

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am pleased to present the FY 2008-09 Department of Public Health Annual Report. As I have mentioned in my previous year, the FY 2009-10 budget process has been the most difficult in anyone's memory. I am comforted by the continuing commitment I see every day in the staff who are working harder and longer to keep the public safe and our patients well. It is this generosity of spirit and nurturing of good public health values that are the core of our employees and those who have made public health their passion.



This was a year of sad transitions for the Department of Public Health; we lost both CEOs of our hospitals. San Francisco General Hospital CEO, Gene O'Connell retired earlier this year. While we miss her presence and vitality, her departure was something we as an organization could celebrate. Gene left to enjoy the next phase of her life – one filled with her family, husband, children and grandchildren. The other loss was very sad, John Kanaley, Executive Administrator of Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center, died suddenly at age 51 on March 19, 2009. With John's death we lost one of our extended family. Losing someone at such a young age is very difficult to accept, and months later we remain very sad. John's commitment to the residents of Laguna Honda and his kindness and wisdom as an administrator made him a dynamic and effective leader. The affection for John as an individual and the respect for him as a professional were evident in the many tributes to him during his memorial service at Laguna Honda on March 27th. This report is dedicated to the memory of John Kanaley.

We suffered another untimely tragedy, when Jamie Xelowski, RN, PHN, a Public Health Nurse who worked for Maternal Child Adolescent Health program, was struck and killed by a vehicle while on duty on July 31, 2009. Ms. Xelowski, age 60, had worked as a Public Health Nurse for the Department of Public Health for over eight years. She was stationed out of Silver Avenue Public Health Center. She left behind many friends within the Department of Public Health and especially among the Public Health Nurses and staff at Silver Avenue.

Change is difficult to deal with, especially when it relates to unexpected losses. DPH is a resilient organization however, and I am proud of the way staff has stepped up to fill these voids in the organization. Sue Currin walked seamlessly into her new role as CEO of SFGH appointing Sharon McCole-Wicher to her previous job, Chief Nursing Officer of SFGH. Not only will Ms. Currin manage the day to day operations of the hospital, she will also oversee the construction of the new San Francisco General Hospital. We are very lucky to have someone so talented and committed assume this important role.

I appointed Mivic Hirose former Director of Nursing at LHH, to step into the large shoes John left and take on the role of Executive Administrator of the hospital. Accepting this position, Ms. Hirose assumed an immense role as the hospital continues to grieve for the loss of John Kanaley and reinvents itself as a dynamic system ready to occupy and manage a world class long-term care and rehabilitation facility. Her compassion and thoughtfulness have helped the staff and residents incredibly. We will be opening the new LHH - - the most modern skilled nursing facility in the country this spring. Ms. Hirose appointed Debbie Tam as her successor to the position of Chief Nursing Officer.

For over a decade, San Francisco has been a leader in efforts to expand access to health care for its uninsured residents and workers. The Department has played a central role in these expansions. Healthy San Francisco (HSF) continued its overarching goal to provide universal, comprehensive, affordable health care to uninsured adults. It ended FY 2008-09 with over 43,200 uninsured adult residents enrolled in the program. This represented 72 percent of the estimated 60,000 uninsured adult residents.

Beyond HSF's expanded enrollment, FY 2008-09 was marked by a year of strengthened private provider partnerships, increased national interest, continued operational enhancements, and laudable public recognition.

In the program's second year of operation, the Department focused on expanding the population eligible to enroll in HSF and expanding the HSF provider network of medical homes. The Department added two primary care new medical home systems to the HSF provider network in September 2008: Chinese Community Health Care Association and Sister Mary Philippa Health Center increasing the number of medical homes from 27 to 29. The Department also partnered with non-profit hospitals increasing the number of hospital systems participating in HSF from one - San Francisco General Hospital - to six in FY 2008-09. Three non-profit hospital systems agreed to "adopt" specific HSF primary care medical homes and receive elective inpatient admissions from those medical homes. The hospitals and partnered medical homes are:

- California Pacific Medical Center (4 campuses) – North East Medical Services
- Saint Francis Hospital (CHW) – Glide Health
- St. Mary's Medical Center (CHW) – Sr. Mary Philippa

The UCSF Medical Center partners with HSF by providing referral-based diagnostic imaging services at its China Basin site. Chinese Hospital participates in HSF through its Chinese Community Health Care Association affiliation. Finally, Kaiser Permanente joined the HSF provider network July 1, 2009 to care for uninsured residents. We are grateful to all our nonprofit partners for their important role in making HSF a successful model that has gained national attention.

The Department is also proud of our many other achievements this year highlighted throughout the report. I have included a brief sampling below to encourage readers to browse through the entire report.

San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH)

Proposition A, the \$887.4 million general obligation bond measure to build a seismically safe SFGH, passed with 84 percent of the electorate in support of the measure. The nine-story building (including two floors underground) will border Potrero Avenue on the west lawn of the hospital campus. Its circular design is intended to give nurses a better view of patients and maximize space. SFGH is the only trauma center in San Francisco, and also acts as the safety net hospital for our residents. We are grateful to the voters for their overwhelming support of the rebuild project.

Laguna Honda Hospital Replacement Project

Three new buildings, which will be home to 780 seniors and adults with disabilities, will open in April 2010. The ribbon cutting is planned for March 26, 2010. Residents are scheduled to move in on April 20 and 21.

Tobacco Ban in Pharmacies

In an effort to reduce smoking rates, exposure to second hand smoke and tobacco-related illnesses, the Health Commission and Board of Supervisors approved a measure limiting access to cigarettes by banning the sale of tobacco products in San Francisco pharmacies.

This bill, the first of its kind in the country, is part of a localized (and state wide) initiative to increase smoking cessation rates and improve overall public health. The measure went into effect in Oct. 2008, and similar bans have been passed in Boston, Uxbridge, and Needham Massachusetts.

All of our accomplishments can be directly credited to the committed and talented staff at the Department of Public Health. I am grateful for their enduring commitment to this public health mission that we share and thank them once again for their on-going support for our patients, our programs and, most important of all, for each other.

In addition to recognizing the staff at the Department of Health, I want to acknowledge the visionary leadership of our policy leaders. We are lucky to have a Mayor, Board of Supervisors, and the San Francisco Health Commission who understand the health needs of the community and support our efforts to fill these vast needs.

These are difficult times, but in spite of this, we undoubtedly run the best Department of Public Health in this nation. Regardless of our economy and its future, I am proud to be the Director of the San Francisco Department of Public Health and look forward to working with my staff as we show this City our very best efforts and our own San Francisco resilience

Mitchell H. Katz, M.D.
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