



CHCQ QUARTERLY

A Warm Welcome from our Deputy Director

Welcome to this first edition of the Center for Health Care Quality newsletter! My hope is that the *CHCQ Quarterly* will help bridge the gap between our Sacramento headquarters (290 strong) and the vast majority of our staff in the field – close to 1,000 at this time.

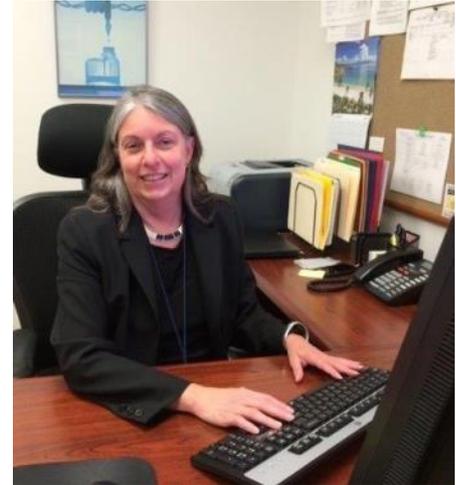
We strive for constant quality improvement and the *CHCQ Quarterly* is proof. The newsletter will provide a regular channel for open communication on important issues and updates as well as a forum for staff recognition and personnel news. (Read about how the newsletter got its name in the pages ahead.)

I would like to congratulate Assistant Deputy Director Scott Vivona, whose permanent appointment was recently

announced. Scott has worked in CHCQ since 2001. I am also pleased to welcome C. J. Howard, join us from the Director's Office as chief of policy and planning.

Since I have been with CHCQ, I have been inspired daily by the hard work and dedication I have witnessed both here at headquarters and in our visits in the field. Scott and I visited the East Bay, San Francisco, and San Jose district offices in July with Branch Chief Eric Morikawa, Chico in August with Branch Chief Cassie Dunham, and Orange County with Branch Chief Jackie Lincer, in September.

If we have not met yet, please stop in to say hello – or introduce yourself the next time we are at your district office. I am also looking forward to hosting an all-staff



teleconference in January. More details to come soon.

Jean Iacino
Deputy Director

Hot Topics: Staff Influx, Quality Improvement Strides

The Center for Health Care Quality is in perpetual motion. We keep busy, move fast, yet constantly check ourselves to see how we can do better at promoting quality health care for California.

The infusion of 237 new staff positions from the 2015-2016 state budget will go a long way toward that mission. Other substantive efforts are afoot. “In addition to the new staff, we’re also trying to learn to more effectively use our staff. This is a great opportunity for us to identify and disseminate best practices,” said Jean Iacino, CHCQ Deputy Director.

The emphasis on best practices goes hand-in-hand with a number of initiatives underway at the California Department of Public Health and within our own Center, from a new staff training requirement to a pair of quality improvement teams focusing on Licensing and Certification's complaint investigation and citation issuance processes.

In May, facilitators from Fresno State's Central California Center for Health & Human Services began monthly meetings with the teams, composed of headquarters and field staff. The complaint investigation team, led by Region IV Field Operations Branch Chief Mike Egstad, is tackling complaint investigation

efficiency and effectiveness, particularly in light of a new state law phasing in 60-day timelines for completion of long-term care complaints by 2018.

Assistant Deputy Director Scott Vivona says the timing of the legislation, new staff, and subsequent training is opportune. “We recognize providers and consumers want us to be more responsive and timely. We are always looking for opportunities to improve and streamline our processes,” he explained. “Engaging in quality improvement is something we want to do more.”

The complaint investigations team includes Elizabeth Callahan (Orange County); Toni Camasura (San Francisco); Chelsea Driscoll (HQ); Tatjana Eby-Siddiqui (San Jose); Muree Larson-Bright (HQ); Deena McFarland (San Bernardino); Katrice Miller (HQ); and Olivia Swift-Ford (SEQIS, Riverside).

The citation issuance team, led by Region I Field Operations Branch Chief Cassie Dunham, includes Michael Bennett (Richmond); Jim Booth, Arnaldo Garza (Redwood Coast/Santa Rosa); Linda Huggins (Bakersfield); Linda Lucey (Redwood Coast/Santa Rosa); Anne Ponko (SEQIS, Chico); Teresita Ramos (Bakersfield); and Lena Resurreccion (San Bernardino).

THE EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION CORNER

Center Members Receive PHAME Awards

CDPH's employee recognition program, Public Health Acknowledging My Efforts (PHAME), grants awards in a number of categories. Here is our tip of the hat to the Center for Health Care Quality's own 2015 award winners, including the Professional Certification Branch (PCB) Investigation Section (photo below at right), which was lauded for quality improvement. The section investigates complaints and allegations against certified nursing assistants, home health aides, and certified hemodialysis technicians and, in 2014, was the

subject of two legislative hearings, an internal gap-analysis study and a Bureau of State Audits report. While facing these challenges, the team improved the efficiency and effectiveness of its business and workflow processes; established and enhanced the collection, monitoring, and reporting of statistical data and trends; and completed investigations of all complaints received prior to 2014. The latter significantly reduced the number of open, aged investigations and improved the timeliness of current investigations. Congratulations, all CHCQ winners!



CHCQ Policy and Planning Chief Christopher "C.J." Howard was honored for applying quantitative modeling practices common in other fields to public health and budgeting, aiding in the estimate and development of various fees that had not been commonly utilized in the department. Howard previously worked for former Chief Deputy Director of Operations Dan Kim. Here, he is pictured with Dr. Karen Smith, CDPH director.



CHCQ Pharmacy Consultants Debra Brown (at left with CDPH Director Dr. Karen Smith) and Robert Menet (not pictured) received a PHAME award for collaboration for their ongoing work with the California Partnership to Improve Dementia Care Enforcement.

The partnership, which includes the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Studies (CMS) and other stakeholders, has made great strides toward reducing the use of anti-psychotic medications in nursing homes.



The Professional Certification Branch Investigation Section is pictured above: (1st row) Christine Rice, Bonny Wolf, Jessica Fisher, Donnalene Vann, Chua Her, Holly Longacre; (2nd row) Nicolette Stein, Rashelle Beal, Deborah Dunn, Greg Shigetoshi, Stacy Corrales, Stacey Williams, Alethea Perez, Deborah Penick, Monse Viteri, Steven Lemke; (3rd row) TG Akins, Janice Sanders, David Stone-house, Robert Vernatchi, Nick Botti, Barbara Dellamarie, Linda Curtis-Smith, Erin Hoppin, Deborah Coe; (4th row) Jennifer La, Danielle Robinson, Christine Ward, Jaime Masuda, Jeff Eggert. Not pictured: Laila Ashaq, Ardyce Bober, Travis Endow, Bryan Harada, Aygul Hecht, Terry Hu, Arti Kumar, Monica Li, Alfred Perez, Sonja Redmond, Juan Rodriguez-Tafoya, Bob Topping and Nicole Vinh.



Also pictured with Dr. Smith: Chico District Office HFEN Samuel Crow (core values), Lori Ann Sturgeon, ITSD (customer service) and Acting Fresno District Manager Steven Lopez (leadership).

Student Assistants: ‘They Do It All With a Smile’

Headquarters has some fresh new faces: Four student assistants representing two different Sacramento area institutions and three majors. The four started in their positions over the summer. Three of the assistants are working with CHCQ’s Centralized Applications Unit; the fourth is with the Field Operations Support Unit.

Lauren Flores, Audrey Hakeneweth, Saul Torres and Lily Tran all have different majors and backgrounds, but share one common goal – learning from CHCQ and becoming health care professionals who will serve Californians in some capacity.

Flores, a California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) sociology major, lived for a month in Honduras and taught grade school students about the environment, personal hygiene, the water cycle, and reforestation. She says she is learning many fun things at CHCQ and is interested in helping the public on matters relating to disease control and illness prevention.

Hakeneweth, also a CSUS sociology major, is a senior this year. She hopes to continue her education after graduation, either in public administration or marriage and family therapy. “I am so excited to be at CHCQ,” she says. “Everyone is extremely nice and helpful. So far, it’s been a great experience.”

Torres, a Sacramento City College biology major who enjoys applied sciences, is all about helping others. When asked why he chose the health field as a profession, he said simply, “Why not? It’s the only field that exists to help people directly!” Torres also he hopes to use the knowledge and abilities he gains at CHCQ to help others.

Tran, a CSUS health science and community health education major born in Oahu, seeks to help others and make a

difference in allied health fields. She hopes what she learns and experiences at CHCQ, will aid her in choosing a career path.

Teresa Gutierrez, manager of the Centralized Applications Unit manager, credits the students with lightening the unit’s growing workload. “They have been so gracious, so helpful and they do it all with a smile,” she said.



CHCQ student assistants from left to right: Audrey Hakeneweth, Lauren Flores, Lily Tran and Saul Torres.

What’s in a Name? Ask the Emergency Preparedness Unit



Leave it to the Center for Health Care Quality unit that specializes in quick responses to come up with a list of newsletter names mere hours after the call for nominations went out in June. Carolyn Macola, an Environment, Health and Safety Policy Analyst who works in the Emergency

Preparedness and Disaster Response Unit (EPDR), began jotting down contenders as soon as she read the email. Carolyn sent five suggestions to her colleagues, Disaster Response Coordinator Ron Smith and Field Operations Branch Chief Eric Morikawa, who oversees EPDR. The trio picked up the discussion at a staff meeting later that afternoon. Carolyn gives credit to Eric for proposing a sixth name to the list: the *CHCQ Quarterly*.

“It took a total of 10 minutes,” Carolyn said. “We’re emergency preparedness. We have to be prepared.”

The proposed moniker was among more than 15 suggestions submitted from staff members around the state. All told, 220 employees voted for their favorites online; “*CHCQ Quarterly*” won by a landslide. (Hats off to some of the other creative top vote-getters, most of which came from our district offices, like, “Health Care Quality Matters.”)

Shout-outs to one of our edgier contenders: “The CDPH Virus—It’s going viral,” submitted by Zack Souza, an Information Technology Services supervisor who supports Licensing & Certification.

For her part, Carolyn is pleased to have contributed to the newsletter, an effort she believes will build community within the program. “I was very happy to see this coming,” she said. “The newsletter will be one more avenue to foster networking and educate new staff to the full scope of the work CHCQ does for Californians.”

CHCQ AROUND THE STATE

Orange County District Office and California Association of Health Facilities ‘Rap’



Staff members of CHCQ's Orange County DO (above) took part in a “rap session”: with members of the California Association of Health Facilities' Orange County chapter in June. From L-R: Lydia Vizcaino, AGPA; Lori Wolford, HFES; Anna Garofalo, HFES; Debra Brown, Pharmaceutical Consultant II, Jacqueline Lincer, Branch Chief; Hang Nguyen, HFEM II, Kathleen Davidson HFEM I; and Josefina Sabino, HEFM I.

When the Orange County chapter of the California Association of Health Facilities (CAHF) hosts its annual “rap sessions” with CHCQ's Orange County District Office, local providers turn out in full force.

Other chapter meetings draw about 100 members of the non-profit trade association that represents skilled-nursing facilities and intermediate-care facilities for people with intellectual disabilities.

But the CAHF chapter's June meeting ~ featuring CHCQ Field Operations Branch Chief Jackie Lincer, Orange County District Manager Hang Nguyen and several other OC District Office staff members ~ drew a crowd of nearly 200.

“The meeting we have with them is always well-attended,” said Joseph Munoz, administrator of Mesa Verde Post-Acute Care Center in Costa Mesa and current CAHF chapter president. “What I have always found beneficial from the sessions is that they are an opportunity for the Department to answer questions and clarify and let people know what's going on ~ as opposed to what members have heard (through the grapevine).”

In June, Orange County District Office staff members spent 2½ hours presenting on a variety of topics, from CHCQ's new Minimum Data Set/Staffing Survey, and the Center's publicly posted quarterly performance metrics on complaint responses, to the Top 10 list of cited tags among Orange County skilled

nursing facilities. CHCQ Pharmaceutical Consultant Debra Brown also discussed the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services' guidance on the use of antipsychotic drugs and other medications in nursing homes as well as additional state and national initiatives to improve SNF dementia care and reduce unnecessary antipsychotic drug use.

Such information-sharing sessions with the Orange County-based CHCQ staff

date back at least 20 years, Joseph Munoz says, and usually take place once a year. Jackie Lincer was the District Manager in the Orange County office before becoming a Field Operations Branch Chief over Orange County, San Diego North and San Diego South district offices. She enjoys the CAHF meetings. “I know most of these people. I'm very comfortable with them,” she said. “I find it a way to communicate and be approachable and involve them in improving resident care.”

“What I have always found beneficial from the sessions is that they are an opportunity for the Department to answer questions and clarify and let people know what's going on -- as opposed to what members have heard (through the grapevine).”

*~ Joseph Munoz,
CAHF chapter President*



CMS Visits Sacramento to Discuss HFEN Training

On September 15, 2015, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services staff traveled to Sacramento to discuss the state's training needs in light of 144 new health facility evaluator nurses (HFENs) coming on board. The group met with headquarters staff and visited the Sacramento District Office.

"They recognize the challenge we have in training such a large contingent and sought feedback on how to improve the scheduling and training locations in the coming year," said Field Operations Branch Chief Andy Barbusca, who accompanied the team to the district office. (Pictured from left to right: Lisa Sullivan and Sandra Phelps from CMS/Baltimore; Lt. Cdr. Leah Ferrier, Karen Fuller and Emery Lee from CMS/San Francisco; and Sacramento District Manager Heather Riley.)

CHCQ is a Hit on the Department's Open Data Portal

The California Department of Public Health launched its Open Data Portal in August 2014, allowing user-friendly public access to the information it collects about important health issues, ranging from West Nile and other diseases to home medical device retailers and health care facilities. This data can be used to craft solutions to public health concerns while providing more transparency in government.

Data from both Center for Health Care Quality programs (Licensing and Certification, and Healthcare Associated Infections) is posted on the portal – and the charts and tables have drawn keen public interest. That is especially the case for information pertaining to California health care facility services and locations, viewed more than 4,500 times by the public since the portal's inception. The facility data ranks in the Top 20 of CDPH's 69 data sets based on the view count, though the subject matter is not nearly as popular as other department data on the most popular baby names of 2009-2013, chemicals in cosmetics or school immunizations.

In the "Diseases and Conditions" category, the Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) program data on surgical site infections in California hospitals has received the most online views after West Nile Virus information.

The Portal, which is accessible [from the CDPH website](#), provides the public with a single point-of-entry to data sources

that can be used for reporting, creating Web tools and mobile applications (apps), and other uses.

"This is the beginning of a very ambitious effort to open portals on information that people want and need," California Health and Human Services Agency Secretary Diana Dooley said in a news release.

The Open Data Portal improves access so researchers, policy makers, technology experts and others can, for example, use the data to create mobile apps to solve local challenges.

A SAMPLING OF THE PORTAL'S CHCQ INFO

- The name and location of over 7,500 licensed health care facilities that were "open and active" as of November 17, 2014.
- The services that are associated with the over 7,500 health care facilities licensed by CHCQ and that were "open and active" as of November 17, 2014.
- The bed types and bed type capacities that are associated with California health care facilities that are operational and have a current license issued by the CDPH and/or a current U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) certification.

Contact the Center for Health Care Quality

Phone: (916) 324-6630

Fax: (916) 324-4820

Contact the newsletter at:

CHCQ_Newsletter@cdph.ca.gov



On A Personal Note

Four CHCQ Employees Celebrate Service Milestones



Four Center for Health Care Quality staffers celebrate service anniversaries this quarter and all are from headquarters: Celeste Poole of the Personnel Liaison Unit celebrates 25 years. Alex Boatwright and Christine Catalano, of the Professional Certification Branch and Michelle Talani, a Resource Operations and Management Branch manager, have logged 20 years apiece.



We welcome news of babies and grandbabies, weddings, significant anniversaries, educational and professional achievements, and favorite CHCQ recipes. We may edit text and images for space. Please submit your items by November 30, 2015 to the newsletter mail box at CHCQ_Newsletter@cdph.ca.gov. Any questions? Please call (916) 324-6630.

The success of this section depends on your contribution. We thank you in advance!

How Well Do You Know Your CDPH Alphabet Soup?

ACROSS

1. Suite of Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) software applications.
3. Mailing to licensed and certified health facilities providing updates on policies and enforcement.
5. Entity that encompasses the Healthcare Associated Infections Program and L&C.
6. Professional Certification Branch program that ensures California nursing homes are managed by qualified administrators.
9. Online resource that provides information about L&C's licensed long-term care facilities and hospitals.

DOWN

2. Award designed to recognize individuals and teams.
4. Office that assures CDPH is in compliance with state and federal civil rights laws, and maintains fair and equitable policies and procedures.
5. Dedicated to optimizing the health and well-being of the people in California.
7. CHCQ program that improves quality of patient care and safety through prevention of infections.
8. This group ensures the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of CDPH computer systems and applications.
10. The CHCQ unit that oversees the facility licensure application process.

ANSWERS

ACROSS 1. ASPEN (CMS data base) 3. AFL (All Facilities Letter) 5. CHCQ (Center for Health Care Quality) 6. NHAP (Nursing Home Administrator Program) 9. HFCIS (Health Facilities Consumer Information System) DOWN 2. PHAME (CDPH employee recognition program) 4. OCR (Office of Civil Rights) 5. CDPH (California Department of Public Health) 7. HAI (Healthcare Associated Infections) 8. ISO (Information Security Office) 10. CAU (Centralized Applications Unit)

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