

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

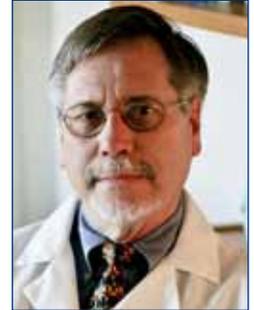
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Are We Prepared?

The recent San Bruno gas line explosion and tragic fire was a stark reminder that disasters can happen anywhere at any time and that sometimes there are only minutes to respond in an effective way that will save lives and protect property. I've been thinking lately about how much better prepared we are now to do that compared to a decade or so ago.

This is a topic that should be of interest to every one of us, since all of us, as public employees, are considered to be Disaster Service Workers in a declared disaster and will be required to report and respond during an emergency activation.



William B. Walker, MD
CCHS Director

The value of preparedness exercises

Last month I participated in a tabletop exercise that helped a broad range of stakeholders get ready for a statewide drill that is being held this month (see story on Page 3). A number of realizations occurred to me during that exercise. One was the huge range of participants from across the county and across disciplines—law enforcement, fire, hospitals and community based organizations like community clinics, the Volunteer Center, the Contra Costa Crisis Center, skilled nursing facilities and others, including virtually all of our Health Services Divisions. Many of those present were people who only interact in emergencies and it was particularly impressive to share across our “cultures” the different perspectives and issues we bring during a response.

I came away understanding once again that it is better to have a tabletop to figure out in advance who needs what and what our different partners bring than to try to work that all out in real time during a disaster.

In my 36 years with Health Services, I've been involved in many emergencies of all sorts. One that comes to mind is the Rhone Poulenc fire in Martinez in 1992. I was on the scene—with the Fire Chiefs, law enforcement, the Coast Guard, Hazardous Materials and state agencies. I remember saying, “We have to stop meeting like this.” And in fact, we did stop meeting just during emergencies. We formed a Hazmat Inter-agency Task Force that, among other things, developed a matrix for who should do what during disasters. Even more important were the personal relationships

DID YOU KNOW?

Last year our Emergency Medical Services Division responded and tried to save the lives of **569** people who collapsed from sudden cardiac arrest.

that were developed among us first responders.

Since then, we've expanded that approach to an all hazards collaboration and our health staff have become central players in addressing how we will respond not just to disease outbreaks but also to bioterrorism incidents and natural disasters.

Our Emergency Management Team

Something that has enormously strengthened our ability to be involved and knowledgeable is the expansion of our Health Services Emergency Management Team (EMT)—now more than 130 staff and still growing. We've looked at the roles required in the Incident Command System and assigned enough employees to each role to function 24/7. We've also equipped our Department Operations Center at 50 Douglas Drive and provided everyone with orientation on how to function there so if we have to activate, we'll be ready. We've also expanded our ability to staff the County Emergency Operations Center's Medical/Health Branch, where I will be during an emergency activation.

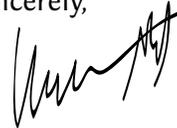
We've also put a tremendous amount of emphasis on communications since that is always a key issue in our exercises, drills and actual incidents. Our internal Incident Response Information System (IRIS), broader use of 440 MHz radios, cell phones and other devices

should stand us in good stead if we have to go into an emergency response mode.

At a recent quarterly meeting of the EMT, during the introductions of team members, I was gratified to hear that virtually everyone knew what his or her role would be during an emergency activation. That, and some personal planning to be sure our families are ready, will help tremendously if we are called upon to step up during a disaster. Even in times of declining resources, I consider this to be a priority area. Some disasters we face in the future could be even more devastating than the economic meltdown we've been struggling through. I encourage you to review our emergency plan and policies and your home and personal preparedness efforts.

More information is available on our public website www.cchealth.org/topics/emergencies/ and our intranet, ISITE. To get a new Disaster Service Worker badge that describes reporting procedures during emergencies, contact Anne Pato, Health Services Personnel at anne.pato@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-957-5261.

Sincerely,



William B. Walker, MD



Rest in Peace

Mourning the Loss of One of Our Own

Last week we lost one of our nursing staff to violence. Cynthia Palomata was attacked by an inmate she was trying to care for at the Martinez Detention Facility where she worked, and she succumbed to her injuries on Thursday. She was a well-respected and dedicated member of Contra Costa Health Services and we mourn her loss.

Cynthia was born in Navas, Aklan in the Philippines. After nursing school she moved to the United States, where she worked for more than 20 years in Bay Area hospitals before joining Health Services in 2005. She leaves behind her husband, Gedelfo, her adult son, Earl, her mother Perla Barraca and other family members. A memorial will be held for Cynthia at 6 p.m. Saturday, November 6 at Wilson and Kratzer Mortuaries, located at Mission Bells Chapel, 13644 San Pablo Avenue, San Pablo. The phone number is 510-232-6552. The viewing will be held 1 to 9 p.m. on both Friday, November 5 and Saturday, November 6.

This tragedy affects all of us. As we struggle to make sense of a senseless act, we need to support each other through this difficult time. Anyone in need of emotional support can call Contra Costa Crisis Line for confidential counseling anytime at 1-800-833-2900. Employees also can contact our Employee Assistance Program to set up a counseling appointment at 925-930-3661.

Cynthia's family and all of you are in my thoughts and prayers. —William Walker

A trust account has been set up for Cynthia's family in her name:

**Cynthia B. Palomata
Trust Fund,**

Redwood Credit Union,
San Rafael Branch,
Routing #321177586,
Account #356859.

Public Health to Hold One-Day, Nine-City Flu Vaccination Event

Flu season is just beginning in Contra Costa. Our Public Health Division is hosting a one-day, nine-city campaign to “Vaccinate Contra Costa” from 1 to 7 p.m. November 10. Free flu clinics will be held throughout the county. Immunization Coordinator Erika Jenssen said the idea is to allow families a time to get vaccinated after work and school. Last month, our Regional Medical Center and Health Centers Division hosted a week of flu clinics for members of our Health Plan. If you still haven’t received your flu vaccine, check with your health care provider or visit www.cchealth.org/topics/flu/ to find out where to get vaccinated.

Health Services, Partners Plan Response to Improvised Explosive Device Attacks

Our Public Health Division’s Health Emergency Response unit, along with our Emergency Medical Services Division, hosted a tabletop exercise with first responders, city and county officials, hospitals and other community partners September 30. The group of about 70 representatives from 59 locations looked at two scenarios involving the simultaneous detonation of improvised explosive devices (IED) in Contra Costa and other Bay Area counties and discussed how our county would support a surge in demand for adult and pediatric medical services in the event of a regional emergency. It was the first tabletop Health Services has held to discuss IEDs. The three-hour exercise was intended to prepare participants for an upcoming functional medical/health statewide exercise November 18.

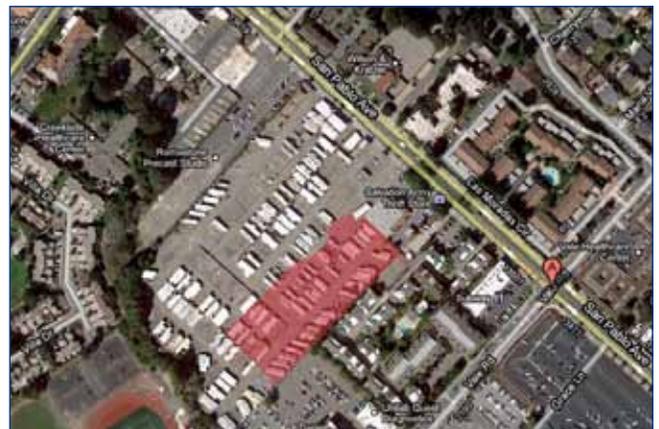


From left to right, Julianne Reed of Public Health, Chris Boyer of the Office of Emergency Services, Margaret Romiti of the City of Concord and Barbara Center of Emergency Medical Services participate in the tabletop meeting.

For more information about the tabletop or the upcoming exercise contact Kim Cox, Emergency Services Manager at kim.cox@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-6648.

County Purchases San Pablo Property for New West County Health Center

The County Board of Supervisors last month approved the \$3.8 million purchase of several acres in San Pablo for our new West County Health Center. The West County Health Center will replace our aging Richmond Health Center, which has served West County for more than 40 years. The new location along San Pablo Avenue, between Vale Road and Church Lane, is located less than a block away from Doctors Medical Center San Pablo, where we originally considered putting the new center. The City of San Pablo helped secure the new site, which allows us to build the center from the ground up without disturbing hospital activities. Funding for the purchase will be made from a combination of federal grant revenues and bond financing. Construction for the clinic is expected to be complete by spring 2012.



To find out more about the West County Health Center, call Steve Harris at 925-957-5416.



4B Day Shift Staff

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center

For excellent teamwork in a Code Blue situation. Everyone played an important role despite many obstacles. The patient had a positive outcome due to all of their efforts and teamwork.

◆Nominated by Holly Longmuir

Yodeillie Baybayan, PHN

Beverly Voorstad, PHN

California Children's Services

For exceptional commitment, outstanding quality and quantity of work, for managing huge caseloads while simultaneously orienting colleagues new to the program, and for working with others to solve complex problems with a kind, thoughtful and humorous manner. They are irreplaceable.

◆Nominated by Barbara Sheehy

Marcela Cardenas

Care Coordinator – Martinez Health Center

For always responding quickly to requests, sharing her knowledge, following up, being thoughtful and friendly, offering to help and for demonstrating care and compassion for the patients she serves.

◆Nominated by Michele Garbers & Jackie Peterson

Larry Carlson

Facilities Manager/AOD

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center

For his meticulous attention to detail assisting with the logistics for a high-profile press conference at CCRMC. The event went smoothly thanks to his support and guidance.

◆Nominated by Kate Fowlie

Jan Gordon

Ambulatory Care Clinic Coordinator

Mental Health

For dedication and commitment in her role as Disaster/Emergency Coordinator for the Mental Health Division ensuring that Mental Health staff, consumers and providers are prepared to respond to emergency situations and that the division is better prepared to serve after disaster strikes.

◆Nominated by Donna Wigand

Diana Mahar, MD

Kaiser Permanente

For her efforts in making the Breast Feeding Telemedicine Pilot Project a success and for her passion and dedication regarding the benefits of breast feeding.

◆Nominated by Frank Puglisi

Jill Honeyman

Disaster Coordinator

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center

Chris Place

Assistant Facilities Manager

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center

Swandi Singh

Director of EVS

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center

For their assistance with parking, traffic and other logistics for a high-profile press conference at CCRMC. The event went smoothly thanks to their support.

◆Nominated by Kate Fowlie



Claudia Salmeron

Lactation Consultant
WIC Program

For her cooperation and commitment to assist women experiencing problems with breast feeding their newborns. Her assistance was instrumental in implementing the Lactation Telemedicine Pilot Project utilizing the Health Care Interpreter Network (HCIN).

◆Nominated by Frank Puglisi

Blair Thedinger, MD

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center

For stepping in to take care of a patient in crisis. He provided direction to the nursing staff in a calm and clear manner which allowed for a positive outcome for the patient.

◆Nominated by 4B Day Shift Staff

The Director's Report is published monthly. Deadline for the December edition is November 19. Send information to Kate Fowlie at 597 Center Avenue, Suite 255, Martinez 94553, fax 925-313-6219, or email kate.fowlie@hsd.cccounty.us The newsletter is available online at cchealth.org and on isite.

Do you know someone who's going the extra mile? Service Excellence nomination forms are available at www.cchealth.org and <http://cchs/> from any cchs computer.

November Milestones Congratulations to these employees who have given us long years of service: Anna K. Williams, Zdena Teply, Carol Curtis, Janet M. McCoy, Christine P. Keebler (10 years); Ulysses De Los Santos, Vickey E. Dominguez (15 years); Yulanda J. Bowles, Hermie O. De Leon, Alice M. Dequilla, Felicia M. Walker, Sonya Pye, Ethel T. Mae (20 years); Pamela E. Dodson, Cynthia C. Pagmanua, Lupe Villalobos and Karin F. Wonnemberg (25 years).

Freestone Retires, Session Takes Over

Julie Freestone, Assistant to the Health Services Director, retires December 3 after 15 years with CCHS. Health Services Finance Administrator Wanda Session will take over her position.



Julie

Julie joined CCHS as a media coordinator with Public Health's Tobacco Prevention Project. A former journalist, Julie built CCHS' communications unit, Community Education and Information (CEI), and served as the CCHS Communications Officer until 2007 when she



Wanda

became the Assistant to the Director. Julie has been involved the California Endowment initiative Healthy Richmond, the RYSE Board of Directors and many other projects and efforts. Wanda has worked for CCHS for 27 years. She received the County Manager of the Year award in 2008 and has been a key player in extending health coverage to more Contra Costa residents. Wanda also managed the Financial Counseling unit and served as program manager for our Health Coverage Initiative and Basic Health Care Program. Congratulations to Julie on her retirement and Wanda on her new position!



Brentwood Health Center staff, from left to right, Esther Luna, Lucy Rosa, Angelica Lazo, Lonni Cronin RN, Elvia Colmenares.



Antioch Health Center staff (pictured from left to right): Leticia Hurtado, Cenán Manansala, JoAnne Garrett, Christine Porter, Nina Finnell, Vanessa Gutierrez, Mylene Ibay, LuzElena Oñate Not pictured: Angela Gonzalez, Chris Fruth, Tina Waser, Caryn Saephan

Antioch, Brentwood Health Centers Get Creative with Service Excellence Principles

The principles of Service Excellence might be a little easier to learn if acted out. That was the idea Ambulatory Care Clinic Coordinators Waynette Mason and Sylvia Elizarraraz had when presenting Ambulatory Care’s principles during a recent staff meeting for employees of the Antioch and Brentwood Health Centers. Health Center employees were divided into teams, each representing a principle. The teams were tasked with creating a skit, song, educational piece or written document to support the principle. Presentations were made and co-workers had to guess which principle was being exhibited. The idea was successful, and Waynette and Sylvia say staff are enthusiastic about the new Service Excellence principles.

To find out more about Service Excellence, visit www.cchealth.org/groups/health_services/excellence.php

Behavioral Health, Primary Care Working Together in Richmond

Our Richmond Health Center over the past year has been home to an effort that aims to integrate behavioral health services into our primary care system while meeting the goals of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s Triple Aim: improving population health, enhanced individual care quality, patient satisfaction and lower per capita containing costs. The first phase of the project increased the availability of consult-liaison psychiatry service fivefold, from four hours per week to 20. However, Ambulatory Care Director of Behavioral Health Dr. Johanna Ferman said psychiatric services alone weren’t enough to address the needs of the county’s at-risk population. For the past seven months, the Office of Behavioral Health and West County Family Medicine staff, under the direction of Dr. Priscilla Hinman, as well as other clinical and administrative staff at Richmond Health Center, have partnered with the Wright Institute of Psychology to better meet those needs. Three second-year post-doctoral trainees will spend 12 hours each per week working with primary care provider hosts. Dr. Ferman said the effort has brought together people who share a vision and have dedicated themselves to a common goal of health and healing for a community under siege.



Regional Health Foundation Director Lynda Gayden, left,, and Dr. Ferman, second from right, talk about the project.

For more information, contact Dr. Ferman at johanna.ferman@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-1136.



Gail Doyle, left, and Community Wellness & Prevention Project Administrative Assistant Cheri Webster examine children's products waiting to be tested.

Children's Toys Tested for Lead Content

Our Public Health Division partnered with several community groups last month to test dozens of children's toys and products for lead. Parents were invited to bring up to three children's products to the testing events in Concord and Pittsburg. Current testing methods provide near-instant readings on the level of lead in the toy. Lead Poisoning Prevention Project Health Educator Gail Doyle said even low levels of lead are poisonous and young children because of their smaller body size are most at risk. Lead has been shown to harm a child's development, learning and behavior. Gail said toys most at risk of lead contamination include older painted toys, vinyl products and inexpensive jewelry.

To find out more about lead poisoning, visit www.cchealth.org/groups/lead_prevention/ or call 1-866-FIX-LEAD.

EMS Tries New Approach to Saving Lives

For all of you who have been putting off learning CPR or refreshing your skills, our Emergency Medical Services Division has an easy, believe-it-or-not fun way for you to prepare to handle a cardiac emergency. Pre-hospital Care Coordinator Pam Dodson has combined the socializing of a Tupperware party with CPR training that can be conducted in homes or community settings. And best of all, the whole event takes about one hour. Partygoers practice lifesaving techniques using a CPR Anytime kit that includes a "mini Annie" inflatable training dummy. The group watches a video, which is part of the kit, practices "hands-only" CPR and learns how to use an automated external defibrillator. At the pilot event recently, guests were extremely enthusiastic about the approach. Guests had several ideas about how to pass along the skills to others, including training at their synagogue, disaster preparedness group and having their own party for fellow Pilates instructors. Pam provides a simple host instruction guide to go along with the self-guided video and is available for consultation.

To learn more or arrange an anytime CPR House Party, contact Pam Dodson at pam.dodson@hsd.cccounty.us or 925-313-9547.



Health Services Staff, Community Walk to Raise Awareness for Cardiac Arrest

Beverly Bradley, front, holds a picture of her son Darius Jones and is surrounded by supporters at the 5k Walk/Run on October 9 at the Martinez Waterfront Park. Hundreds of people, including many CCHS employees, participated in the event, which was held to raise awareness and funds to prevent sudden cardiac arrest. The walk was organized by the Darius Jones Foundation, a nonprofit started by Beverly, an Account Clerk with our AIDS Program, after her 15-year-old son died of sudden cardiac arrest last year while playing basketball. The walk raised \$17,000, which will pay for five automatic external defibrillators to be placed in local schools. Beverly said the American Medical Response also donated five AEDs to the foundation. For more info on the Darius Jones Foundation, visit www.dariusjonesfoundation.org



Cross Divisional Team Recognized for Violence Prevention Efforts

A four-year journey to address escalating violence in West County ended last month, but programs that were institutionalized during the process will continue to have an impact. Health Services convened an ad hoc team in early 2006 to assess how we could best respond to the upsurge in street violence plaguing West County. The initial Cross Divisional Violence Prevention team was made up of Director Dr. William Walker, Public Health Director Dr. Wendel Brunner and staff from Public Health, Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Services, and Ambulatory Care. Members

Members of the Cross Division Violence Prevention team are, from left to right, Merida Diaz (John Muir), Dr. Wendel Brunner, Monica Ortega (John Muir), Dr. Joe Barger, Concepcion James, Cynthia Belon, Chinyere Madawaki, Barbara Sheehy, Dr. William Walker, Matthew Luu, Tiombe Mashama, Roxanne Carrillo, Donna Wigand and Julie Freestone.

conducted research, assessed current Health Services efforts and interviewed community violence prevention leaders. Three areas were of particular importance for the group: supporting county re-entry and transition efforts, supporting Richmond’s Office of Neighborhood Safety, and helping to launch a John Muir-Office of Neighborhood Safety hospital violence intervention project called Beyond Violence in Richmond and Antioch. The team held its final meeting October 21 to recognize its accomplishments and its members. In the four years, the team and its partners were able to create partnerships and programs that may reduce the reoccurrence of a person from being involved in violent activity, said Tiombe Mashama, Reducing Health Disparities Community Health Education Coordinator.

For more information about this effort, contact Tiombe Mashama at 925-957-5421.

Health Plan Welcomes Former Health Net Patients

Our Health Plan has accommodated 1,500 Contra Costa residents who lost coverage from Health Net in September from community physicians contracted with HealthNet. During September, CCHP was successful in contracting four new pediatric groups to our Community Provider Network for continuity of care. The new Healthy Families members were assigned based upon their requests to our Regional Medical Center (200) and Health Centers, La Clínica or physicians in our Community Provider Network (1,300). Health Plan CEO Patricia Tanquary said Member Services, Marketing, Membership Maintenance and Utilization, Provider Relations and Contracts have all made it a smooth transition for the new members. Assessments are now being made to determine which new members require on-going case management or special needs. Patricia said the coordinated managed care approach has been successful and will be built upon next year to enroll seniors and persons with disabilities into managed care.

To find out more about our Health Plan, visit www.cchealth.org/health_plan/

Pesky Pests are Topic of Public Meeting

Bed bugs are creeping into Contra Costa more than ever and creating a nuisance for residents and business owners alike. Our Public and Environmental Health Advisory Board teamed up with the County Bed Bug Task Force and the Monument Community Partnership last month to host a town hall meeting about how to manage the invasive pests. More than 80 people attended the meeting. PEHAB Executive Assistant Joanne Genet said bed bugs feed on people at night causing painful, itchy swellings, but do not transmit disease. People attending the meeting learned pest management techniques, as well as tenant rights.



To find out more about bed bugs, visit www.cchealth.org/topics/bed_bugs/