Happy New Year

Happy New Year to all and I wish you much success in keeping all your new year's resolutions. I would like to share my view of what the coming year will bring for us as we implement some very large projects that will require a significant amount of staff time and resources while we maintain business as usual. To name a few of these projects, we will implement our electronic health record, which is an epic undertaking. We will continue to enhance processes that will improve quality, decrease costs, and prepare our system to be the system of choice for our patients/clients/consumers. We will continue to increase our collaboration and partnerships with community partners to address environmental issues that negatively impact the health of our communities. These and other initiatives will help to prepare our system to meet the demands of Health Reform.

Electronic health record

We are now six months away from full implementation of our electronic health record, ccLink. We are entering the period in which many of you will spend many hours in training – we know that we will need to backfill some of your positions and are working with County Human Resources to improve the hiring process to meet our operational needs. Often during implementation of electronic health records, the number of patient visits temporarily decreases. We anticipate this and are planning ahead in order to continue to meet the needs of our patients. Beyond the challenges of implementation, ccLink will finally give us the ability to monitor and improve the health of our patients and the opportunity to link with others in the community to focus on community-wide health interventions. These are the most exciting possibilities of ccLink.

Preparing for health reform

We also are continuing to enroll new patients through the Low Income Health Plan (LIHP). Most LIHP enrollees will be eligible for Medi-Cal in 2014 with 100% federal funding. We are working with the Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD) to ensure we have the capability to seamlessly transition these patients from Contra Costa Health Plan to Medi-Cal.

Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) is now six months into the full transition of Seniors and Persons with Disabilities (SPDs) from fee-for-service Medi-Cal into managed care. This transition brings us a step closer to Health Reform when most individuals and families will be enrolled on Medi-Cal or the state's insurance exchange. CCHP has been doing a stellar job responding
to individual patient’s needs. They have striven to provide continuity of care for patients and providers by contracting with more community providers. Most SPDs were already receiving care from Contra Costa Health Services. For those needing to change their primary care provider (PCPs) they have made every effort to make the transition easy. We have received outstanding cooperation from hospitals and other medical specialists to care for these formerly fee-for-service Medi-Cal patients. With all of CCHP’s efforts, we know that there continue to be a need for more PCPs. We will continue to struggle, like every county in the nation, to provide adequate PCPs with fewer medical students choosing primary care, but we are taking many steps to address this problem such as increasing the number of clinic visits available, recruiting more PCPs, and taking steps to encourage more of our residents to stay with CCHS upon completion of their residency.

Vulnerable Populations

The Behavioral Health Division continues to respond to the needs of reentrants returning to our communities. They are working in close coordination with probation and law enforcement to meet housing, mental health, substance abuse and other support services needs.

In partnership with school districts throughout the County, Public Health is expanding school-based clinics through the use of two new mobile health vans/clinics that will be in operation this year. These federally-qualified health clinics give us the opportunity to address the health needs of children in their schools, fill longstanding gaps in children’s health care, and are another step toward providing health homes. In addition to mobile clinics, Public Health also operates stationary clinics at two high schools.

Employee satisfaction survey

The most important transformation effort in delivery systems is to define and implement the patient-centered health home, a system designed with team-based care in an appropriate setting. It furthers the goals of patient’s satisfaction and quality health outcomes for our system. We can’t achieve this without paying close attention to employee satisfaction.

You will soon be receiving a survey to help us assess your level of job satisfaction and allow us to better focus on meeting your needs. I encourage each of you to participate in this anonymous survey because each voice is important to me. The greatest assets of an organization are the people working in that organization.

Threats ahead

With all of the excitement and opportunities ahead in 2012, I also want to share with you my greatest concern in this New Year which happens to be an election year. All of our abilities to meet the needs of current and future patients are dependent on the ACA. My greatest fear is that through judicial or legislative processes the aspects of the ACA, which finally allows most Americans to be able to afford health insurance in 2014, will be undone. This will be a tragedy for our local community and the nation as a whole. ACA will provide millions of federal dollars locally to fund health care and without these federal funds, we will be unable to backfill this gap as local and state funds are almost non-existent.

We have a lot to do as we implement our local and federal initiatives that focus on innovation and prevention, many of which will begin this year. I encourage you to stay focused on meeting the needs of our patients and to take care of each other. We will get through this together. Please remember to respond to the employee satisfaction survey as I need to hear from each of you.

Sincerely,

William Walker, M.D.
Regional Medical Center Earns Honors for its Widely Successful Perinatal Program

Our Regional Medical Center received the prestigious Quality Leaders Top Honors award last month for its work to give women who have had a cesarean the opportunity to avoid this surgery with their next birth. CCRMC’s Perinatal Unit received the award from the California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems and the California Health Care Safety Net Institute for its innovative program, the “Vaginal Birth after Cesarean (VBAC) Improvement Project.” The award recognizes a public hospital program that best represents an innovative approach to improving health. Providing the VBAC option is a challenge for many hospitals because there must be numerous systems in place to make sure it can be offered safely. But CCRMC’s perinatal team was determined to make this choice available to its patients, knowing that a vaginal delivery has many benefits over a C-section birth. The team created a comprehensive, evidence-based process that assured the safest outcome for mother and baby. The program succeeded in increasing the number of vaginal deliveries among VBAC patients with no long-term complications for these patients or their babies. With CCRMC delivering about 15 percent of all babies in Contra Costa County, this project has the potential to provide hundreds of women with the option to safely avoid subsequent C-sections.

To see a video on the program, visit http://cchealth.org/medical_center/vbac.php

CCRMC doctor helps children in Ivory Coast

In keeping with our tradition of serving those in most need, one of our Regional Medical Center doctors recently returned from a 3-month deployment with Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) at a children’s hospital in West Africa’s Ivory Coast. Dr. Pramita Kuruvilla, who works in CCRMC’s Intensive Care Unit, cared for desperately ill children at a 24-bed pediatric hospital in the western part of the country near the Liberian border, a region experiencing considerable political instability and health care infrastructure challenges. Many of the children had malaria and she treated them for seizures, severe malnutrition, diarrhea and pneumonia. “You learn a lot, you give a lot and you gain a lot. The people I worked for had very little in material wealth but there is this abundance of joy and richness of community,” she said. Although back home she works mostly with adults, because of CCRMC’s comprehensive Family Medicine training, she is able to work with children as well. Dr. Kuruvilla also went to Haiti with several other CCHS staff members to help after the devastating earthquake there in 2010. She said the experience she gains through this international work helps make her a better doctor back home. She follows in the steps of the late CCRMC emergency room Dr. Mark Stinson, who was quick to help whenever and wherever disaster struck. This legacy and commitment to service is one of the reasons Dr. Kuruvilla came to work for CCRMC. She said she was grateful to be able to take the time off to be able to serve with MSF, an international, independent, medical humanitarian organization that delivers emergency aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, healthcare exclusion and natural disasters. “It really was an honor to be part of an organization that brings critical health care to countries that so badly need it,” she said.

For more information, contact Dr. Pramita Kuruvilla at pramita.kuruvilla@hsd.ccounty.us
Health Plan Reaches Out to Adult Day Health Care Beneficiaries to Ensure Smooth Transition
People who rely on services provided by the Adult Day Health Care did not see this Medi-Cal benefit go away as planned in December. Instead, benefit elimination was postponed until March, when an almost identical center-based program will take its place. This is good news for the more than 170 beneficiaries who have enrolled with our Contra Costa Health Plan, according to Case Management Services Manager Laurie Crider. Laurie said CCHP has already reached out to 100% of the Adult Day Health Care beneficiaries for health risk assessments. The new benefit, Community Based Adult Services, is part of a Medi-Cal managed care arrangement and will continue to provide elderly and disabled residents with daily protective supervision, meals, case management, respite care and other services to keep them out of a nursing home. Laurie said most people who qualified for Adult Day Health Care will qualify for Community Based Adult Services. Those who don’t, she said, will receive case management support via a special contract between CCHP and the Centers.

To find out more about Adult Day Health Care or Community Based Adult Services, contact Laurie Crider at laurie.crider@hsd.contra Costa.us or 925-957-7421.

Influential Advisory Board Celebrates 25th Anniversary
Our Public and Environmental Health Advisory Board (PEHAB) marked its 25th anniversary last month with presentations of its accomplishments and the current state of health in Contra Costa. The advisory board, which was formed under the direction of our Public Health Director Dr. Wendel Brunner, has played a pivotal role in key improvements to the health and environment of Contra Costa. Over the years, PEHAB has had a hand in limiting secondhand smoke, creating menu labeling policies, monitoring and improving air quality, promoting environmental and social justice and decreasing pesticide use, among other things. Health Services Director Dr. William Walker, who also spoke at the anniversary event, said advisory boards are a great way to bridge the gap between the community and public agencies.

To find out more about PEHAB, visit www.cchealth.org/groups/pehab/ To listen to a recent podcast about advisory boards by Dr. Walker, visit www.cchealth.org/topics/podcast

Dr. Brunner speaks during PEHAB’s 25th anniversary celebration.

“ If you have not made any resolutions yet, or are looking to add another one to your list, I have a suggestion.”
— Dr. Walker in his recent podcast

Input Needed at ccLink Device Fair
Join us for a test drive of the devices we’re considering for our new electronic health record system. Stop by at one of the following times and locations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Jan. 4 - 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.</td>
<td>Richmond Health Center, 1603A, Main Conference Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, Jan. 5 - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.</td>
<td>Pittsburg Health Center, Cypress Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, Jan. 6 - 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.</td>
<td>Martinez Health Center, Building 1 Conference Room</td>
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</tbody>
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Find out more about ccLINK on iSITE.
Industrial Safety Continues to Improve under County's Landmark Ordinance

The number and severity of the major chemical accidents or releases have been in a general declining trend since the implementation of the county’s Industrial Safety Ordinance, according to a report by our Hazardous Materials Division. The Industrial Safety Ordinance Annual Performance Review and Evaluation Report was presented to the Board of Supervisors on December 13. Our Chief Hazardous Materials and Environmental Health Officer Randy Sawyer said there are some positives in the report. After four major incidents in 2010, there was not one major accident or release in Contra Costa during 2011. There also has not been a severity Type 3 accident or release—meaning the most severe—in 11 years. Accidental Release Prevention Programs Engineer Supervisor Cho Nai Cheung said that streak is an indicator the ordinance is having a positive effect on the community. The ordinance was approved by the Supervisors in 1998.

To find out more about the Industrial Safety Ordinance, contact Cho Nai at 925-335-3212 or visit our website: [http://cchealth.org](http://cchealth.org/groups/hazmat/pdf/iso/iso_report_2011.pdf).

Practicing to Protect

Our Hazardous Materials Specialist Trisha Asuncion, second from right, attended the area’s largest oil spill drill last month. Trisha acted as the Local Government On-Scene Coordinator in Unified Command, in which she represented local concerns of area counties at the highest level of decision-making in the management of the spill response. The drill is hosted by Chevron and tests local, state and federal agencies’ response to a worst-case release scenario. It is held every year to assess response readiness and to improve coordination between public and private agencies and at all levels of government.

To find out more about this exercise, contact Trisha Asuncion at [trisha.asuncion@hsd.cccounty.us](mailto:trisha.asuncion@hsd.cccounty.us) or 925-335-3247.

Snuff Out Fires to Improve Indoor Air Quality, Column Advises

Fireplaces can evoke fond memories keeping warm in the winter, but they’re also a big source of particulate matter in the home. In a recent Healthy Outlook column, Dr. David Pepper writes that the carbon-rich pieces of material in wood smoke are small enough to pass through the nose into your throat and lungs, causing irritation and damaging cells. Dr. Pepper said if you do have a fire, burn clean, dry wood. He said you should also limit the use air dampers, use Duraflame or other clean-burning logs, and consider installing a wood stove. It’s also important to observe Spare the Air alerts.

To read more of this or other Healthy Outlook column, visit [www.cchealth.org/topics/column](http://www.cchealth.org/topics/column).
East County African American Health Empowerment Collaborative Surveying Residents

The East County African American Health Empowerment Collaborative, which successfully implemented the first African American Health Expo in East County, is now implementing a survey with East county African American residents to understand how best to communicate. Our Regional Medical Center’s Patient and Family Advisory Council Coordinator Lynnette Watts has been working closely with Collaborative Chair Carrie Frazier in the design of the survey. According to Lynnette, it is important that the collaborative find effective communication pathways with our most vulnerable members of the African American community to improve health disparities for African Americans. “We are hoping that this survey helps us understand how to effectively reach these community residents. Unless we know when and where and how to reach our most vulnerable African American residents, we cannot hope to provide effective interventions,” Lynnette said. Some examples of the survey questions include: What kind of media/communication do you use? How do you normally hear about community events? Where is the best place to receive health information or health education? Other questions try to determine what health issues are of greatest importance to the African American community. The survey was implemented at the annual Kwanza celebration at the Pittsburg Senior Center on December 27 and then will be rolled out at various other community sites and with various African American groups in East County. The collaborative is composed of community residents, members of local churches and local health programs.

For more information about this survey please contact Lynnette Watts at 925 370-5403 or lwatts@hsd.cccounty.us.

Learning the Ropes

Public Health Disease Investigation staff member Sara Sowko, bottom right, instructs CCRMC Facilities Manager Dave Duet on updating Emergency Management Team (EMT) flash drives with CCHS Emergency Plans and Procedures during a hands-on EMT training December 12. The training offered EMT members opportunities to practice skills related to emergency communications and procedures. Above left, Public Health’s Diana Cunnison and CCHP’s Lenell Anderson practice recording Division-specific messages on the Employee Emergency Hotline. EMT members can access these and other emergency instructions and procedures by visiting the EMT folder on iSITE. More pictures from the drill also can be found on iSITE.
You are a GEM for Going the Extra Mile

Nominate Someone for Service Excellence

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.

Dora Regalado
Administrative Aide
Public Health

For her dedication to the Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Initiative by meeting deadlines, taking initiative, being responsive, professional and supportive to all program staff.

♦ Nominated by Cristina Perez

5D Surgical Floor Night Shift
(Please see iSITE for list of names)
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center

For their team work and support, always taking time out to help each other even though everyone is always busy, creating a welcoming environment, training me well, teaching me that “team work always works,” and for making me proud to be part of this great team.

♦ Nominated by Eddie Mendoza-Ong

Lorene Francois
Clerk – Senior Level
Richmond Health Center

For being extremely courteous and supportive of patient group visit registration, for always being professional and helpful and for being a great support to the Promotoras program and the pediatric-obesity group visits.

♦ Nominated by Promotoras Program

Danira Oseguera
Certified Medical Assistant
Pittsburg Health Center

For her support of patients in diabetes and pediatric obesity group visits, proactively handling all of the details of the visits, making sure patients receive appropriate information, and for taking great pride in her work and meeting the needs of her team and her patients.

♦ Nominated by Connie James

Editha Guevarra
Accountant
Finance

For volunteering so much of her time crocheting very beautiful and unique hats for the newborns at CCRMC, and for making the most hats of any volunteer.

♦ Nominated by Terrillynn Kopitar
January Milestones

Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service:

- Dag H. Richards, Lisa A. Quindor, John K. Ojewole, Harrison G. Pace, Suzette A. Romero, Ellen V. Ruiz, Julie K. Weigel, Rosulo L. Donida II, Arlyn A. Enriquez, Olga Esparza-Rojas, Helen H. Kearns, Jason J. Pingol, Elizabeth O. Orme, Jacquelynne C. Winfield, Rosemarie K. Won (10 years);
- Stephen R. Cohen, Janice P. Cabaleda-Kegler (15 years);
- George Julie Ann Parsons, Jennifer L. Tucker (20 years);
- Lorene Francois, Phyllis M. Lee and Mendel C. Manzano (30 years).

SIDS Coordinator Recognized by State

Dawn Dailey was recently commended by the state for her “outstanding, dedicated and vitally important community service” around sudden infant death syndrome. The California Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Advisory Council said Dawn has performed “above and beyond the call of duty, and her activities have been of vital importance.” According to the Council, one out of every 2,000 babies who are born in California will die from SIDS before their first birthday.

FMCH Has New Director

Lorena Martinez-Ochoa has officially taken the reins as Director of the Family, Maternal and Child Health Programs in our Public Health Division. For the past year, she has provided leadership and vision to FMCH. Lorena began her career with Health Services in 1996 as a consultant. She went on to serve as Director of our Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Project and in various capacities in the FMCH Programs. Before coming to Health Services, Lorena worked in health promotion, perinatal services, HIV and youth empowerment. Public Health Director Dr. Wendel Brunner said he looks forward to working with Lorena in this new role to improve the health and well-being of children and families in Contra Costa.

Do you know someone going the extra mile?

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