



NEWS

From Your Health Department

Fall/Winter 2003

This community newsletter came from our work with three communities in the Partnership for Public's Health initiative. Our partners in West County, Monument Corridor and Bay Point emphasized the need for Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) to explore new ways to communicate about what we are doing and planning to do to improve the health of our community.

Financial Counseling Phones Ringing

Starting July 1, when anyone calls our Central Appointment Unit (800-495-8885) for a medical appointment, they are asked to enter an identification number that reflects their insurance coverage. Patients who already have insurance coverage — including Basic Health Care — are routed immediately to an appointment clerk. So far, it seems those folks have a shorter wait to make an appointment. Callers who don't have insurance coverage are routed to a financial counselor to begin the application process for Medi-Cal, membership in our Contra Costa Health Plan, Healthy Families or Basic Health Care.

Safely Surrendered Baby Program Expands

Contra Costa County officials have designated fire stations, operated by cities and fire districts, and Kaiser medical offices as sites for abandoned newborns in Contra Costa County under the state's Safely Surrendered Baby (SSB) law. This action expands the number of Safe Surrender sites from the original eight hospital emergency departments to 88 sites throughout the county. California's SSB law, signed by Governor Gray Davis in 2000, allows a parent or person with lawful custody to safely surrender their newborn infant within the first 72 hours after birth to any California hospital emergency room or other designated location without the threat of prosecution for child abandonment. The law was designed to protect infants from being abandoned by distraught parents and potentially being hurt or killed. For addresses of designated sites or other community resources, call the Contra Costa Crisis Center at (800) 833-2900 or visit <http://cchealth.org>.



Into Safe Arms

News is published quarterly by Contra Costa Health Services as a pilot project funded by the Partnership for the Public's Health.

Let us know what you think!

Send comments and suggestions to mmorgan@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us or call (925) 313-6715.

Center for Health Expands Service

Responding to residents' priorities, the Center for Health in North Richmond has begun providing free Children's Preventive Dental services on the second and third Monday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. of each month. A bilingual Spanish-speaking staff person is available during those times. The Center has also added two medical social workers on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., one of whom is bilingual in Spanish. Primary care, HIV and TB chest clinics, patient education, TB testing, acupuncture, mental health and asthma services are also offered. The Center, its Advisory Board and the Partnership for the Public's Health have been working with West County residents to design and enhance services. CFH Director Chinyere Madawaki, MPH, conducted focused trainings about the operation of CCHS' Ambulatory Care and Public Health Divisions. Recommendations developed by residents were presented at a community forum to Steve Tremain, MD, Director of Ambulatory Care. He agreed to a number of actions, some of which are reflected in the expanded hours. Others require additional funding which is not available now. The Center is located at 1501 Third Street, Richmond. For appointments, call 800-495-8885. For more information, contact Chinyere Madawaki 510-374-7330.



Information about
Health Coverage
Programs
877-503-9350

Homeless
Hotline
800-808-6444

Mental
Health
888-678-7277

Contra
Costa Health
Appointment
Line
800-495-8885

Community
Substance
Abuse Service
800-846-1652

Poison Control
800-222-1222

Medicare Hotline
800-633-4727

Elder Abuse Hotline
877-839-4347

Food Bank
925-676-7543



Where can
you get
information
about Services
in
Contra
Costa?

www.cccord.org

Need more
information about
health services?

Visit our website
cchealth.org.

Looking At Language Needs

CCHS' new initiative to reduce health disparities includes a focus on improving linguistic access. It's a strategy we believe is key to addressing health disparities and an area we are required to address as a recipient of federal funds. Among the more immediate actions we will be taking is to ensure that multilingual signs are posted at every point of access into our system and letting those who use our services know that they have the right to an interpreter. Our programs will be reviewing all written material they use to determine which need to be translated into other languages. Spanish has been identified as our threshold language, meaning that in our service area there are more than 3,000 people who primarily speak this language. Because Spanish is our threshold language, all materials should be translated into Spanish. The next largest language group in our service population is Vietnamese. As a concentration language, all "vital documents" should be translated into Vietnamese. To supplement existing bilingual staff resources we will be strengthening and better publicizing our resources for obtaining telephone oral interpretation services and written translations of materials. Overall, we are taking a close look at how we deliver linguistic access services and identifying ways to improve them. For more information call Karen Lin at 925-370-5056.



Serving Children with the Gateway

The Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) Program, which has been serving children since 1973, started a new approach in October — CHDP Gateway — aimed at directing uninsured children into health insurance, right at their doctors' offices. CHDP provides complete physical exams, screening tests for hearing and vision, lab screenings and immunizations for children and youth. The new Gateway process offers online applications for Medi-Cal, which are submitted to the state when patients arrive for their appointments at clinic sites. If the patient — a child under 19 years old who is a resident of California with a family income at or below 200% of poverty — is eligible, he/she will receive temporary Medi-Cal services for the month of application and the following month. To continue with coverage, families will have to complete the appropriate application. Our CHDP Director, Paula Hines, says this is a wonderful opportunity to help families secure health insurance for their children and have health problems identified and treated. For more information, call Paula Hines at 925-313-6150 or visit our website at cchealth.org/fmch.

What's New on Our Website

If you are looking for information about the County's Industrial Safety Ordinance, you can find a wealth of answers on our Hazardous Materials pages. On the Public Health pages, find tips on what immunizations children and adults need and information in English and Spanish about the importance of folic acid to having healthy babies. The Public Health clinic schedule is now available on the Spanish-language page. Find it all on <http://cchealth.org>.

New Consumer Health Library Open

The new Consumer Health Library opened in September at the Family Practice Center (Building 2, Suite 4) in Martinez. The service, for patients, their families and friends, is funded by the National Library of Medicine. Medical librarian Sally Chu says the medical library staff and trained volunteers will teach consumers to use a computer in searching for health information. The Consumer Health Library has easy-to-read health-related books and pamphlets; access to MedlinePlus.gov, which contains information on health topics and drugs; articles, illustrations and definitions of medical terms from medical encyclopedias and dictionaries; current and up-to-date news; directories of hospitals, physicians and other specialists; and interactive health tutorials with audio explanations. Health information in Spanish is available. An extension of the Consumer Health Library is in the lobby of Martinez Health Center (Building 1), providing a computer for database searching and some pamphlets for consumers. Call Sally Chu at 925-370-5530 for information.