State Under Scrutiny
Report Recommends Efficiency Measures

Our Agency isn’t the only place going through changes. On August 3, the California Performance Review (CPR) released a 2,500-page report of more than 1,000 recommendations to increase State government efficiency through restructuring and policy changes. Hearings on the report have been held throughout the State. The Governor’s administrative staff is currently reviewing comments and testimony from the public, advocacy groups and professional associations.

Following are some of the recommendations that impact Health and Human Services (for the full report see http://www.report.cpr.ca.gov):

- Consolidate 11 State agencies and 79 departments into 11 departments
- Cut 12,000 state positions
- Centralize and consolidate eligibility processing and reporting requirements for Medi-Cal, CalWORKs, and Food Stamps at State level
- Transfer Indigent Health Care, IHSS responsibility to the State
- Transfer mental health and child welfare services responsibility to the counties
- Merge CalWORKs Stages 1 & 2 under county administration and transfer all other childcare to California Department of Education
- Limit unlicensed childcare payments pending clean background checks, with no payments to convicted providers
- Reduce unlicensed child care reimbursement rates; base them on quality and require training
- Develop Foster Care Report Card to measure county performance
- Enroll high-cost Medi-Cal clients in Medicare
- Automate identification of other health care coverage
- Examine SMART Card technology for Medi-Cal fraud reduction
- Adopt anti-fraud strategies related to Medi-Cal error rate study

The Governor is expected to submit a package of selected proposals for the 2005-06 legislative session. The report has sparked on-going discussion on strategies to achieve cost and program efficiencies at all levels of government.

Classy Classifications: Human Services Specialist

Changing to Succeed
Living Proof of Positive Longevity

Jan Lemaster, Human Services Specialist, began as an Intermediate Clerk Typist in 1972, when the County was transitioning from manual record keeping to a computerized system. In 1974, she became an eligibility worker in a brand new Food Stamp program. In 1985, Lemaster became one of a four-person automation/implementation team, traveling from office to office to process applications. In 1995, Lemaster promoted to Patient Services Specialist and joined the Hospital Outstation Services team.

Lemaster says her most rewarding experience is granting MediCal/CMS to a comatose or incompetent patient, who has no one to act on their behalf. “I have the greatest feeling of accomplishment when I can help a patient get good treatment.”

Awards Lemaster has received: DIBBS Suggestion, Outstanding Performance, Customer Service, and Distinguished Service.

For Lemaster, flexibility is key.

A Message from Jean Shepard
Agency Director

Someone once said, “When you fall in a river, you’re no longer a fisherman; you’re a swimmer.” HHSA employees are constantly called upon to adapt. Change is a given in our world: The laws, regulations and procedures that guide our work are constantly changing. People frequently change roles within the Agency and in the community, some moving on to other work assignments and some retiring. The tools that we use to get the job done - workstations, equipment, computer programs and forms - are renewed and replaced on a regular basis.

How do you adapt to change? Do you see change as an opportunity or a threat? The County’s HR Department and our own HR Training and Development Center have resources to help you manage and adapt to change. In an Agency of this size, there are new opportunities to learn and grow every day. I urge you to take advantage of them, to stay fresh and ready for change.

Jean Shepard
Information is Power
Team of Experts Will Translate Data into User-Friendly Info

Data-driven program planning and evaluation just got easier in Central and South Regions with the help of the newly formed “Tech Team.”

Rene Santiago, Deputy Director of both regions, formed the Tech Team to help managers make better use of available data and information resources in order to maximize program performance.

The six staff members who comprise the new team - Margarita Holguin, Project Lead; Hank Ramirez, Team Leader; George Jones, Data Specialist; Martha Armenta, Data Quality; Elaine Higgs, Children’s QA Specialist; Elainerose Lontoc, Operational Support - have the expertise to help managers gather pertinent data and conduct in-depth analysis of the data.

The team will monitor trends and help managers identify strategies to improve their program outcomes. The team will also assist managers in preparing various reports such as the Operational Plan, Business Plan, Continuous Improvement Plan, and Performance Measures Report. The team will ensure that the regional plans are in alignment with the Agency and County Strategic Plans.

The Tech Team looks forward to helping Central and South Region continuously improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which all services are provided.

Central and South Regions

Central and North Central Region

Holding A Health Care Safety Net
HCAD Handles Hard but Rewarding Work

The County-wide Health Coverage Access Division (HCAD), provides healthcare and coverage services for the disabled and lowest-income populations. HCAD consists of three unique programs: County Medical Services (CMS), Hospital Outstation Services (HOS), and Health Care Options (HCO).

Forty-seven Human Service Specialists (HSSs) are out-stationed at Family Resource Centers (FRCs) and hospitals, as well as community and public health clinics throughout the county. An additional 14 staff and 10 supervisors work at headquarters.

Each month, CMS staff provide an average of 4,000 indigent adults with eligibility determinations for physical health services. These services are for patients with acute and chronic conditions, which, if left untreated, could result in significant disability or death. Staff also evaluate medical histories to determine if the patient might qualify for disability/Medi-Cal benefits. They also see an average of 1,000 walk-ins per month to discuss a variety of needs and concerns, resolve issues and provide clients with referrals and resources as appropriate.

HOS is a partnership between the County of San Diego and the HealthCare Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties, whose goal is to improve access to care and provide eligibility determinations for hospitalized patients who may qualify for Medi-Cal and/or CMS. HOS staff serve clients who have been hospitalized due to serious or emergency needs. Staff help about 800 individuals and their family members each month, working closely with hospital staff and agents.

HCO was implemented to meet State requirements for enrolling existing Medi-Cal beneficiaries into a health care plan or HMO of choice. If none is chosen, clients get automatically enrolled - San Diego County has the lowest default rate in the State. Staff help clients complete HMO applications and identify whether or not a physician of their choice participates in the available HMOs. Staff conduct an average of 975 presentations and see about 3,300 individuals each month. They also respond to around 80 1-800 calls from clients who want information, or are having difficulty with coverage, or accessing resources. Throughout the year staff also conduct outreach activities at health fairs and other events around the County. HCO has received recognition for its high enrollment numbers and program design.

Staff in each of these programs must be able to work independently and possess extensive knowledge of County and community resources. They must also have exceptional interpersonal skills and a high degree of patience in order to work with a variety of professionals, and very sick individuals and their families.
October is SIDS Awareness Month
Change in Position, Change in Tradition
The Month of October is Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Awareness month. It is a time when the Public Health nurses (PHNs) and families who have been touched by SIDS make a concentrated effort to raise the public's awareness of SIDS and things that can be done to reduce the risk of an infant dying of SIDS.

SIDS is defined as the sudden, unexpected death of an otherwise apparently healthy infant, usually under one year of age. SIDS occurs in all types of families, regardless of race or income level. When a baby dies from SIDS, no one is to blame. Although a SIDS death cannot be predicted, there are ways to lower an infant's risk of dying from SIDS.

In San Diego County there will be a number of different activities by HHSA Public Health nurses to spread the message of risk reduction. African-American babies die of SIDS at twice the rate of white babies. To help address this disparity, Patricia Lundeen, a North Coastal PHN specially trained in SIDS, is coordinating an effort with FBACH (Faith Based Approach to Community Health), and the California SIDS Program to provide a "Train the Trainer" approach with the African-American community.

For more information on SIDS, contact the California SIDS Program at 1-800-369-SIDS (7437) or go to www.californiasids.com.

Although the cause of SIDS is not known, there are things that can reduce the risk of an infant dying from SIDS:
- Always place a baby on his/her back to sleep, even for naps
- Never allow smoking around a baby
- Place a baby on a firm, flat surface to sleep
- Remove all soft things such as, loose bedding, pillows, and stuffed toys from the sleep area
- Never place or sleep with your baby on a sofa, waterbed, soft chair, pillow, or bean bag
- Take special precautions when your baby is in bed with you
  - Sleeping with your baby may be risky - It is best not to have your baby sleep with other people
  - If you choose to bring your baby to bed with you, it is safest to return your infant to his/her crib (in your room if you prefer) before you fall asleep

Healthy Fun Isn’t Just For Kids
Intergenerational Games Create Winners for More Than One Day
Following on the tail of the Summer Olympics, pairs of seniors and youngsters will toss balls and run their hearts out as they compete in Intergenerational Games this November. There will be two separate games, one in South Bay and one in East County. Active older adults are being encouraged to register this month. Aging & Independence Services is cosponsoring both events.

The goal of the games is to create an environment that brings young and old together to promote healthy, active lifestyles. Teams will earn points through a number of activities, and each player will receive a certificate of participation, with medals awarded to the top-finishing teams. There is no cost to participate.

The first games will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 10, at the U.S. Olympic Training Center, 2800 Olympic Parkway in Chula Vista. Teams will be made up of one senior (age 50 and older) and one local fourth-grade student. Teams take part in skill challenges, such as basketball shoot, tennis shoot and shot put. To register, or for more information, contact the Senior Olympics at (619) 226-1324 or e-mail: info@sdseniorgames.org.

East County is the site of the second Intergenerational Games. This event will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 17, at the Boys and Girls Clubs of East County, 1171 E. Madison Ave., El Cajon. Older adults (age 55 and older) and fifth-grade students from Narancra Elementary School will team up for Frisbee toss, hockey shootout and more.

For registration information, call the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) at (858) 505-6399.
Health Statistics Now Easier to Find!
Answering the Call for Data

Have you ever had a need to find health statistics, but weren't sure where to go to get assistance? The new HHSA Community Health Statistics Unit can now help you out. The unit works in collaboration with other HHSA programs to provide health statistics to local health professionals, County staff, community-based organizations and the general public.

The Community Health Statistics Unit can provide health statistics that describe health behaviors, diseases and injuries for specific populations, health trends and comparisons to national targets. Local, state and national statistics can be provided or referenced.

“We received community feedback requesting one central office to access health statistics,” said Public Health Officer Nancy Bowen, M.D., who established the unit. Mona Thabit, Community Health Program Specialist, heads the new unit, which is part of Community Epidemiology. She works along with Bruce Even, Health Information Specialist II, and Biostatistician Jean Slosek.

Another community request was to make current health statistics more easily accessible. To accomplish this, the unit soon will have its own HHSA Web site address, providing the latest data. This unit has produced the Core Public Health Indicators, a document that provides the most commonly requested public health core indicators. Unit staff collaborated with all Public Health Services programs on this project.

To request health statistics, please call the Community Health Statistics Unit at (619) 515-4318.
HHSA Staff Enriching the Lives of Children in Need

Staff-Run Non-profit Helps Kids Take Part in Life

When it comes to helping kids, HHSA staff goes above and beyond. Children in Need, Inc. (CIN) is a non-profit charitable corporation run by HHSA staff that provides financial assistance to abused and disadvantaged children in San Diego County. Yearlong fundraising efforts support enrichment activities for the kids, such as membership dues, sports fees and various lessons.

Right now, County employees can purchase discount tickets to the Buick Invitational Golf Tournament, being held January 17-23, 2005 at Torrey Pines Golf Course. ALL PROCEEDS from these tickets go directly to the children. To order your tickets, visit the HHSA Web site at www.sdcounty.ca.gov/hhsa and click Children in Need Golf Flyer under the “Documents - Brochures” tab or call (760) 967-4511. Donations, volunteers and other supports are always welcome!

Kronos, the County’s new time collection system, is the third system in the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project, which is designed to increase operation efficiencies. The first two systems, already in use, are PeopleSoft, an HR database, and Oracle, the financial database.

Human Resources and Fiscal Services have been working side by side developing roles, schedules and Aliases (the replacements for current “activity codes”). The new Alias is made up of Project, Org, Expenditure, Task and Award. An example: HHS-1001910-Gen Admin-NonSS-AO General Fund////

Training has been provided to all employees through a Web-based tutorial. Additional classroom training was given to those assigned specific roles in the system, such as supervisor/manager, time-keeper/scheduler, HR Analyst, and Department Payroll Clerk.

With the pay period that began on August 20, HHSA parallel testing began for employees in Phase I (Agency Executive Office, Agency Contract Support, Financial Services, Human Resources, Information Technology, First Five Commission, Strategy and Planning and Edgemoor). During this test, those employees entered duplicate information into both Kronos and TLDS, the current time collection system. This allows for review of the new system and correction of any issues before full implementation.

Phase II parallel testing started October 1. Phase II includes: Public Health Services, Alcohol and Drug Services, Children’s and Adult Mental Health, and San Diego Psychiatric Hospital.

Finally, parallel testing for Phase III will be the last and largest group, including all of the remaining employees in HHSA. Training for these employees is currently being conducted. Parallel testing for this group will be in late October or early November.

Questions regarding Kronos roles, schedules access etc. can be directed to:
Linda Nuzzo - (619) 338-2678 or
Mavette Sadile - (619) 338-2920

For questions regarding Kronos Aliases:
Denbigh Dickson - (619) 531-5928
Fun With Fruit on National Child Health Day
Local School Kids Enjoy Healthy Activities

Fourth graders at Jackson Elementary School in San Diego found out that fruit (and vegetables) can be fun at a celebration of National Child Health Day on Oct. 4.

Coconut Bowling, Watermelon Weightlifting and Cucumber Javelin Throwing were just a few of the activities in the “Nutrition Olympics,” sponsored by the Agency, Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego, and American Cancer Society.

Supervisor Ron Roberts kicked off the event by asking the children questions about nutrition and health. “Healthy Environments, Healthy Children” was the local theme for the national recognition day, designed to get parents and children thinking about healthy eating habits and behaviors.

For more information on children’s nutrition, fitness and general health, please call (619) 692-8819 or visit the Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego Web site at www.ccwsd.net.

Shining Stars

Agency Employees Making a Difference

Alan Smith, an epidemiologist with Emergency Medical Services, was recently praised by Beth Sise of Scripps Mercy Hospital for his work in support of the Community Health Improvement Partners’ (CHIP) Suicide Prevention Committee. “Alan Smith…has proven to be a key member of [the committee]...He has applied his expertise in data analysis to help create the CHIP online publication, “Suicide in San Diego County.”...[He] has also presented as a speaker for the committee on the topic of suicide to both local and statewide groups...He has further assisted in the committee’s research activities...[and] prepared a Suicide Prevention Tool Kit...”

Sharon Slater, Public Health Advisor for the New Hampshire Immunization Program, recently called Dr. Lawrence Barker, Director of Research for the National Immunization Program, and asked for guidance on an immunization survey they were conducting. He referred her to the County of San Diego’s Immunization Program. According to Slater, Barker said “San Diego did the best he had ever seen, and did the only survey he had seen that he could say he had full confidence in the results.”

The State of California asked Jan Campana of the County of San Diego’s Immunization Program to write and compose a children’s song for National Infant Immunization Week that would be used by counties throughout the state. The State asked for a song in Spanish this year and she composed “Cuida Mis Pulmones” (“Protect My Little Lungs”). The Federal Program asked her for another one next year. Her efforts to get the word out to parents about the importance of childhood immunizations has contributed significantly to local, state and national efforts to spread this message.

Dr. Janice K. Louie of the California Department of Health Services recently cited Community Epidemiology’s rapid flu testing program as a model for other counties interested in providing a similar program. It increases Community Epidemiology’s ability to detect flu viruses circulating in the community and provides comprehensive information to medical providers and laboratories.

Dr. Gary Michael Vilke, EMS Medical Director, has been named by his peers as one of San Diego’s Top Doctors, in the the October, 2004 issue of “San Diego Magazine.”
The Regional Program Support Division (formerly Program and Policy Support Division - PPSD) has four sections that offer administrative support to County-wide services.

**Medical Care Program Administration (MCPA)**
MCPA sets policy and manages several programs within the County that provide health care coverage for indigent and low-income residents.

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**County Medical Services (CMS)**
CMS funds medical care for uninsured indigent adult county residents. CMS funds services through a network of community health centers, private physicians and hospitals and manages several other health care programs. Total provider reimbursement managed by MCPA exceeds $60 million annually.

**Other Indigent Programs/General Relief** is San Diego’s cash assistance program for adults meeting eligibility requirements. Staff also set policy and oversee the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI).

**Healthy San Diego** is the project name for Medi-Cal managed care within San Diego County. It coordinates care between the six Medi-Cal health plans serving San Diego County and other service programs such as Mental Health Services, Public Health Services, Polinsky Children’s Center and San Diego Regional Center for the Developmentally Disabled.

Improving Access to Healthcare addresses issues of the uninsured and ensuring that publicly funded health coverage programs such as Medi-Cal, Healthy Families and CMS are accessible and responsive to the community.

CalWORKs transitions people from welfare to work. It provides temporary cash assistance to eligible families with minor children, to move those families from dependency to self-sufficiency through employment.

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**Halloween Safety Tips**

- An adult should go with children when trick or treating.
- Trick or treat in a familiar, safe neighborhood.
- Avoid costumes that are too long or too loose to prevent tripping. Make sure mask holes are large enough to see through easily.
- Light-colored costumes or reflective colors allow drivers to see trick or treaters better after dark.
- Instruct children to walk on sidewalks and observe safety rules when crossing streets.
- Use a flashlight to see where you are going and stay in lighted areas as much as possible.
- Inspect your child’s candy before they eat it.

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HHSA Overview - RPSD - [hyperlinked!]

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Some recipients have to pay a share of the medical cost before Medi-Cal covers the rest.

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HHSA Overview - RPSD - hyperlinked!

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Welfare-to-Work (WtoW)
Participation in WtoW is required for all employable recipients. The goal is to help parents obtain employment through job readiness, search and other employment-directed activities. Supportive services, such as childcare, transportation payments and other cost reimbursements are available.

Refugee Cash Assistance provides temporary cash assistance and employment services to refugees who are ineligible for CalWORKs or SSI.

Childcare/Food Stamps
Childcare administration develops and plans policies and programs that promote accessible, affordable, and quality childcare for low-income families countywide. They collaborate with partner agencies to identify resources and maintain expertise on childcare and development issues.

Food Stamps promotes the general welfare of, and safeguards the health of, low-income households by preventing hunger and raising the level of nutrition. The program enables low-income families to buy nutritious food with Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards.

Civil Rights ensures that programs administered by HHSA are non-discriminatory.

Corrective Action and Fraud and Integrity works with FRCs to ensure that accurate benefits are issued to eligible people. Corrective Action focuses on payment accuracy; Fraud and Integrity focuses on fraud detection and prevention.

Quality Assurance and Resource Management Administration provides staffing and budget-fiscal management of Agency eligibility staff. Coordinates and manages the budget, personnel, financial, and facility related support activities for RPSD and the Strategy and Planning Division. Prepares management and other reports, and support contracting activities.

Automation manages the development and implementation of automated systems, updates existing social services systems based on regulation changes, and coordinates and maintains Memorandum of Agreements with other agencies (public and private).

Appeals represents HHSA in administrative hearings before State Administrative Law judges where clients have appealed county actions. Appeals conducts General Relief and County Medical Services hearings when clients dispute county department actions, with county staff in the role of “judge.”

Quality Control is responsible for monitoring and reporting accuracy levels for public assistance program disbursements through both Desk Audits and random Full Field reviews of CalWORKs and Food Stamp cases. Collected data meets mandatory requirements to determine whether or not San Diego County meets federal accuracy goals.

Overpayment Specialist Unit (OSU) reviews cases and recomputes benefit amounts to determine the amount of CalWorks and Medi-Cal overpayments, as well as Food Stamp over-issuances.

Public Assistance Inquiry (PAI) answers written and phone inquiries from the public, other agencies and departments, Medi-Cal providers and complaints. They are the entry point for Medi-Cal mail-in applications and for Healthy Families for the County of San Diego. They average 70,000 phone calls and 11,000 written inquiries a year.

Information Assessment and Referral (IAR) originated to implement the Agency’s “No Wrong Door” approach for enhanced customer service. It helped customers identify additional service needs. A secondary goal was to create a Master Client index, containing basic client information about all customers served by Agency programs.

CalWORKS Information Network (CalWIN) is an on-line, real time system that supports all of the major processing functions necessary to administer California’s public assistance programs.

Compliance Office: (619)515-4244
Toll-Free Hotline: (866)549-0004
An ethical workplace is your right...and your responsibility...

Have Some News?
Please submit articles ideas to your section editor listed below, or to Jennifer Mallory, via Outlook e-mail.