History of Improving Patient Outcomes

Our Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers (CCRM/HCS) have been making improvements to patient safety and quality outcomes for most of the past decade. Starting with redesign efforts and early adoption of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s (ihi) 100,000 lives campaign—much work has been done to improve patient care and prevent avoidable deaths. Early on, we took seriously efforts to improve health outcomes for patients/clients/consumers. CCRM/HCS has been recognized for its innovative work in health care improvement and system transformation and was named an ihi Mentor Hospital.

National recognition of ‘courageous leadership’

Under the leadership of CCRM/HCS CEO Anna Roth, we are now working on safety and quality collaborations with other hospitals around the country. We have been continually recognized for our patient safety and quality improvements, and most recently began engaging our patients, families and other stakeholders in the system transformational redesign of programs. Just last month, CCRM/HCS was honored by being selected as the site for the regional launch of the Partnership for Patients: Better Care, Lower Costs, a national patient safety initiative by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

At the press conference and launch event held in front of our hospital, Congressman George Miller, HHS Regional Director Herb Schultz and Joseph McCannon, Senior Advisor with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, described CCRM/HCS as a model for the rest of the country. Joseph McCannon said, “This is a remarkable community. The work that you are doing is just fantastic,” adding that this initiative is part of health care reform’s focus on “Increased reliability in the health care system and making the system safer, having it provide results of the kind we are seeing here in Contra Costa that will reduce harm to patients in very significant ways.”

CCRM/HCS was among the first hospitals around the country that signed up to be part of this new public-private partnership that will help improve the quality, safety and affordability of health care for all Americans as part of the historic reforms of the Affordable Care Act. Joseph McCannon congratulated Anna and CCRM/HCS staff on the work already done—“You have here in Contra Costa some of the most striking, bold, courageous...
leadership we’ve seen in the country.” None of this would be possible without the kind of dedication and commitment that each of you show every day as you go about taking care of our patients/clients/consumers.

Anna, who was asked to speak at the event, talked about our longstanding commitment to patient safety and how we can do even better. She highlighted some of our successes, such as the reduction of health care associated infections by 50% in the last three years. She also talked about how we have made great strides with ventilator-associated pneumonia, a serious infection people can get when they are on ventilators. In Contra Costa, we have sharply decreased these infections and hope in the next few years to eliminate this type of infection in our hospital. Under this initiative CCRM/HCS has pledged to decrease by 40%, preventable hospital-acquired conditions and reduce by 20% hospital readmissions by the end of 2013. Anna acknowledged that staff, of which more than 150 gathered for the Partnership for Patients event, are the ones who make this work possible.

Having the event at our facility is a huge honor. You can read more about it, see photos and watch a video on our website at www.cchealth.org and Anna’s blog at http://safetynethospital.blogspot.com. You can also read the Contra Costa Times story at www.contracostatimes.com/ci_17910533. As a public hospital and health system, we recognize the crucial role we play in our community’s health and we can all be proud of what we’ve done and what we strive to accomplish.

**Continuing efforts to maximize resources**

At the end of the day, the entire Health Services Department is about working effectively with the resources we have for better outcomes for the patients/clients/consumers in our communities. The experience we’ve had with these efforts in CCRM/HCS, I believe, can be utilized in all divisions of Health Services. It gives me great pride for us to be recognized as a leader in addressing patient safety and quality outcomes, and the credit belongs to each of you. We look forward to the implementation of health reform, which not only manages health insurance costs and how money flows, but goes beyond these important aspects of health care to also address patient safety and quality outcomes.

In this time of evaluating what we do in the context of a sustainability study and budget reductions, it is important to remember that a health system like ours, which produces good results for the communities it serves, will by definition remain sustainable.

Sincerely,

William Walker, M.D.
Regional Health Foundation Gala Raises $55,000 to Support Hospital, Health Centers

Our Regional Health Foundation’s annual fundraising gala last month was a marvelous success. Early figures show the evening raised more than $55,000 to support operations at our Regional Medical Center and Health Centers. Jazz in the Canyon, Dancing Under the Stars attracted 196 people and boasted an evening of dinner, dancing and music at the Crow Canyon Country Club in Danville. Regional Health Foundation Executive Director Lynda Gayden said the event went off without a hitch and was a wonderful opportunity to raise community support, as well as highlight our facilities and staff.

For more information about this project, contact Arlene Trimble at arlene.trimble@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6227.

Electronic Health Records Near Reality as IT Unit Begins Implementation Phase

The wheels are in motion at our Information Technology Unit, where a massive project is underway to provide electronic health records at our Regional Medical Center and Health Centers. The technology, available through the Epic enterprise software system, is expected to help increase medication safety, improve clinical decision-making and reduce costs. With help from a consulting firm, IT staff are engaged in training, testing and preparation for the implementation of Epic. IT Director David Runt said the new system enables three key functions. First, clinicians will be able to manage their patient’s care through an electronic health record available to all clinicians throughout the health system. Secondly, physicians will be able to manage patient health through a single desktop portal that includes electronic signature, computerized provider order entry, electronic prescribing, care documentation and integration with evidence-based clinical content. Lastly, patients will be able to track their health and participate in their care by accessing their electronic health records online. The system is expected to go live in July 2012. You’ll be hearing more information about this exciting project in the coming months.

For more information about this project, contact Arlene Trimble at arlene.trimble@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6227.

Don’t miss a beat: Become a fan of Contra Costa Health Services on Facebook for the latest cchs news. You can also catch us on Twitter by following @CoCoHealth. Check out all of our social media channels at www.cchealth.org/topics/social_media/
Jail Workshop Reduces Health Disparities, Builds Better Lives for 80 Incarcerated Women
A resounding message echoed through the West County Detention Facility in March: Stay out of jail, build a new life for yourself and your children, and value yourself. The message targeted 80 incarcerated women who attended a workshop hosted by our Public Health Division’s Lift Every Voice program and the Contra Costa Sheriff’s Department. The workshop, titled “Moving On Up a Little Higher—Taking Care of Ourselves,” aimed to educate and empower at-risk women of childbearing age, assist them in learning skills to build on resiliency, positively impact self-care, and to access information and resources of value to them as women and mothers, especially in preparation for their transition out of the prison system. More than 30 people, including keynote speaker Dr. Angela Davis, from 15 community programs brought resources to the workshop. The incarcerated women also saw a video of Lift Every Voice clients who shared successes, challenges and stories of how the program played a pivotal role in making positive changes in their lives. Lift Every Voice Coordinator Jeannie Cummings said by giving incarcerated women hope, you can positively impact their life and the lives of their children.

For more information about Health Services’ Lift Every Voice program, contact Jeannie Cummings at jeannie.cummings@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6313. For more information about the Health Services Reducing Health Disparities Unit, contact Concepcion James at connie.james@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-957-5421.

Tobacco Project’s New Landlord Tool Kit Helps Property Owners Snuff Out Secondhand Smoke
Owners of multi-unit housing properties in unincorporated areas of Contra Costa now have help complying with secondhand smoke laws thanks to a new toolkit developed by our Tobacco Prevention Project. New regulations, which took effect in January, prohibit smoking in all new multi-unit housing units and on balconies, decks, patios and carports of new and existing multi-unit housing. Landlords must also now include lease terms that make smoking in non-smoking areas a violation of the lease. The law applies to apartments and condominiums with four or more units in unincorporated parts of the county. Tobacco Prevention Project Manager Denice Dennis said the new law aims to prevent the adverse health effects from secondhand smoke drifting into people’s homes. The Landlord Tool Kit contains a brochure that outlines the new requirements, as well as downloadable signs, sample lease documents and steps to make a property smoke free.

The toolkit is available at www.cchealth.org/topics/tobacco/landlords.php or by calling 925-313-6216.
Environmental Health Opens its Doors to Sons, Daughters for Day of Learning

More than a dozen children followed their parent or relative to work last month to find out what exactly goes on in our Environmental Health Division. The children, participating in the Division’s first recognition of the national Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day, learned about Environmental Health’s scope of work, including food and pool safety, solid waste, land use and more. Various demonstrations were set up to give the children an in-depth look at what their parents’ jobs entail. As part of the day, some of the children participated in the filming of public service announcements by our Communications Unit staff that the Division will use in its awareness efforts. Environmental Health Director Marilyn Underwood said that planning the day gave staff an opportunity to display their great work, which hopefully inspires a future generation to enter the environmental health field.

Column Offers a Hefty Dose of Allergy, Asthma Relief

Spring is in full swing and people who suffer from allergies can help themselves by avoiding triggers, according to one of our recent Healthy Outlook columns. Column coordinator and Martinez Health Center physician Dr. David Pepper writes that removing airborne particles from the home is one of the best ways to control allergy and asthma attacks. In addition to home remedies—like using saltwater solutions—he said medications can help provide relief. He said controller medications, like steroid inhalers, must be used regularly—regardless of symptoms—to be effective. Quick-acting medication, on the other hand, can be used less regularly to relieve symptoms.

Health Services Writers Group Publishes Media Strategies Paper

Our Writers Group has published a paper on the importance of making strategic media work an integral part of public health practice. Using the Media to Advance Public Health Agendas was co-authored by Public Health Director Dr. Wendel Brunner, CCHS Communications Officer Kate Fowlie and former Assistant to the Health Services Director Julie Freestone. The article describes how CCHS and others have worked with the media, provides an overview of media strategies, and encourages Local Health Departments to view media work as core to their essential functions.

Using the Media to Advance Public Health Agendas is available on our website at http://cchealth.org/groups/health_services/pdf/media_paper.pdf For information on the paper, contact kate.fowlie@hsd.cccounty.us and for info on the CCHS Writers Group, contact wendel.brunner@hsd.cccounty.us
Health Plan Sets Multiple Tdap Clinics for Members, Health Center Patients

CCHP members and patients of our Health Centers can receive a Tdap vaccine at one of 14 drop-in clinics from May 3-5 at six locations throughout the county. There is no cost to receive the Tdap vaccine and appointments are not necessary, but patients must have the cranberry-colored card. A list of clinics is available by visiting www.cchealth.org, clicking Health Topics, then Pertussis and, finally, Vaccinations. The Tdap vaccine protects against three contagious diseases: tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, also known as whooping cough. These clinics are especially important for students entering grades 7 through 12, who are required to have the booster before starting school this fall. Remember to keep immunization records as proof of vaccination. CCHP members with a valid cchp card can also get a free Tdap vaccine from Walgreens and Rite-Aid pharmacies in Contra Costa. Public Health Communicable Disease Manager and Immunization Coordinator Erika Jenssen said free clinics, in addition to the ongoing Public Health Immunization Clinics, are being planned for the general public.

For more information about where to get a Tdap vaccine in Contra Costa or to find out about the new school law, visit http://cchealth.org/topics/pertussis/ or call 925-313-6767.

Belon to Head Behavioral Health & Homeless Services Division

Former Homeless Program Director Cynthia Belon has been selected to lead our new Behavioral Health and Homeless Services Division. The newly formed Division is a merger of our Alcohol and Other Drugs Services Division, Mental Health Division and Public Health’s Homeless Program. Health Services Director Dr. William Walker said this integration of services is necessary to meet the needs of the people we serve, and to align ourselves with health reform and other proposed mandates. Cynthia is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and has extensive experience as our Homeless Program Director for more than a decade, as well as the executive director of several nonprofit organizations that provide mental health, substance abuse and case management services. Cynthia said she aims to create a more comprehensive, consumer-driven and compassionate system of care.

To reach Cynthia, email cynthia.belon@hsd.cccounty.us

Shots for School

Public Health Clinic Services Nurse Eliza Virata prepares Tdap vaccine at a whooping cough clinic for schoolchildren. A new law requires students entering 7th through 12th grades to have proof they are vaccinated against whooping cough. Find out more about the law at www.shotsforschool.org
Service Excellence
You are a GEM for Going the Extra Mile

Dave Archuleta
Tim Dowd
General Services Department
For going out of their way to help us revamp our unit over the last couple of months and for always going out of their way to help us when we need something fixed.
♦Nominated by Amber Wheeler & Katie O’Shea

Clerks
Nutritionists
Brentwood Health Center
For their hard work serving more than 2,000 WIC participants in 2010 and for going beyond their call of duty.
♦Nominated by Marilyn Sanchez

Jicara Collins
Health Education Specialist
Richmond Health Center
For her strong, unwavering commitment to our teen and school–based health center students and for handling a difficult case with sensitivity and compassion.
♦Nominated by Leigh Pierson–Brown

Ann Hartman, RN
Michelle Sharman, RN
Public Health
For their professional behavior toward patients, families and colleagues, for excellent nursing care and for their positive attitude, smiles and ability to stay focused during their busy pediatric clinics.
♦Nominated by Leigh Pierson–Brown

Leigh Pierson Brown, FNP
Richmond Health Center
For outstanding patient care, promptly providing medical information, researching what will work best for my children, following up on prescriptions, and for going above and beyond the call of duty to care for my children.
♦Nominated by the patients’ mother

Mary Lou Tafoya
Clerk–Senior Level
Appointment Scheduling
For her willingness to take responsibility for scheduling an appointment for an elderly patient who did not understand his medications and then calling to remind him to bring his medications to the appointment.
♦Nominated by Wanda Smith

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 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. For a list of current and past award recipients, visit isite.
Mental Health Program Manager Honored by State Lawmakers

Congratulations to our Central County Child and Adolescent Health Program Manager Dr. Grant Wyborny, who earlier this year received praise from two state lawmakers. In January, State Sen. Mark DeSaulnier and State Assemblywoman Joan Buchanan recognized Dr. Wyborny for his more than 31 years of dedication and service to mental health clients, their families and the staff who support them in the State’s Early Mental Health Initiative program. Dr. Wyborny was part of the team that launched the state initiative in the San Ramon School District 25 years ago. As a consultant, he has trained paraprofessionals to work with kindergarten through third-grade students who have mild to moderate behavioral and emotional health issues. Dr. Wyborny will retire from Health Services on June 30.

To reach Dr. Wyborny, email grant.wyborny@hsd.cccounty.us

Disease Intervention Technician Wins State TB Award

Congratulations to Senior Disease Intervention Technician Mark Condit of our Public Health Division. Last month, Mark took home the Outstanding Allied Health Professional of the Year in Tuberculosis Control, an honor that recognizes an individual’s hard work and dedication to tuberculosis control in California. Mark has worked in our Public Health Division for more than 20 years, most of which were spent in TB control. Mark regularly collaborates with public health nurses, physicians and clinic staff to find a successful method for patients to complete treatment. TB Program Manager Wendy Malone said Mark’s empathy helps him get along with and care for patients in difficult situations.

To reach Mark, email mark.condit@hsd.cccounty.us

May Milestones

Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Chandra J. Day, Brenda M. Duncan, Terri D. Lieder, Renee D. Killips, Beverly J. Wright, Ricardo J. Bermudez, Bonnie J. Gallegos, Robert R. Martinez, Lytonya L. Brown, Sandra G. Harris, Ileana R. Kaleialii, Elba Arreguin, Mark A. Loes, Karen M. Flowers, Temeka L. Oliver, Francine R. Lewis (10 years); Oscar F. Monta, William B. Jurewicz, Theresa A. Draper, Karen S. Wright, Faalua Iosua (15 years); Redempta B. Tumbaga, Robin Bedell-Waite, Theresa D. Doakes, Tokozani V. Kumalo (20 years); Deborah L. Shiles, Denise K. Root (25 years); Debra E. Ferrara and Karen E. Soliz (30 years).