

Inside

2
Director's Message
Continued

3
Service Excellence
Honor Roll

4
Reducing Health
Disparities
— Public Health
Works on Linguistic
Access

— Sharing Best
Practices

5
Children's Dental and
Nutrition Programs
Receive Funding

Mental Health
Expansion Plan Being
Drafted

Health Foundation
Event a Success

6
George Miller
Center Transition
to be Complete by
November 3

Bay Point Promotora
Speaks at National
Conference

CCHS Employees
Help with Hurricane
Katrina Relief Effort

7
Check the Intranet
for Tips on Computer
Security

Lock It Up! No Youth
Access to Alcohol

Employee Milestones

8
Presentation on Youth
Placement Lauded at
Conference

Mission to Russia
New Coordinators
Start Work on
Emergency
Response,
Immunization
Registry

How Prepared Are We?

Perhaps like most of you, I wasn't paying much attention to Hurricane Katrina when it first developed and began its journey to the Gulf Coast. The weekend that the storm hit, I was the Health Officer-On-Call. I heard bits and pieces of news and noticed when the tempo of the coverage increased. "This could be serious, one of the worst storms ever," began to be the message.

When I woke up on the morning after the storm passed through, it seemed as if the worst was over and the anticipated damage hadn't materialized. Then I listened in horror as reports began coming in about the levees breaking and saw people, who thought they had escaped, literally in the midst of life-threatening floods.

What was most disheartening was watching people clearly needing to be rescued and not seeing any help for them.

An Earthquake Will Happen

What occurred to me then and what has been on my mind since is the question of whether we are prepared for an event of such magnitude. Obviously a hurricane is not on our list of potential disasters. But we here in Northern California know that it isn't even a question of whether a major earthquake will strike, but when that will happen. And what will make that disaster all the more catastrophic is that there will be no warning and no chance to evacuate.

We will face many of the same issues that Gulf Coast residents and responders grappled with: no water, no power, many injured, an overwhelmed health care system, public transit and evacuation routes compromised.

Time to Assess Readiness

This is an important opportunity for us to reassess our own capabilities. Last month, spurred on by the frightening images from Katrina's aftermath, the Board of Supervisors directed the County Office of Emergency Services and the County Policy Board to report to them on the county's current level of readiness and what more needs to be done to prepare. The Policy Board, of which I am a

member, consists of all department heads who will be part of the County's Emergency Operations Center when a disaster occurs.

In some ways, we can count ourselves luckier than many other government entities in California and across the nation when it comes to having plans and infrastructure in place. We've had the misfortune over the years of dealing with the massive General Chemical release and other chemical plant and refinery incidents.



— Dr. Walker

Help for Katrina Evacuees

Health Care - 800-777-4270

County Office of Emergency
Services - 925-228-5000

With other Bay Area and California counties, we've also responded with mutual aid during the Loma Prieta and Northridge earthquakes, a major flood and other disasters.

What We Have

We have a strong system for mutual aid in California. Along with every other health officer in the state, I am responsible for

Continued next page

DID YOU KNOW

During its 11-day deployment to the Gulf Coast, our Disaster Medical Assistance Team, recorded a patient arrival rate of more than one per minute in the Superdome.

organizing health responses locally and tying into a regional system of support. In addition, since 1988, we have been the regional disaster medical health coordinator for the Bay Area, including the coastal areas up to Mendocino. Besides responding directly to our own local disasters and participating in mutual aid for other emergencies, we've conducted or been a part of tabletop exercises and drills to test our ability to respond to earthquakes and more recently to bioterrorism attacks and disease outbreaks.

With federal funding provided after September 11, we have created a number of systems that should serve us well during emergencies. We are working with the Office of Emergency Services to develop and refine a telephone emergency notification system that alerts residents to important disaster information and will be able to call in employees for duty. Our Emergency Management Team, which would be activated during a crisis, continues to receive training on important topics such as action planning and communication. We recently launched and are exercising an internal Incident Response Information System that has already helped us track and coordinate division efforts during an emergency. We recently submitted a plan to the California Department of Health Services for receiving and distributing the Strategic National Stockpile, a cache of antibiotics and other drugs, from the federal government. We also submitted plans for conducting mass vaccination clinics in the event of a disease outbreak, and dealing with an outbreak of smallpox. We now have a Health Emergency Information Hotline (888-959-9911) that can be updated in minutes to provide the public with updates and instructions in multiple languages.

More To Be Done

With all of this planning and preparation, it is tempting to say, "don't worry." But I'm afraid that doesn't reflect how I feel now, fresh from the images of Hurricane Katrina's devastation.

The fact is, no matter how prepared we are, we don't know how optimally we'll respond until the disaster strikes. As we look ahead at the issues we may confront — contaminated water, sewage problems, hazardous materials issues, chemical plant releases — we know there is much more to be done.

Although we've done much work already to coordinate efforts, we must continue to work with our partners to prepare. Since September 11, we have strengthened our ties with law enforcement, community clinics, cities, schools and the American Red Cross and we will continue to build those relationships.

Hurricane Katrina has certainly underscored the need to have focused emergency response plans for the most vulnerable in our communities — including people who are homeless, people with disabilities, nursing home residents, and those who live in poverty and have no access to public transportation or private vehicles. This kind of planning is very consistent with our Reducing Health Disparities Initiative and we must give it priority so all residents have equal access to services in emergencies. At the same time, we must be sure the public understands how important it is for them to be able to care for themselves for at least 72 hours after a disaster.

We Each Have a Role

In this *Director's Report*, you'll read about what some of our employees did to help with Katrina relief efforts. I know that many more of you contributed money and time to help and are continuing to do so. There are other steps all of us can take now to be prepared. Every one of us, as county employees, are Disaster Service Workers. California law requires us to report for duty during an emergency. With Santa Clara County, we have just completed a video that explains what it means to be a disaster service worker. I urge all of you to watch it. In order to perform effectively as a disaster service worker, you must be sure that your personal emergency preparedness is in place. That means developing family emergency plans, out-of-state phone contacts, and emergency kits with radio, water and food. Carry in your wallet the CCHS Employee Emergency card, which includes information on how to check on disaster reporting assignments and other critical information.

While Katrina is fresh in our minds, we must make disaster preparedness a priority. And with a major earthquake looming in our future, we can never let down our guard and become complacent about how prepared we are to help our community weather whatever crisis may occur.

The Disaster Service Worker video will be distributed soon. Order Employee Emergency wallet card and Family Disaster Planning brochure from Fowzia Younos at 925-313-6823 or email her at fyounos@hdsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us

Sincerely,



William Walker, MD

GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Honor Roll

Dr. Cynthia Carmichael, Norma Martinez, Sue Meltzer
CCRMC/Health Centers

For their excellence in helping a patient with housing, physical and mental health issues with support and compassion. All three went the extra mile every time providing care “as if they were my family, which I don’t have.”

—Nominated by a patient

East County CHDP Team
Public Health

For their hard work in referring Gateway children to La Clinica de La Raza’s Dental mobile project, helping to increase insured visits from less than 25% to more than 50%. They are always professional, helpful and courteous.

—Nominated by Viola Lujan, La Clinica de La Raza

Sandra Gutierrez
*Community Health Worker
Richmond Health Center*

For always providing toys, stickers and more from her personal funds, acting with a kind heart and never forgetting kids at the health center.

—Nominated by Jacqueline Hargis

Dag Richardson
*Network Analyst
Information Systems*

For turning a routine software upgrade for CCHP into a major improvement in system performance, security and member privacy. Using this prototype, IS can extend security protocols throughout CCHS for even more benefit.

—Nominated by Art Webb

Paula Hines
*Deputy Director
Child Health Disability Prevention Program*

For facilitating and fostering a successful and productive partnership between Public Health and Probation to promote the health and well-being of youth being placed in Group Homes from Juvenile Hall.

—Nominated by Dr. Cheri Pies

Dr. Teresa Madrigal
*Women’s Health Clinic
Pittsburg*

For staying beyond her clinic hours and greatly assisting STD staff in providing services to patients. Instead of being turned away untreated and frustrated, patients were cared for and were grateful for service.

—Nominated by Al Hernandez, Nancy Warren and Patty Christman

Javier Magana
*Senior Level Clerk
Brentwood Health Center*

For going above and beyond to obtain needed information for the Public Health Nurse to continue care of a child with multiple disabilities and for his unending desire to keep patients first. His care exemplifies Service Excellence.

—Nominated by Billie Wilson

Christina Ramirez, LVN
*Inpatient Psychiatric Services
CCRMC*

For demonstrating leadership, teamwork and a high degree of clinical skills and for her ability to develop rapport with patients, make them feel safe and centered. Her attitude and ability to deal with clients in a crisis is much appreciated.

—Nominated by Judy Quittman

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 “Going the Extra Mile” commendation form, available from every CCHS Division Director, or email your commendation to ServicEX@hcd.co.contra-costa.ca.us or fax it to 925-313-6219. The form can also be downloaded from the Internet (About Us page) or Intranet.

This page brings news of how the implementation of the CCHS Plan for Reducing Health Disparities is progressing and highlights program efforts. Our divisions have been working on three key areas to reduce health disparities. These are improving linguistic access, implementing educational activities on diversity and cultural and linguistic competence, and developing an organizational climate that values patient, customer and employee diversity.



Public Health Works on Linguistic Access

Our Public Health Division has focused on linguistic access as part of the Reducing Health Disparities Initiative (RHDI). PH staff learned how to access our translation and interpretation services and are using them to improve access to care, said Joanne Genêt, who is the manager of the Lead Poisoning Prevention Project and co-chairs the Division's RHDI work group with Deborah Card. One example is the Homeless Program, which recently participated in an training on how to a use the service that provides CCHS with language interpretation services via telephone. Homeless Program Outreach Team brings cell phones or uses pay phones to access the service in the field to communicate with non-English speaking people who are homeless and living in encampments. PH also is working to develop an incident form to report when a client has difficulty accessing care because of language issues. This will help the Division improve care, Joanne said. Most of PH's programs -- which also include the Community Wellness and Prevention Program, Communicable Diseases, HIV/AIDS, and Family, Maternal and Child Health and more -- are actively engaged in RHDI and all have implemented the linguistic access tools. "We have never gotten so many people at the table," Joanne said. "I am really proud." She said the work group will decide its next steps based on a needs assessment that is done with program managers. PH Director Wendel Brunner, MD said reducing health disparities is a top priority for Public Health. "Our staff is committed to reducing health disparities and is working very hard to tear down the walls that impede access to health care," he said.



For more information about Public Health's RHDI efforts, call Joanne Genêt at 925-313-6763 or email her at jgenet@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us



Left to right; Dawna Vann, Charlie Fernandez, and Charlotte Dickson are members of the Inclusion Work Group.

Sharing Best Practices

As part of the RHDI, our Community Wellness & Prevention Program's Inclusion Work Group is using its monthly professional development workshops to address such topics as race, class, sexual orientation and health disparities. The workshops provide a venue for staff of different backgrounds and ethnicities to share and learn from each other, said Dawna Vann, Senior Clerk, who co-chairs the Inclusion committee. "We come together from different backgrounds and ethnicities to share best practices to help us overcome the divide and move beyond our own filters," Dawna said. Feedback about the workshops has been really positive, said Joanne Genêt, manager of the Lead Poisoning Prevention Project. "People really want to talk about these issues," Joanne said. Inclusion Work Group members include Dawna Vann, Joanne Genêt, Tracey Rattray, Charlie Fernandez, Roxanne Carrillo, Gwenn White, Charlotte Dickson and Kitty Lenhart.

For more information call Dawna Vann at 925-313-6764 or email her at dvann@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us

Children's Dental and Nutrition Programs Receive Funding

Our Children's Oral Health Programs and Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program received some extra funding to work with residents in Concord's Monument Corridor thanks to Supervisor Mark DeSaulnier. The dental health program received \$7,600 and will use the money for dental health education classes for low-income families and to train four of its dental assistants to apply sealants to children's teeth. The classes teach families about healthy food choices and dental care to help prevent tooth decay, which is an epidemic among children. The training for the dental assistants will make it possible to provide 400 more children a year with dental sealants that protect their teeth from decay. The Women, Infants and Children program (WIC) received \$4,000, which will be used to teach a series of nutrition classes for low-income families starting this month. The classes strive for a fun learning environment and will include outings to local grocery stores with a nutritionist, who will demonstrate how to shop healthier by choosing healthy foods and reading product labels.



CCHS Senior Public Health Nutritionist Mary Jane Kiefer leads some children through a WIC activity class.

 For more information call Cheri Pies, Director of Family, Maternal and Child Health Programs, at 925-313-6254.

Mental Health Expansion Plan Being Drafted

After months of work with stakeholders, our Mental Health staff is completing a first draft of the plan required by the Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63), a voter initiative to expand mental health services. Once the plan is drafted this month, staff will meet with the Advisory Stakeholder Group. The plan is the result of efforts that began in January and have continued through the summer. Late last month, four Stakeholder Workgroups completed their meetings and each of the groups—Children, Transition-Age Youth, Adults and Older Adults—prepared a set of recommendations as to how funding for services and strategies should be used. (The recommendations and more information about the stakeholder groups are available online at cchealth.org) In August the State Department of Mental Health issued final guidelines for counties to write their 3-year plan for Community Services & Supports (the first component of the Mental Health Services Act). Our staff hope to have the final plan available for public comment in late October.

 For more information, call Kimberly Mayer at 925-957-6132.

Health Foundation Event a Success

In August, the Contra Costa Regional Health Foundation held its 2nd Annual Gala Event, "Jazz in the Park." Held again at John Muir National Historic Site, the event raised approximately \$40,000 as compared to last year's \$30,000. More than 150 attendees from all parts of Contra Costa participated in a live and silent auction. There was food from the Havana restaurant in Walnut Creek, Boundary Oaks, also in Walnut Creek, New Mecca in Pittsburg, Martinez's Wilma Lott Catering and Le Gateau Elegant, the latter providing tasty desserts. Dick Callahan, former voice of the Golden State Warriors, was the Master of Ceremonies and Dennis McCormack was the Auctioneer. The well known Jazz Quartet at Cal State East Bay provided entertainment. Carlos Reyes once again was the featured program attraction. The Presenting Sponsor was the Medical Staff of our CCRMC/Health Centers Division, and many of our physicians were in attendance. Save the Date for the Foundation's 3rd Annual event on September 23, 2006.

 For more information, call Frank Puglisi at 925-370-5020.

The Director's Report is published monthly. Deadline for the November edition is October 7. Publicize your upcoming events and successes by sending information to Julie Freestone at 597 Center Avenue, Suite 255, Martinez 94553, fax 925-313-6219, email: jfreestone@hds.co.contra-costa.ca.us. The Director's Report is available online at cchealth.org and on the Intranet at cchs.

George Miller Center Transition to be Complete by November 3

The transition of operating the George Miller Centers for individuals with disabilities from our staff to that of Contra Costa ARC is nearly complete. After 38 years of the county operating the centers, budget constraints forced the transition this year. Dr. Wendel Brunner, Public Health Director, told the Board of Supervisors last month that only one program each at George Miller Centers East and West, respectively, would continue to be staffed by CCHS personnel in October. The transition is expected to be complete by November 3. A Miller Center Task Force composed of disability advocates, staff, parents, services providers and staff from Regional Center of the East Bay aided the transition, and ARC and the Regional Center secured about \$2 million in State funds to pay for much-needed improvements at the sites. The Board of Supervisors, in accepting Dr. Brunner's report, asked for another update in six months and gave direction to the County Administrator's Office to continue efforts to place the approximately 15 county staff who were laid off in the transition and had not yet been placed in other jobs.



For more information call Bill Sorrell at 925-646-5710.

Bay Point Promotora Speaks at National Conference

Our lead promotora at the Bay Point Family Health Center, Angelica Matamoros, spoke at the National Community Health Worker Promotores Conference in August in Phoenix, Arizona. Angelica gave a presentation about the New Kids New Families program regarding childhood obesity. The program is funded by Kaiser Permanente. Promotores are community members trained to be public health educators in the Latino community.



For more information, call Angelica Matamoros at 925-427-8339.

CCHS Employees Help with Hurricane Katrina Relief Effort

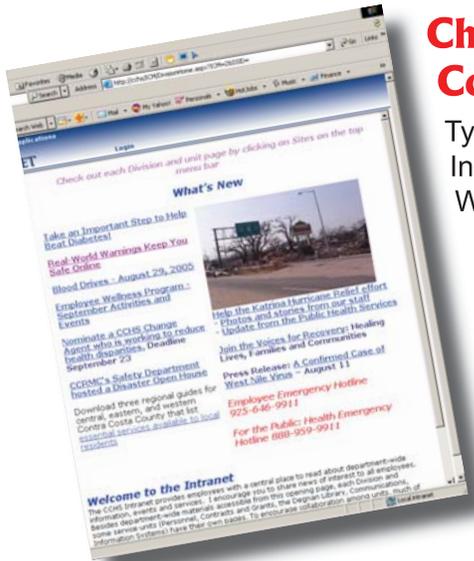
The suffering and destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast has moved CCHS staff to donate to the relief operation both with their money and time. Employees gave money to humanitarian organizations, organized local collection drives to help evacuees and some went in person to help. CCRMC emergency room doctor Bill Peterson went to Biloxi, Miss. with the East Bay Urban Search and Rescue Team deployed by FEMA. He was featured in a September 7 story in the Contra Costa Times, which described the team's harrowing task of recovering the bodies of Hurricane victims. CCHS Public Health Family Nurse Practitioner Terry Holbrook went to Fort Rucker, Ala. near Biloxi to help manage the Disaster Medical Assistance Teams responding there. She helped coordinate where medical care was delivered and provided logistical support for the medical teams. She slept on the floor and used a hose for a shower, nothing new for a seasoned relief worker who has helped out on other medical relief operations such as for the tsunami in South Asia. Her experiences re-enforce her belief that personal preparedness is vital to coping with disasters. Community Education and Information Specialist Kate Fowlie also went to Biloxi, Miss. and other affected areas with the American Red Cross. She wrote stories describing the Red Cross relief efforts in Mississippi and some of these stories and pictures can be found on our Intranet site and on the Red Cross website: www.redcross.org



CCHS employee and American Red Cross volunteer Kate Fowlie talks to a New Orleans evacuee staying with her baby at a shelter in Hattiesburg, Miss. Photo credit: Steve Coleman/American Red Cross



Email Dan Smith at dsmith@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us or call him at 925-313-6833 to share a story about a CCHS employees involved in the Hurricane Katrina relief operations.



Check the Intranet for Tips on Computer Security

Type cchs in your Internet browser to access our Intranet, where one new page tells how “Real World Warnings Keep You Safe Online.”

Lock It Up! No Youth Access to Alcohol

Our Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Board has adopted “Lock It Up! No Youth Access to Alcohol” as its theme for this year’s Red Ribbon Week. The slogan is part of a media campaign funded by Safe and Drug-Free Schools and created by Bay Point and Rodeo middle school youth to raise awareness and educate adults about the consequences of underage drinking. During Red Ribbon Week (October 23-31), our Alcohol and Other Drugs Services Division will distribute to county employees red ribbons, bookmarks and brochures highlighting local events this month. Red Ribbon Week is a 20-year old campaign to present a unified and visible commitment toward a drug-free America.



To request Red Ribbon Week materials, contact Amy Chao at 925-313-6636 or email her at achao@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us For more information about the Lock It Up! campaign, contact Laura Pasion at 925-313-6302.

Employee Milestones

Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Margery Kushner, Janet Murrell, Catherine Zonfrello, Maxine Little, Blanca Lopez, Victoria Brown, Julie Freestone, Carlos Dreiss, Victor Klatt (10 years); Galina Genina, Pamela Hines, Patricia Lapin, Catherine Wilson, Anne Wolf, Niloufar Shafigh, Judith Benham, Sonya Jacoby, Rosemarie Aguinaga-Tripp, Deborah Mijares, Lydia Bautista, Mabel Negron, Dianne Rogoski, Cyril Hinds, Suzanne Crowe (15 years); Jody Adelberg, Marsha Flakoll, George Saad (20 years); Janet Marshburn, Curtis Coleman (25 years); Roberta Boylan, Patricia Bernhardt (30 years); Martha De La Torre and Catherine Mendoza (35 years). *(We know there are lots of other dedicated employees with long years of service. Because of space limitations, we are only reporting those with 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 years.)*

Winners of our 2005 Reducing Health Disparities Initiative (RHDI) Awards will be announced in the November Director’s Report. The award recognizes CCHS employees who have demonstrated a commitment to the RHDI in the past two years through projects, events, policies or other efforts. Watch this page next month for the list of honorees.

Presentation on Youth Placement Lauded at Conference

Program planners at a recent conference on “Youth Being Placed in Group Homes from Juvenile Hall” lauded the approach presented by a team led by Paula Hines, Deputy Director of our Child Health and Disability Prevention Program (CHDP). Among other comments, the planners praised the teamwork and set of forms used in Contra Costa as excellent models to follow. They noted that collaboration between county departments resulted in better service to the youth. Other participants in the panel besides Paula included Dave Ellis, Probation Supervisor; Kira Faulkner, Probation Placement Worker; Donna Harbaugh, Employment and Human Services Medi-Cal Supervisor; and Nancy Hayes, Public Health Nurse.



For more information, call the CHDP Program at 925-313-6150.



Bob Kajdan

Mission to Russia

Bob Kajdan, a Manager with our Alcohol and Other Drugs Services division, is in Russia for 10 days this month as part of a delegation of addiction professionals who are sharing techniques and strategies with clinicians in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Bob will be presenting at a clinic that uses U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration best practices to guide its work. He'll be talking about dual diagnosis strategies and sharing information from our department, including CCHS brochures, an article about our Spectrum of Prevention framework and other materials.



For more information, contact Bob Kajdan at 925-313-6380.

New Coordinators Start Work on Emergency Response, Immunization Registry

Two Public Health staff members have changed jobs recently to take on new challenges. Erika Jenssen, who initiated the position of Health Emergency Response Coordinator for us almost three years ago, has moved on to become our Immunization Registry Coordinator. The Contra Costa Automated Immunization Registry (CCAIR) is a database of immunization records for residents of Contra Costa and currently being used in all CCHS health centers and at WIC. Erika will be working to expand it to community clinics, private health care providers, Head Start centers and schools. The goal of this effort is to make sure residents of Contra Costa, particularly children, are protected against vaccine-preventable diseases. The new Health Emergency Response Coordinator is Kim Cox, formerly Project Director for the Contra Costa Breast Cancer Partnership and most recently the Women's Health Partnership and Community Action to Fight Asthma. She will work with various partners -- first responders, Office of Emergency Services, community groups — to prepare for and respond to any health emergencies including bioterrorism, flu pandemic or other outbreaks. Good luck to both Kim and Erika on their new assignments!



Left, Kim Cox receives the Health Emergency Handbook from Erika Jenssen.