
during the 2008-09
flu season.

Why seasonal flu

I know that some of you probably think you'll get the H1N1 vaccine but will pass as usual on the seasonal flu vaccine—maybe because you don't usually get sick. I urge you to reconsider. Even if you don't come down with a severe case of seasonal influenza, you can still shed the virus and infect others. To be able to cope effectively with H1N1, we need to prevent as much seasonal flu as possible. Every year, nearly 36,000 Americans die of complications related to seasonal flu and our emergency departments and hospital inpatient units are stretched to capacity dealing with people who are sick with the flu. We must do everything possible to prevent that this year because we will need the capacity to deal with H1N1 cases. Also, the more we prevent seasonal flu, the easier it is for treatment decisions to be made, ruling out seasonal flu and homing in on H1N1.

How our response will work

This year we have a complicated flu response planning challenge as we gear up to deal with both strains of influenza. To prepare for both, we are changing our approach to seasonal flu vaccinations, hoping that process will lay the groundwork for providing the H1N1 vaccine as well.

We will be doing mass seasonal influenza vaccination efforts at drive-through community sites throughout the County on Saturdays in November. We are also planning to offer vaccines to students and teachers at 30–50 elementary schools. Our Health Centers are working to make the vaccine more accessible without appointments. And we are partnering with community providers such as the community clinics. We hope those efforts will give us a blueprint for the next phase: administering two doses of H1N1 vaccine, several weeks apart as soon as the vaccine is available. A second dose will be required to provide more of an immune boost because this is a novel virus and many of us, especially younger people, have no immunity to it. The school-

based clinics are especially important since we have seen how the flu spreads and impacts our schools, and the information we have so far indicates that young people are at higher risk for H1N1.

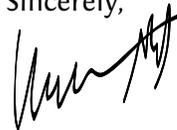
My personal appeal

I know that every year, we have difficulty convincing employees and the community to get vaccinated. Certainly good infection control practices, such as hand washing, covering coughs and staying home when sick, are important measures for all health workers to take. The use of personal protective equipment such as masks can also help control the spread of disease. And the antiviral Tamiflu—which is not a cure—can reduce the severity of H1N1 (it may be ineffective in treating seasonal flu). But at the end of the day, it would be ironic if our own employees, having been made a priority group by CDC for the vaccine, don't take advantage of this highest and best protection for them.

I'm asking you to get vaccinated and do it early for your own protection, for your families and for the community. Do it so that our health care system can respond and save lives and so you are healthy and can help your family and neighbors cope.

There are numerous venues to receive seasonal flu vaccine. Most of you can get the regular flu vaccine from your regular health provider. Kaiser offers vaccine at every one of its facilities. CCHP members will get a letter in September giving them information. The website flucliniclocator.org lists sites such as churches, Costco and other locations. CCRMC and Health Center employees should check the employee vaccination schedule with their managers.

Sincerely,



William B. Walker, MD

The Director's Report is published monthly. Deadline for the October edition is September 14. Publicize your upcoming events and successes by sending information to Kate Fowlie at 597 Center Avenue, Suite 255, Martinez 94553, fax 925-313-6219, or email: kfowlie@hsd.cccounty.us The Director's Report is available online at www.cchealth.org and on iSITE

CCHS Gives Update to Board of Supervisors, Holds H1N1 Partner Planning Meeting

Several of our Division directors and members of the Emergency Management Team were present at the County Board of Supervisors meeting August 4 to provide updates on our H1N1 flu response efforts. Giving presentations were Director Dr. William Walker, Ambulatory Care CEO Dianne Dunn-Bowie, Infection Control Nurse Kathy Ferris, Emergency Services Manager Kim Cox, Immunization Coordinator Erika Jenssen, CCHP CEO Patricia Tanquary and Emergency Medical Services Director Art Lathrop. As part of a follow up to a June community debrief, CCHS also held a planning meeting with medical partners on August 14. Attendees received an update on the H1N1 situation and planning efforts for the fall. Participating CCHS Divisions included Public Health, Contra Costa Health Plan, Emergency Medical Services, Contra Costa Regional Medical Center/Health Centers, and Mental Health.



Dianne Dunn-Bowie, left, and Kathy Ferris update the County Board of Supervisors on our H1N1 flu response.

For more information contact Kim Cox at kcox@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6648 or visit www.cchealth.org/topics/swine_flu/



Erin Hanson holds her newborn daughter Sydney.

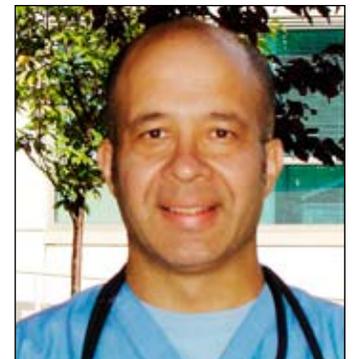
CCRMC's Free Greeting Card Service Delivers Joy From Afar

Our free online greeting card service at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center helped bring joy to new mom Erin Hanson, a Discovery Bay resident who recently gave birth at the hospital. Erin's fiancé, James, had to return to duty just days before their daughter Sydney was born. Through our website, her fiancé's military unit, which is currently serving in Kosovo, was able to pick a card and have it hand delivered by a hospital volunteer. Managed by Volunteer Services Coordinator Louise Lawson, the service offers cards in English and Spanish and is a nice way to give support to someone in the hospital, especially if you can't come and visit. The service can be accessed by anyone around the world.

The free greeting card service is available on our website: www.cchealth.org/medical_center/cards/

New Web Page Expands Medical Reserve Corps' Presence

The Contra Costa County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) now has its own web page on our website where members and would-be members can find training dates, read newsletters and check the current deployment level. The MRC consists of medical and non-medical volunteers who assist the community in times of emergency or disaster. Sponsored by the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General, the MRC is run locally by our Emergency Medical Services and Public Health Divisions. Contra Costa MRC Volunteer Team Leader Dr. Neil Jayasekera, who works at our Regional Medical Center, said that in addition to disaster relief, the MRC provides public education and first-aid at community health events. Membership in Contra Costa's MRC has been growing since it began in November, and Dr. Jayasekera said new members are always welcome.



Dr. Neil Jayasekera

Visit the MRC page at cchealth.org/mrc. To find out more about MRC, contact Neil Jayasekera at njayasekera@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-370-5973.



The DIRECTOR'S REPORT RHD PAGE showcases 2008-09 Division strategies and activities to address four CCHS Reducing Health Disparities goals. The goals are: Improving consumer/client/patient/customer experience; Engaging and Partnering with community and public entities; Improving staff respect, responsiveness and cultural sensitivity; and Creating systems that support and promote access and respectful delivery of services. The complete CCHS RHD plan is available at <http://www.cchealth.org>

RHD SPOTLIGHT

This month we focus on the Reducing Health Disparities Unit, under the Office of the Director. The following are descriptions of the many different efforts showing how the RHD unit staff are leading and/or collaborating with CCHS staff in addressing CCHS' five-year plan.

The Four Goals of CCHS' Five-Year Reducing Health Disparities Plan are:

- Improve consumer/client/patient/customer experience in utilizing CCHS services
- Engage and partner with community and public entities to support healthier environments and culturally and linguistically appropriate care, services and behaviors
- Improve respect, responsiveness and cultural sensitivity in all staff internal and external interactions
- Enhance internal systems to support and promote access to and respectful delivery of services

Palliative Care Committee:

In collaboration with CCRMC committee members, the RHD unit is assisting in the development of a volunteer chaplaincy program that is representative of the diversity of faiths of our patient population.

Pittsburg Diabetes Team:

The RHD Unit is assisting the Pittsburg Health Center medical staff to develop a diabetes care model that can begin to address diabetes health disparities among Latino and African American patients.

Directors Report RHD page:

In collaboration with the CEI unit, the RHD staff produce the themes and content for the monthly Reducing Health Disparities page.



Left to right: Dawna Vann, RHD Education and Learning Coordinator, Tiombe Mashama, RHD Community Health Education Coordinator, Blanca Gutierrez, RHD Support Clerk, and Concepcion James, RHD Manager.

African American Health Initiative (AAHI):

A cross-divisional, multi-disciplinary group of county staff, whose mission is to reduce African American health disparities by increasing self-care and community wellness. Over the last two years AAHI has primarily focused on establishing community partnerships in West County (West County Critical Mass Health Conductor Project) and in East County (African American Health Initiative) to improve community wellness.

Service Excellence:

With CCHS Personnel Division, and with input from AAHI, the PRIDE Initiative and RHD champions, 250 managers and supervisors have been provided the training and tools to improve and enhance respect, responsiveness and cultural sensitivity of staff and support to develop unit specific service excellence principles and behavioral expectations.

CCRMC Education Program:

Using case studies and other exercises, RHD staff work to educate physician residents on health disparities, communication and diversity. RHD staff and Noon Conference physician leaders arrange for guest speakers to educate providers on reducing disparity issues and best practices.

African American Health Conductors Program (HCP):

With the Center for Human Development, RHD unit staff oversee the HCP. At Bay Point Family Service Center and Pittsburg Health Center, HCP provides patient navigation, health and chronic disease education and health education community forums.

Promotora Program:

With the Center for Human Development, the Bay Point and Pittsburg Health Centers, and the Public Health Community Wellness & Prevention Program, RHD staff provide oversight to the Promotora Program. The Promotoras provide Spanish language and culturally appropriate diabetes and nutrition health education and fitness activities, navigation, health benefit enrollment assistance and peer health support to more than 500 East County residents annually.

CCHS Violence Prevention Efforts:

Staffed by the RHD Unit, this cross-divisional team collaborates to identify, support and implement violence reduction and intervention strategies within three priority areas: Supporting Richmond's Office of Neighborhood Safety, Supporting Beyond Violence for Richmond and Antioch trauma victims at John Muir Health, and helping re-entrants on state parole access health care.

RHD Leadership:

CCHS Director Dr. William Walker, his assistant Julie Freestone and the RHD team meet twice a month to dialogue with Division staff on their reducing health disparity efforts and to plan strategies.

Physician Cultural Competency Assessment:

With CCRMC resident physician leadership and the Public Health Community Health Assessment, Planning and Evaluation Unit, RHD unit is supporting this project by connecting African American, Latino and LGBTQQI patient feedback via focus groups. The feedback will be used to develop an assessment tool to determine the cultural competency, professionalism and communication ability of physician residents.

Data Collection:

With the California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems/Safety Net Institute (CAPH/SNI), the Contra Costa Health Plan, Public Health Linguistic Access unit, and Information Systems and other division representatives, the RHD team is working to implement recommendations made by CAPH/SNI on collecting REAL (Race, Ethnicity and Language preference) data consistently across CCHS.

PRIDE Initiative:

The RHD unit provides support to the new initiative, which is striving to create a more respectful and culturally sensitive health service system for members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Intersex community (LGBTQQI).

For more information about any of the Reducing Health Disparities Unit activities, please contact Blanca Gutierrez at bgutierrez@hdsd.cccounty.us or by calling 925-957-5422.





Honor Roll

GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Ram Ramlall

Storekeeper

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center

For always being super helpful and for responding immediately and effectively to solve a major problem in the nursery related to a new product for premature babies.

◆ Nominated by Jane Proctor

Parna Kamyabfar

Supervising Accountant

Finance

For spending many hours reviewing numbers, preparing charts and projecting expenses and revenues to assist in the completion of the "Staff Report on the Determination and Apportionment of Certified Unified Program Agency Fees."

◆ Nominated by Randy Sawyer

Michaela Mougengkoff

The Mental Health Transition Team

Mental Health

For providing care, support, guidance and education to a mental health patient and the patient's family. Her efforts have contributed to his recovery.

◆ Nominated by a family member

Richard Bermudez

Financial Counselor

Emergency Department

For providing excellent service, making a genuine difference for patients and the clinical team and for his work with uninsured clients.

◆ Nominated by Julie Holmes

CCRMC Staff

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center

For the amazing professional and compassionate care provided during treatment and recovery to a patient diagnosed with cancer.

◆ Nominated by a patient

Dave Fry

Health Services Information Systems

Security Officer

For voluntarily planning, organizing and coordinating an inter-departmental golf competition for 40 golfers, benefiting CCHP's Healthy Living Program.

◆ Nominated by Chris Tanaka

Ira Sabio, RN

Co-Charge Nurse, Evening Shift

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center

For making time for every request and for demonstrating teamwork along with a professional attitude.

◆ Nominated by Mary List

Holly Hand

Mental Health Clinical Specialist

Mental Health

For dedication, grace, compassion and remarkable selflessness working with peers and clients under challenging circumstances and for helping to make the program a success.

◆ Nominated by Older Adult Mental Health

Meiko Windt

Health Services IS Specialist

Information Systems

For responding immediately and resolving a dilemma by loading software onto 12 computers in less than one hour, enabling our team to conduct training as scheduled.

◆ Nominated by Dana Stephens

Do you know someone who's going the extra mile?

Service Excellence nomination forms are available at www.cchealth.org and <http://cchs/> from any CCHS computer.

Milestones Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Latricia M. Johnson, Maria L. Lyttle, Chad Pierce, Christina L. Barron, Patricia M. Creel, Avtar Singh, Sherryl F. Cacacho, Karen K. Kerns, Tina M. VanWolbeck, Jane A. Grant, La Shan D. Haynes, Joy V. Mendoza, Catherine M. Wildermuth, Barbara Benedict, Lorrie A. Knott, Michaela D. Mougengkoff, Andrea C. Aiello (10 years); Ann Harvey, Sonia Sutherland, Soledad C. Abad, Marguerite Lee, Mercedes Paz, Christine Leivermann, Renee Matthews (15 years); Luz D. Baldoza, Roberta Hesperen, Hydee Tuason Ong, Rudy M. Sanchez, Santhamma John, Ann Schnake (20 years); Gary M. Smith (25 years); Charles A. Braggs and Donald N. Knepper Jr. (30 years).

Cancer Survivors, Staff Participate in Relay for Life

Last month, a dedicated group of CCRMC employees and cancer survivors walked for 24 hours to raise \$745 for the fight against cancer. Lynn King and Marianne Bunce-Houston, both oncology nurses at our Regional Medical Center, organized the “CCRMC & Friends” team for the local Relay for Life. The American Cancer Society Relay for Life represents the hope that those lost to cancer will never be forgotten, that those who face cancer will be supported, and that cancer will someday be eliminated. Every dollar raised by “CCRMC & Friends” will go toward lifesaving programs and services through the American Cancer Society. Don't forget: October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month!



Left to right: Heather Quisenberry; CCHS employee and cancer survivor Lelani Hernandez; cancer survivor Maria Pasquinucci; Oncology Nurse Lynn King and Oncology Nurse Marianne Bunce-Houston.

To find out more about the Relay for Life, visit www.cancer.org or call Marianne Bunce-Houston at 925-370-5822.



Health Column Offers Tips to Prevent Workplace Injuries

CCHS Industrial Occupational Therapist Steven Garcia writes about how bad posture or body mechanics at work can cause injuries in a recent Healthy Outlook column. He explains how to minimize these injuries by improving stability, support and clearance. Your two bases of support—feet and hips—are crucial for the stability and support of your spine. If you're sitting down while reading this, try taking your feet off the ground. Notice how your spine adjusts to bear the extra weight? Steven also explains that work surface—whether you're standing or sitting—should be kept at waist level to two inches below your elbows. The column, which runs regularly in the Contra Costa Times newspapers, includes these and many more tips for protecting your neck, back and arms.

Steven Garcia

To read more of this or other Healthy Outlook columns by CCHS staff, visit www.cchealth.org and click on the Healthy Outlook link in Items of Interest or on the Publications page.

Volunteers Needed to Connect Homeless People with Health Services

Our Homeless Program is holding an additional event this year to help homeless people connect with health services. Project Homeless Health Connect will be a free one-day event that is smaller than the annual Project Homeless Connect. Sponsored by Contra Costa Health Services and the City of Concord, the event will be held 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday, September 16 at the Willow Pass Center, 2748 East Olivera Road in Concord. Volunteers are needed to help set up, greet and direct people, assist service providers and provide general assistance. The event offers health, vision and dental care, as well as many other free services. Homeless Program Director Cynthia Belon said this is the first event in which vision services will be offered. Earlier this year, Project Homeless Connect 4 in Richmond served about 800 people.

For more information, visit www.cchealth.org/services/homeless/ or contact the Contra Costa Health Services Homeless Program at ProjectHomelessConnect@hsd.cccounty.us or call 925-313-6124.

Want to Keep Up with the Latest Health Services News?

Follow us on Facebook (Contra Costa Health Services) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/CoCoHealth) for news and health alerts!

Free Immunization Clinic Prepares Students for School

Our Public Health Division recently teamed up with General Federation of Women's Clubs Woman's Club of Antioch to offer free back-to-school immunizations. By the end of the one-day event on August 5, 166 people received 371 vaccines to help protect them from diseases such as measles, chickenpox, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio. Immunization Coordinator Erika Jenssen said that while the vaccines directly protect the children who received them, they also protect the broader community. In addition to back-to-school immunizations, free tetanus and whooping cough vaccines were available for adults. Vaccines are still available at Public Health clinics throughout the county.



Layla Mag is comforted by her mother as she receives a shot from nursing student Whitney Silva during an immunization clinic in Antioch.

To find out more about immunizations, visit www.cchealth.org/services/immunization/ or contact Erika Jenssen at ejenssen@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6734.



Drs Alan Siegel and Nishant Shah at last year's art event.

Event Highlights Health Care Workers' Artistic Side

The fourth Annual "Healthcare Workers as Creators" event will be held 5 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, September 24 on the lawn at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center in Martinez. The program features visual art and musical performances by Contra Costa Health Services' health care workers. A silent art auction will benefit Frontline Richmond, a grassroots anti-violence program. Vietnamese food will be served. The event is sponsored by ArtsChange, the nonprofit organization that grew out of the Richmond Health Center's Quilt of Many Colors Project. Performers will include: San Pablo City Councilman Arturo Cruz and his "Hiz-Kidz" Hip-Hop Vocal Group; The Rhythm Method, a Motown/R&B band; and Tommy Nunnely, a CCHS substance abuse specialist.

CCHS employees who want to participate or volunteer, can contact Dr. Alan Siegel at: doctoralan@gmail.com or 925-346-4993.

Course Prepares Mental Health Consumers to Work as Service Providers

Our Mental Health Division is again partnering with Contra Costa College to offer its SPIRIT (Service Provider Individualized Recovery Intensive Training) course beginning January 2010. SPIRIT is a training and support program for people who have life experience in the mental health system and want to work as service providers. Individuals who complete this training will receive community college credit and be prepared to work in the mental health field. Office for Consumer Empowerment Manager Susan Medlin, who runs SPIRIT, said the program trains students on how to support their peers and gives them the opportunity to grow in their own recovery. A limited number of stipends for the class are available. Applications are due September 30.

For information on how to apply for a stipend or the course, contact Susan Medlin at smedlin@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-957-5104.