

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

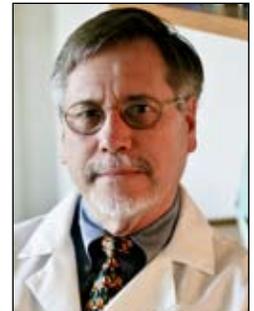
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What Really Matters

In the past few months, I've been preoccupied with budget issues and health reform and myriad other issues that my job involves. The news—whether you read the local paper, get information from broadcast media or browse online—is filled with discussion, controversies, outright lies and painful subjects we might rather ignore.

Unfortunately, what seems to be getting lost in all the noise is what should be the bottom line for those of us who are public servants: the patients/clients/customers. Too much of the discussion is about whose financial ox is being gored. The true needs are getting caught in the crossfire.



William B. Walker, MD
CCHS Director

Outcomes for real people

At the end of the day, what people want with their insurance card, enrollment in a plan, or assignment to a primary care physician, is to be cared for and I believe that is our strength. It starts with our mission statement and is visible throughout our organization in so many ways. As a health care leader, I am immersed in the details of health reform and the demands of managing an enormous department. As a physician, I'm reminded of what really matters in small ways every day.

A story in last month's Director's Report about a new mother who received a post card via our online service from her fiancé serving in the military in Kosovo. An email from a patient undergoing chemotherapy who said she was "wrapped in love and support" because of the Blankies for Grownups project at CCRM. An accident victim who wrote to thank the unit who cared for her after a car accident. A husband who thanked our "courteous competent professionals" for helping to diagnose his wife's congestive heart failure. These stories aren't about how the money flows in the health care system and whether the government or a private provider delivers care. They are about outcomes for real people.

We save lives

As I've said often in the past months during the recent economic fiasco, an ever-increasing number of people without health insurance are turning to us as

DID YOU KNOW?

Last year, a total of **5,981 mammograms** were performed at our health centers.

Continued next page

their safety net. I see some of them every week in my clinic. For most, it is their first exposure to our system. Recently I treated a patient who owns a small business. With the current business decline, he was forced to drop his health insurance. For more than a year since then, he went without medication for hypertension and depression. Before he realized he qualified for our county-funded Basic Health Care program, he couldn't function and his business declined. Now, he's back on his medication and business is picking up. He told me he feels we saved his life. He said he felt he'd come into a system that cares about him—his health and well-being.

Going the extra mile

What occurs to me in this huge discussion about “blowing up” the current health care system and creating something new is that amid all the policy talk, we're losing something we all know: It's the little things that count. Going the extra mile. Smiling across the registration desk. Acknowledging a patient as a human being. We know this throughout our system and we create ways to reach out to a broad range of the people and communities we serve. It's perhaps the most important part of what we do and it isn't part of any written benefit package.

Working together

In spite of our shrinking resources, we're finding ways to improve and become more focused on the core of our mission—and sometimes we miss things that would make that work better.

Emergency Management Team Expands to Strengthen H1N1 Flu Response

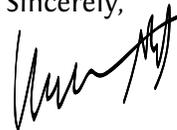
Our Emergency Management Team welcomed new members and discussed the coming flu season at last month's meeting. Attendees received an update from Immunization Coordinator Erika Jenssen and Public Health Director Dr. Wendel Brunner on the current status of H1N1 flu in our county and how we are responding. Other speakers included Karin Stryker of our Finance Division and Emergency Services Manager Kim Cox, who gave an overview of EMT members' duties during a Department Operations Center activation.

For more information about the EMT, contact Dr. Wendel Brunner at 925-313-6712. For the latest information about H1N1 flu and printable H1N1 prevention signs, visit www.cchealth.org/topics/swine_flu/

Recently, as the Medical Center continues its Lean management efforts, they invited two members of the National Alliance on Mental Illness to participate in a weeklong process that is part of Lean. Teresa Pasquini and Dave Kahler identified the fact that families of psychiatric patients had no place for their needs to be heard while the patient is in the Emergency Room and being admitted. As part of Lean's Kaizen process, they worked with our CCRMC staff through a rapid process to create a Family Involvement Center, which is now up and running. I'm proud that our system had the ability and energy to work to address this problem quickly and that we listened when consumers said they wanted a role as well. I hope the Center and the Family Involvement Partnership that evolved from the Kaizen process will become a model for listening to our patients and their families.

Many of you in our CCHS family have devoted your professional lives to serving the most vulnerable in our community, often in difficult environments. I know you try to do the right thing for the right reasons—not for a profit motive but to fulfill our mission to care for the residents of Contra Costa County. I hope your example for delivering services will help others focus on what really matters. And I thank you for focusing on what really matters: the people and communities we serve.

Sincerely,



William B. Walker, MD



Emergency Management Team members meet to discuss H1N1 flu response efforts.



Pictured left to right are: Dr. James Rael, Dr. Robert Liebig, Jackie White, Darrell Williams, Donna Kaufman, Grace Dwyer, Angela Womble, Brenda Stewart and Dr. Peter Won. Team members not pictured are: Heather Cedermaz, Jane McCormick, Sandy Whitesell, Cathy Steirn, Dr. Mike Gynn, Sharon Hiner and Dianne Dunn-Bowie.

Diagnostic Imaging Examines Improvements in Breast Health Care

Our Regional Medical Center and Health Centers are making great strides in the area of breast health to decrease the time it takes for women with abnormal mammograms to receive follow-ups and standardized interventions. The Abnormal Breast Finding to Tissue Improvement Project was launched by our Diagnostic Imaging Department in 2008. The main goals of this multi-disciplinary project were to improve communication, eliminate redundancies, standardize treatment and streamline the appointment process. Since the project began, significant progress has been made. Currently, 92% of patients are receiving a follow-up appointment within seven days of the abnormal mammogram finding. In addition, 86.3% of patients are receiving the appropriate follow-up intervention within 14 days. The project is led by Diagnostic Imaging Chairman Dr. Peter Won, Registered Nurse Grace Dwyer, Clerk Jackie White, Diagnostic Imaging Assistant Manager Angela Womble and Diagnostic Imaging Manager Darrell Williams.

To find out more about improvements in the Diagnostic Imaging Department, contact Brenda Stewart at bstewart@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-370-5674.

Mental Health Seeks Innovative Ideas to Improve Care

As part of the Mental Health Services Act's (MHSA) goal to transform care, our Mental Health Division is seeking input on innovative ways to deliver and improve mental health services. MHSA will fund these innovative ideas. Anyone can submit a project idea—whether you're a consumer, family member, provider or not even connected to the mental health system. Projects must promote interagency collaboration, increase access to services or underserved populations, or increase the quality of services. To encourage ideas, Mental Health will host an Innovation Launch Event from 4 to 6 p.m. October 7 in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 651 Pine Street, Room 107, Martinez. The deadline to submit ideas is October 28.



Mental Health Staff Cindy Downing, Aida Shirazi, Ph.D., and David Carrillo.

To submit an idea, contact David Carrillo at dcarrillo@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-957-5164.

Collecting Race, Ethnicity, and Language Data supports CCHS' Reducing Health Disparities and quality improvement efforts, which benefit the people we serve through the development of interventions and plans which make best use of our precious resources (our staff, their time, our funding). This month we spotlight some of those data collection efforts.

Cross-divisional Team Gets REAL About Data Collection

The REAL Data Collection Task Force, with Information Systems Assistant Director Sam Khan at the helm, aims to develop a system that will standardize CCHS-wide collection of race, ethnicity and language data. Sam says, "To paint a complete picture of the health disparities in our county, we must have a system that is standard across the board," Sam said. "This data will enable us to address any issues in an effective manner." CCHS is not alone in this effort. Other hospitals and health systems across California will also engage in this effort under a special project with the California Association of Public Hospitals' Safety Net Institute. In "Unequal Treatment," a 2002 report on health care disparities, the Institute of Medicine determined that data collection on the race, ethnicity and language preference of patients is a primary step in helping health care organizations identify, mitigate or eliminate health disparities. Eventually, the REAL Data Task Force will have a representative from each division. Currently, representatives include Otilia Tiutin from CCHP, Sam from IS and Finance, Sally McFalone from Public Health and Concepcion James from the Director's Office.

To find out more about the REAL Data Task Force contact Sam Khan at skhan2@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6703



Left to right, Estela Cerda, Lucy Smith, Concepcion James, Le'Andra Turner, Taiyun Roe, MD, and Troy Kaji, MD.

Pittsburg Diabetes Team: Utilizing Data For Quality Improvement

A look behind the diabetes numbers in Contra Costa reveals that race and language could affect a patient's outcome. The Pittsburg Diabetes Team recently focused on roughly 2,000 diabetic patients who receive primary care at the Pittsburg Health Center. Dr. Taiyun Roe led the study with help from Dr. Craig Desoer, Lucy Smith, Dr. Troy, Rosa Venegas, Sandy Queirolo, Sana Mazhar, Estela Cerda, LeAndra Turner and Concepcion James. Dr. Roe explained, "Without knowing the data, one cannot know where to direct one's efforts and is instead operating by hearsay." Data showed that Hispanics and African Americans had less control of their diabetes than any other racial group as measured by the HgA1c test—which measures how well a person has controlled their diabetes in the past two to three months. The average HgA1c for Hispanics and African Americans was 8.1—much higher than the goal of 7. The team also found similar disparities based on language and health coverage. Dr. Roe said, "This information will help us focus our future efforts with our diabetic care. It will help us find funding to support our goals of promoting widespread use of the diabetes registry and improving patient engagement in self-management."

To join the diabetes team, contact Dr. Taiyun Roe at troe@hsd.cccounty.us



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>

EMS Collects Data To Assess Health Disparities

For the last year, our Emergency Medical Services (EMS) division has been working with American Medical Response to find out if disparities exist in the EMS system. Ours is the first county to work with AMR to collect ethnic data on patients transported by emergency ambulance. “The 2002 Institute of Medicine report on racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare looked at unequal treatment in a number of health care settings but not in EMS,” EMS Director Art Lathrop said. “While we had been working with AMR to promote cultural awareness training among emergency responders, we realized that we did not have ethnic or racial data on patients transported by emergency ambulance.” In 2008, EMS began working with AMR to modify the electronic patient care reporting system to enable paramedics to enter basic ethnicity data. Data collection using the modified patient care report began in January 2009, and AMR has just made its first six months of data available to EMS for analysis. EMS Medical Director Dr. Joseph Barger and EMS Assistant Director and Quality Improvement Coordinator Pat Frost are looking at this data to formulate conclusions and look at next steps.



Left to right; Pat Frost, Leslie Mueller (AMR), Art Lathrop, Becky Hobson (AMR) and Dr. Joseph Barger.

CCHP Language Assistance Database Receives National Recognition

If Health Plan's Otilia Tiutin had her way, you'd know the preferred written and spoken language of all patients, consumers and clients before they stepped into a CCHS facility. Since 2008, CCHP's Member Services Department has asked its members for their preferred spoken and written language, race and ethnicity. The information is stored in the Language Assistance Database and can be used to schedule interpreters, analyze health disparities and more. The practice is so successful at collecting standardized information and improving care that it was recently featured as a best practice model in a national report by the Institute of Medicine titled, “Race, Ethnicity, and Language Data: Standardization for Health Care Quality Improvement.” Otilia, the manager of Cultural & Linguistic Services for CCHP, created the database with IS employees Art Webb and Viet Le. Recently, Dr. Walker and senior staff approved the Language Assistance Database concept as a good model for CCHS as a whole. When put into action, Otilia says each division will have access to patient, consumer and client preferences.



Top row, left to right: Matt Celis, Kennette Mallory, Corey Bagsby, Art Webb. 2nd row: Manuel Llamas, Viet Le, Troy Lam, Otilia Tiutin, Sonia Lameiras. Front row: Kathy Kentebe, Belkys Fernandez

To receive a copy of the IOM report or for info on the Language Assistance Database call Otilia Tiutin at 925-313-6063.





Honor Roll

GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Omar Adair

Orthopedic Technician
Martinez Health Center

For being very professional, always smiling and for going the extra mile for patients, nurses and doctors in a busy, stressful clinic.

◆ Nominated by The Nursing Staff 3 North Building 1

Faye Chao

Community Health Worker II
Mouang Saetern
Community Health Worker II
Richmond Health Center

For their teamwork and commitment to assisting people from Laos with getting appropriate health care, for keeping providers informed about current community issues and providing cultural interpretation and for being kind, caring, friendly and supportive to staff and patients.

◆ Nominated by Dawn Marie Wadle

Debbie Cowden

Disability Benefits Coordinator
Personnel

For being courteous, patient and taking the time to explain everything for employees during difficult times and for being knowledgeable about all the state and federal program qualifications.

◆ Nominated by Laurie Terranova

Shawn Eyer

Web Producer
Kate Fowlie
Communications Officer
Community Education & Information

For responding to Hazardous Materials by posting documents on the Health Services website at 2 a.m.

◆ Nominated by Randy Sawyer

Francine Jolton, MD

Ann Lockhart, MD
Liz Masterson, RN
Debby Oehrlein, RN
Perinatal Unit
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center

For an outstanding job planning and conducting simulation training for emergency situations, improving teamwork and the safety of our care.

◆ Nominated by Michelle Bushong

Troy Lam

Manager of Marketing & Member Svcs.
CCHP Member Services Dept.
Contra Costa Health Plan

For their hard work and dedication to the Language Assistance Data Base project and for their ideas for making the database user and member friendly.

◆ Nominated by Otilia Tiutin

Viet Le

Information Systems Programmer/
Analyst III
Art Webb
Information Technology Supervisor
Information Systems

For their expertise and ideas to make the Language Assistance Data Base project a success, making the data collection process comprehensive yet fast.

◆ Nominated by Otilia Tiutin

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

To recognize a CCHS employee, vendor or volunteer for outstanding Service Excellence performance, submit the commendation form by email to ServiceEX@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.

Milestones Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Concepcion T. James, Pattie L. Stewart, Audrey D. Gray, Phyllis Jackson, Cheryl R. Standley (10 years); Maria Cabida, Deborah Strych, Gena McCarthy, Eileen I. Holland, Catherine F. Sherman, Dorette J. McCollum (15 years); Gregory Pilarski, Barbara A. Barton, Priscilla A. Woo, Rhonda F. Walker (20 years); Yolanda Glasco, Roylen R. Stack (25 years); and Wendel C. Brunner (30 years).



The Art of Healers

Jeff Kaufman, Mark Vukalcic and Dr. Hideto Saito (left to right) jam at the “Health Care Workers As Creators” event September 24 at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center in Martinez. The annual event features artwork and music by CCHS staff. This year’s event raised \$2,000 for Frontline Richmond and ArtsChange.

Life Course Initiative Launches New Online Resources

Public Health’s Family, Maternal and Child Health (FMCH) Programs staff has made it easier for professionals and clients to get resources they need to better understand the Life Course model. Last month saw the launch of the Life Course Initiative pages on our website at <http://www.cchealth.org/groups/lifecourse/index.php> and fact sheets, downloadable presentations, online resources, and much more are included. FMCH Director Cheri Pies said the webpages will be updated regularly to include the latest materials and resources about maternal and child health. The mission of the Life Course Initiative is to reduce disparities in birth outcomes and change the health of the next generation in Contra Costa County. Information on the initiative’s wealth asset building project, Building Economic Security Today, also is available on the website.

To find out more about the Life Course Initiative, contact Padmini Parthasarathy at pparthas@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6178.

Health Column Answers Questions about H1N1 Flu Vaccine

CCHS Immunization Coordinator Erika Jensen tackles many of the most common questions about H1N1 vaccine in a recent Healthy Outlook column. She explains that everyone will need two different vaccines this year: one for seasonal flu and one for H1N1 flu. To help prevent spread of H1N1 flu, Erika writes that it is important health care workers get vaccinated. She also stresses the fact that vaccines are tested in clinical trials to ensure safety and effectiveness. Our health column, which runs regularly in the Contra Costa Times newspapers, includes these and many more tips for protecting yourself and your loved ones this flu season.

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.



Erika Jensen

The Director’s Report is published monthly. Deadline for the November edition is October 16. 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

Project Homeless Health Connect Features Vision Care for First Time

Our Homeless Program made full use of a mobile vision care provider that was in the area last month and held a scaled down version of its Project Homeless Connect event, focusing on health services for homeless residents. Project Homeless Connect is a one-day event that offers free health and social services to homeless people. The Concord event was the first time vision services were provided at one of our Project Homeless Connect events. In all, more than 271 people were served. Also, roughly 30



A client receives an eye exam at our Project Homeless Health Connect in Concord.

people received eye exams and glasses from vsp Vision Care. Homeless Program Director Cynthia Belon said she was excited to offer vision services, which are often out of reach for homeless people. In addition to vision services, people also received free flu shots, dental care, haircuts and much more. The last Project Homeless Connect, which was held in June, served nearly 800 people. The next Project Homeless Connect will be May 6, 2010.

To find out more about Project Homeless Connect, call 925-313-6124 or visit www.cchealth.org/services/homeless.

AODS Sponsors Walk for National Recovery Month

Staff from our Alcohol and Other Drugs Services Division appeared before the County Board of Supervisors last month to promote National Recovery Month activities in Septemeber. At the meeting, AODS Director Haven Fearn spoke about the progress his Division has made in providing services for people battling alcoholism and addiction. The Board of Supervisors proclaimed September 2009 as National Alcohol and Drug Recovery Month. This year's activities included picnics, dinners, dances and the fifth annual Recovery Walk at the Martinez waterfront. The AODS Advisory Board and Support 4 Recovery organized the walk with support from AODS and other community partners.



AODS Director Haven Fearn speaks to the County Board of Supervisors about National Recovery Month.

To find out about other AODS activities, contact Fatima Matal-Sol at fmatalso@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6311.

Free Breast Exams To Be Offered During Breast Cancer Awareness Month

There will be Breast Health Fairs at our Martinez, Pittsburg and Richmond Health Centers this month. Physicians, nurses, social workers, patient navigators and community cancer organizations will be on hand to give exams, provide education and answer questions. Free breast exams will be provided to uninsured women living in Contra Costa County. Bilingual staff will be present.

For more information visit http://cchealth.org/special/pdf/2009_breast_exams.pdf or call 925-646-5507.