National Preparedness Month

I’ve talked about our disaster roles as county employees several times in past issues of my report. This month, however, seems an appropriate and particularly poignant time to ask you all again to reflect on the importance of preparedness—and the consequences of failing to do so—on our families, our patients, our clients and those who will depend upon us to help them after a disaster.

We know that a major earthquake could strike the Bay Area at any time. And recent events across the country—an F5 tornado (the most violent rating), a hurricane that caused massive damage and deadly flooding, a building collapse in Indiana, and earthquakes on the East Coast—remind us that the time to prepare is now, before disaster strikes.

While we may not be able to prevent a disaster, being prepared for one can help reduce its impact on our lives. During a disaster such as a major earthquake, emergency responders will be overwhelmed and it is likely that the infrastructure systems we depend upon (transportation, utilities and communication systems) will be affected and undependable. Conventional media and social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook are giving us almost instantaneous images of the impact of disasters. It is becoming more common that average people in the midst of devastation are becoming spontaneous “first responders.”

Strengthening the community

Given the shrinking available resources, it is critical that we develop partnerships, expand networks and team with other health systems to better plan our response. We continue to strengthen these efforts by taking part in emergency preparedness exercises, including Golden Guardian (a flood scenario), a shelter exercise, and planning for the upcoming statewide Medical and Health exercise (a contaminated water scenario). The state health department also recently recognized our efforts to help prepare all hospitals in our county for emergencies (see story on Page 4).

The West County Mass Care and Shelter exercise was a great example of how we partner with other county departments, cities, the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army to prepare for disasters (see story on Page 4). In November, William B. Walker, MD
CCHS Director

DID YOU KNOW?

We have about 140 Emergency Management Team members attending meetings on a regular basis.
along with other Contra Costa hospitals and health care providers, we will participate in an exercise scenario in which the water supply to these facilities will be affected. Planning for these worst-case scenarios can only help better prepare us to care for the most vulnerable in our communities when disaster strikes.

Preparing our system

As the Health Services department for the county, our role is to ensure the delivery of health care through our own system and other partner systems during emergencies. To help ensure we are prepared, some years ago we established the cchs Emergency Management Team, of which many of you are members. We have greatly expanded this team over the years as it became clear to me that we needed multiple people trained in emergency response to back each other up during a long-term or large-scale disaster activation. As part of our Emergency Management Team, we hold annual trainings and exercises, including hands-on skill-based training on the use of communication equipment and other emergency management resources such as 440 MHz radios and online tools including IRIS.

Our Department Operations Center at 50 Douglas Drive, is now fully equipped and ready to be activated to serve as the hub of our emergency response. The county’s Emergency Operations Center on Glacier Drive in Martinez was recently renovated and has seen a quite a bit of practice, helping to prepare our county departments to work together to respond in an emergency.

We also support the Contra Costa County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), a team of community volunteers trained to respond to and assist with medical and public health emergencies. Our county established the MRC two years ago and now has some 200 members, mostly doctors and nurses, trained and ready to respond.

Research shows what people want after a disaster:
- Facts to protect them, their families, their pets
- The ability to make well-informed decisions with good information
- An active, participatory role in response and recovery
- Good stewardship of public resources, and
- The return to normal

Each of us will play a critical role in helping our communities respond and recover. Goodwill is bountiful following a disaster. But that alone is not enough. To maximize our ability to help our families, our neighbors, our pets and our friends, we must first be able to help ourselves. Have you ever stopped to think about why, on an airplane, the safety message is, “secure your oxygen mask first before helping others”? A selfish message? Quite the opposite. It’s because if you don’t take care of yourself first you may not last long enough to help others. Being prepared to take care of yourself and those closest to you following a disaster is, perhaps, the greatest and most compassionate gesture of caring you can show. Be a hero. Show you care. Be prepared.

Let’s use this year’s National Preparedness Month to do more training and preparation and take stock of our own personal preparedness. Do you have a disaster plan for your family and an emergency supplies kit at home and in your car? Have you taken CPR and first aid? If not, use this month to get ready. We can be proud of the work we’ve done while we take steps to ensure we’re better prepared for the next event. For more information on emergency preparedness, visit www.cchealth.org/topics/emergencies/

Sincerely,

William Walker, M.D.
Health Plan Prepares Safety Net for Adult Day Health Care Clients
When funding for adult day health care is eliminated in December, most who rely on the Medi-Cal benefit will turn to our Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) for comparable services. Adult Day Health Care currently provides 209 elderly and disabled residents with daily protective supervision, meals, case management, respite care and other services to keep them out of a nursing home. The state will require Medi-Cal managed care plans, like CCHP, to find alternatives for Adult Day Health Care beneficiaries. CCHP CEO Patricia Tanquary said it could be difficult to provide the mandated health assessments, case management and care coordination with the $60 per month, per member her Division will receive from the state. Nevertheless, she said her team is working with community partners to piece together care plans that will help these disabled adults safely remain in the community.

WIC Celebrates World Breastfeeding Week at Concord Market
Our Public Health Division had a large presence at the Concord farmers market last month. On August 4, our Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) set up alongside our Immunization Program to celebrate World Breastfeeding Week. Senior Public Health Nutritionist Marina Rowoldt, RD, said the goal of the WIC event was to promote the importance and education of breastfeeding and to offer support for new and expecting mothers. She said more than 100 people attended the event, which included lactation consultants from WIC and our Regional Medical Center. In Contra Costa, 90% of WIC members start breastfeeding in the hospital, but that number drops to 41% after six months. Breastfeeding provides many benefits for mother and baby and can be continued to one year. Our Immunization Program had been attending the farmers market on a weekly basis to help schoolchildren get a Tdap vaccine for the upcoming school year.

Giving Kids a Boost
Public Health nurses Eliza Virata, Kathryn Young, Jennifer Bates and Jennifer Dean helped vaccinate 53 schoolchildren at a Tdap vaccination clinic in Richmond. Inset: Nurse Judy Barron vaccinates a 13-year-old at the clinic. A new law requires all 7th–12th graders to have a Tdap booster for the 2011–12 school year. For more information, visit http://cchealth.org/topics/pertussis/
CCHS Participates in Shelter Exercise for People, Pets
When an earthquake strikes, our immediate attention focuses on the safety of our families and ourselves. But what about our beloved pets? For the first time, Health Services joined eight community partners to test an emergency shelter that could house people and their pets. The mass care clinic was held on the San Pablo campus of Contra Costa College. More than 100 community volunteers acted as evacuees and shelter volunteers. Multiple parts of the campus were repurposed for cots, medical services and food stamps, as well as other services. The exercise also tested the American Red Cross Safe and Well network, which allows people to locate loved ones displaced during a disaster. The exercise was a great example of the many partners we work with to prepare for disasters, including the Contra Costa Community College District, County Animal Services, Office of Emergency Services and Employment and Human Services departments, the Cities of Richmond and San Pablo, the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

To find out more about emergency preparedness, visit www.cchealth.org/topics/emergencies/

Divisions Connect 100% of Local Hospitals with Emergency Notification Network
Acute care hospitals in Contra Costa are more connected to health emergency communications thanks to the efforts of our Public Health and Emergency Medical Services Divisions. The California Department of Public Health recently presented Health Services with a certificate of appreciation for enrolling all 10 general acute care hospitals in the California Health Alert Network (CAHAN). Emergency Planning Coordinator Christye McQueen and former Emergency Preparedness Manager Dan Guerra were successful in getting all Contra Costa hospitals onboard. Christye said local and state health departments use CAHAN to notify hospitals of emergency alerts and communicate guidance during disease outbreaks.

To find out more about CAHAN, visit www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov or call Christye McQueen at 925-313-6744.

Health Services Highlighted in County Newsletter
The county is taking notice. We know you enjoy reading about your co-workers’ achievements every month in the Director’s Report. This month, the County Clips newsletter is dedicating two full pages to you and your department. Take a look and share it with others. It’s due out September 7 and you can find it by visiting www.cccounty.us and clicking County Clips from the left menu.
Body and Soul Gardeners Reap More Than Produce from Community Plots

On any given afternoon, you might find Liz McCoy gardening at the Los Medanos Community Health Care District Board community garden, located on the grounds of our Pittsburg Health Center. At first glance, you can tell she is tending to the fruits and vegetables, but a closer look reveals she’s nurturing something else, too. As one of our African American Health Conductors, Liz uses the garden to provide peer health support for positive lifestyle changes. She knows some members of her Body and Soul group face tough health issues like obesity, high blood pressure and physical disabilities, and thought the garden could help facilitate discussion. According to Liz, many local African Americans have limited access to fresh produce, which is a key part of a healthy diet. Liz hopes to link the food they are growing to improved health. The group is planning an autumn feast after fall harvest. Body and Soul is one of four groups led by the African American Health Conductors, who are supported by Health Services and the Center for Human Development, in addition to their other duties, including patient navigation, co-facilitators of patient group visits, and community outreach and engagement.

For more information about the African American Heath Conductor gardening project, contact Liz McCoy at liz.mcCoy@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-427-8062.

Calling Artists, Performers and Art Aficionados

The sixth annual Healthcare Workers as Creators event will be held 5 to 8 p.m. Thursday October 6th on the lawn at our Contra Costa Regional Medical Center in Martinez. The program will feature visual art and musical performances by county health care workers. There will be hands-on creativity workshops. It will also feature a silent art auction to benefit ArtsChange, a West County nonprofit that works to empower youth and reach the community through art. It will also raise money for our new Healing Through the Arts Initiative. Food and drinks will be served.

CCHS employees who are visual artists, artisans or musicians and want to participate and especially those interested in helping to plan or volunteering on the day of the event, contact Dr. Alan Siegel via email doctoralan@gmail.com or pager 925-346-4993.

This Month in CCHS: African American Health Expo

The African American Health Empowerment Expo is 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, September 24 at Pittsburg High School. Registration begins at 9 a.m. This free event features speakers, hands-on workshops, entertainment, community resources and free health screenings. For more information, contact Itika Greene at 925-957-5439.
Making a Difference
Lisa Chow, a representative from Sen. Mark DeSaulnier’s office, presents a proclamation to our Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Board in July. The proclamation recognizes the board for its work on the People Who Make a Difference Awards, an annual ceremony that honors those who combat alcohol and drug abuse in our county.

Walk to Prevent Substance Abuse
This month is National Recovery Month and hundreds of people are expected to converge at the Martinez Waterfront Park on September 24 for the seventh annual Recovery Walk and Celebration. The aim is to celebrate efforts that prevent alcohol and drug abuse. The annual event is free to the public and features music, guest speakers, a free lunch and activities for children. Registration opens at 9 a.m. and the event runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Suicide Prevention Committee Making Headway
Suicide prevention efforts have been ramping up the past few months in an effort to put an end to the tragic and unnecessary deaths of county residents. Since 2010, the Mental Health Program in our Behavioral Health Services Division and the Contra Costa Crisis Center have joined efforts on a Suicide Prevention Committee. According to Mental Health Services Act Program Manager Mary Roy, of the 100-120 people who commit suicide each year in Contra Costa, at least 25% have encountered the mental health system. Several months ago, our Mental Health Program sponsored the attendance of a suicide prevention conference for 200 people from county departments, community-based organizations and law enforcement agencies. The Suicide Prevention Committee has been examining successful models and lessons learned for suicide prevention. Mary said she is also working with our Community Education and Information Unit to produce a Get Ready, Get Healthy television show that includes an interview with mental health clinicians and suicide survivors.

To find out more about the Suicide Prevention Committee, contact Mary Roy at mary.roy@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-957-5169. Show airdates for Get Ready, Get Healthy will be available on www.cchealth.org.
John Thomas  
Institutional Services Worker – Lead  
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center  

For being extremely helpful and always willing to assist at a moment’s notice, for completing tasks with a friendly, positive attitude and for consistently going above and beyond.  

♦ Nominated by Jill Honeyman & Peter Delfiorentino

Michael Gynn, MD  
David Pepper, MD  
Andrea Sandler, MD  
Paul Shen, MD  
Nurses  
Other Staff  
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center  

For making me feel comfortable and giving me courage and reassurance during my surgery and recovery. For the compassion, kindness, concern and excellent care that I received from all of the staff. It is because of their care and guidance that my long-term prognosis looks so promising.  

♦ Nominated by a patient

McCollumn Named Personnel Officer  
Dorette McCollumn, who has worked with Health Services for nearly 17 years, has been named our new Personnel Officer. She has been in an acting role since Shelley Pighin retired from that position earlier in the year. Dorette started her career in the Financial Counseling Unit, and was promoted to Personnel Liaison in the Public Health Division before becoming a Personnel Analyst. Congratulations to Shelley on her retirement and Dorette on her new position!

Do you know someone 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.

Your Voice Matters! As we continue the process of configuring and designing the new electronic health record system, we are also in the process of developing a comprehensive communications plan to keep you well informed about this project. In order provide communications in the best way possible, we need your feedback about your experiences, preferences and ideas related to communications here within CCHS! Please find five minutes before Friday, September 16 to let your voice be heard. Take the survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CCHS_Commfeedback
Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Michele R. DiMaggio, Denise P. Donnelly, Juanita Garrison, Camille A. Wilkinson, Nerissa S. Chu, Melinda P. Elliott, Shirley Mariscal, Pat W. Page, Patrick Ruliva, Nilsa N. Vazquez, Ronnie D. Drago, Ranjel Garcia, Janice L. Wheelihan, Patricia J. Hennigan (10 years); Melinda K. Flores, Alma R. Toney, Elvia Colmenares, Anthony Franchi, Rosalind T. Hunter, Victoria P. Yarber (15 years); Maria C.D. Thomas, Odessa M. Staton, Diana Kato, Richard Lee, Maria L. Ortiga, Marissa C. Uy (20 years); Arnella V. Giron, Vicki R. Smith, Donna R. Wilson (25 years); Heriberto Perez, Yolanda Ramirez and Frances I. Marcus (30 years).

Ed Krebs
Information Systems Technician II
Information Technology

For quickly responding to IT needs in the Emergency Department and getting the printer operational.

-Nominated by Marisha Chilcott

Zohra Akbari, RN
Concord Health Center

For her ability to make her co-workers feel comfortable.

-Nominated by Magdelena Rodriguez

Raquel Gomes, PHN
Public Health

For consistently providing excellent care for many years to the children and families in pediatric clinics and for always going the extra mile to provide public health nursing services.

-Nominated by Leigh Pierson-Brown

Laurie Terranova, PHN
Public Health

For being courageous and brave by responding quickly to aid a wounded victim on the streets of Pittsburg and for assisting the victim in getting prompt emergency medical care.

-Nominated by Michelle Williams

September Milestones

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