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The TURNAROUND Lifeline

California Prison Health Care Services

Inside this issue

Kelso: The Constitutional Standard 1
No Need for an Academic Concept

Inspector General 's Probe Widens 1
Doctors Accused of Grand Theft

Encouragement for the New Year 2
***Above and Beyond* Special**
An Inmate's Letter of Thanks

Team Member Spotlight 3
Nurses: Generations of Service

Team Member Spotlight 3
CMO Achieves Childhood Dream

DON Statewide Conference 3
Worksite Issues are Focus

Best of California 4
Kelso and IT Team Honored

Mule Creek Medical Facilities 4
Up next for construction upgrades

Do you know?

Flu Shot and TB Tests

CPHCS has just completed the largest Flu Shot Distribution in CDCR history. Even with 9 prisons yet to report, more than 75,000 people have received the vaccination. Vaccines are administered to inmates annually, but this year staff members were also invited to receive the injections free of charge in hopes of containing the virus from spreading through the population and among the staff.

Now, it's time for the Annual Employee Tuberculosis Testing. Testing will be done by institution so be on the look-out for your testing schedule.

Kelso: Constitutional Standard 'Long Established'

J. Clark Kelso, Receiver

Federal Receiver J. Clark Kelso is steadfastly answering critics such as Attorney General Jerry Brown who claim there is no established minimum constitutional standard of adequate health care for California inmates. Speaking in opposition to the Receiver's Turnaround Plan of Action, Brown, who is actively fundraising for a probable run for Governor in 2010, raised a recurring argument. Brown was quoted in the Sacramento Bee on December 9th asking, "what is the constitutional standard for health care? When we ask the receiver and his lawyers, they say, 'We'll know it when we get there.' That's not good enough." In his own press conference almost a month before, Kelso laid out binders of court documents on the table to emphasize the Attorney General is "wrong!" Kelso reiterated that "the term 'constitutional minimum' as used in the Facility Program Statement (FPS- the detailed plans for the construction of the 10,000 bed project,) means compliance with the orders of the Plata, Coleman, and Perez Courts. The FPS has not been developed by referencing academic or hypothetical concepts of what is a 'constitutional minimum;' indeed such an effort would create no end to debate and disagreement. (Continued on Page 3)

See It Yourself

Streaming video of the Receiver detailing the Constitutional Standard is available on the CPHCS website at:

http://www.cphcs.ca.gov/resource.aspx

Inspector General's Timesheet Probe Widens

The State Office of the Inspector General is expanding its probe into allegations of false claim filings as a result of phone call tips received after the indictments of Dr. Charles Dudley Lee, 69, of Salinas (Chief Medical Officer at Salinas Valley State Prison) and five other contracted psychiatrists and a physician were made public. Few details are available as to the scope of expansion of the probe or whether employees at other State institutions may be investigated. The Receiver's Chief of Staff, John Hagar said, "I have an enormous amount of trust and faith in our employees. But it's important for everyone to understand that anyone who knowingly pads their time sheet commits career-threatening fraud against the State's taxpayers. Don't even think about it."

Dr. Lee is accused of knowingly authorizing fraudulent timesheets. The other accused clinicians from Salinas Valley state prison are Randy Sid, 42, of Pacific Grove; Wade Exum, 60, of Las Vegas, Nev.; Pedro Eva, 43, of Soledad; Mark Herbst, 48, of Honolulu; and David Hoban, 65, of Santa Cruz. Each was indicted of five to six counts of grand theft, falsifying public records and filing false claims. They are accused of misrepresenting their work hours and falsifying timesheets. The next court hearing for the accused doctors and psychiatrists from Salinas Valley State Prison will be Jan. 13, 2009 at 10 a.m. in Salinas.

Facility Expansion Will Bolster Retention

The Human Resources department at California Prison Health Care Services has, in cooperation with the hiring managers in the State's 33 institutions, significantly reduced the high vacancy rates of nursing and clinical providers. There are still "hard-to-recruit" geographic locations for some classifications where it continues to be difficult to find staff; however, the fill-rate for nurse positions is now at about 91% throughout the system and for physicians it is approximately 88%. The next challenge is retaining those nurses and primary care providers. The turnover rate is 12 percent among Licensed Vocational Nurses, 9 percent for physicians and 11 percent for mid-level practitioners. To counteract some of these problems, the following initiatives are currently under development:

Part-time and intermittent nursing opportunities are being advertised in an effort to reduce our dependence on the more expensive staffing companies. "Grow Your Own Nursing Programs" are being developed in partnership with the community colleges to increase the number of Licensed Vocational Nurses and psychiatric technicians educated in the communities where new health care facilities are proposed. And a New Employee Orientation and preceptor program specifically geared to increase the retention of health care professionals has begun and will be available for all new hires statewide by January 2009 (See story on pg. 1 *HR Connections*.) Lastly, facility development and improvement will be a key component of the new staff retention strategy. Facility problems like lack of space and outdated (Continued on Page 3)

An Inmate's Heartfelt letter of Gratitude

Entire CPHCS Team Thanked for Compassion, Hard work, & Caring

The letter below was received and sent to "Lifeline" by Dr. Joseph Chudy of CTF, Soledad. Dr. Chudy says the inmate/author has been witnessing the changes in medical delivery first-hand at several institutions for many years.

Upon reading the letter, Dr. Chudy 's response to the inmate was, "it was our teamwork that has brought these changes about." He told the inmate that "the thoughts he expressed truly apply to every one of our 33 institutions."

There was a time when you decided to enter this profession because you wanted to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. To lend a healing hand to those who could not help themselves. It may have begun with a conversation, an event, or an individual. Wherever it began, it has brought you here. Maybe you carry a stethoscope or a medical file. Or maybe it's a medication tray or you take dental x-rays. Whatever you do, you work for the welfare of others. Everything you work for has but one ultimate goal, to alleviate the ailments of the infirm. It is not, however, the common individual you care for, but for the uncommon. For this, we thank you. Thank you for serving our particular segment of society.

Only a few years ago, a person could walk through the long corridor of CTF-Central and see common sights that should not be common. It was not uncommon to see congested traffic as one approached the medical department. (It still is) It was not uncommon to see the men there afflicted with large tumors or skin lesions. It was not uncommon to see men who could barely walk, stand, or breathe. And it was not uncommon for men to be bounced from prison to prison rather than receive adequate treatment. A man could go to an MTA with a tooth infection, be diagnosed behind the glass, told nothing was wrong with him, and sent rudely away. Discouraged, he would not return to the MTA worried he would get in trouble seeking their help again. There were those who died on the rec-yard or their housing units because help did not arrive on time, or because no one nearby knew how to give CPR.

Then there were those who were terminally ill. They were housed in the second floor infirmary, in pain, alone, and without hope. Their only companion the despairing knowledge of having to die in prison. Perhaps, the most disheartening part of all this, was the feeling we had when we walked away from the medical department. That we were something less than human. We weren't men, we were inmates. We resented anyone who worked for "the system". Some of us plotted to find new ways of manipulating medical staff to be treated. Some would go so far as to fake one illness to be seen by a doctor, then change and tell them what really ailed us. None of us could define just what our relationship to the people who were supposed to help us was. We were suspicious of anyone who treated us genuinely. Our cynicism would be confirmed when we saw the good efforts of staff thwarted by workplace politics.

Then, something happened, relief.

We began to see lots of new faces. New equipment like that MRI machine they bring in during the week. We started to get treated differently from what we were accustomed to. Rather than a glare in the corridor, a smile and a greeting. Huh? The shift in the change of culture was immediate. Not only were we finding relief, but we no longer had to go to the extremes of the past to receive health care. Be it a tumor, a liver biopsy, chronic back pain, etc. We were being seen. It is the comfort you provide that reminds of our own humanity. The care you provide tells us that no matter where we are, we are still men and not just inmates. That we do not belong to an inanimate tool of justice, but to God. RNs, more than anyone, but also LVNs, Dental Assistants, Psych Techs, are the backbone of CTF's Medical Department. You deal with so many of us on a daily basis. You bear the brunt of the workload. Often, we can get on your last nerve. Some of us have a big chip on our shoulder, or are rude. Some of us have bad breath or smell bad. Others of us fake it, ogle, or etc. Forgive us. Forgive us and have patience.

We are the men whose pain is often deeper than our physical ailments. Many of us have been punished for so long we've forgotten what it's like to live without it. Some of us are angry, bitter, lonely, broken-hearted, or just plain broken. Remember that whatever we've been judged to be, we are still someone's son, brother, father, husband, or grandfather. Because of our poor decisions, there is an empty seat at our families' dinner tables. Some day though, most of us will be home. We will tell our loved ones about how, "When I was in prison and was sick, there was this one…" doctor, nurse, or secretary who helped us. How if it wasn't for you, some of us wouldn't have made it home to tell them the story. So thank you. There is no formal way of expressing our appreciation, but please accept our gratitude as sincere however we may express it. It may be a young man who deep cleans your office for hours, but didn't steal as much as a paper clip. (Even though you had all of that loose candy laying around.) Or it may be the old man you see every week and has that familiar twinkle in his eye as he tells a joke or two. It may simply be the guy in the corridor who looks you in the eye and says, "How are you?" Or just a simple thanks when you've helped someone. We really mean it. We know that there's still a long way to go and the road to better health care is a long and arduous one for all of us. We're in it together and we will get there. It has been said that a society can be measured by how it treats its prisoners and its pets. We should hope that your treatment of us will always speak well for all of us. Thanks.

SERVICE, HONOR & TRADITION IN 3 GENERATIONS OF NURSING FAMILY

Ironwood's Cris Bato: Nurse, Marine, Marital Arts Champion and Master

Tradition is very strong in the Bato household. For three generations now, the Batos served in the U.S. military. Two of those generations have produced nurses. Cris Bato, is a Supervising Registered Nurse II at Ironwood State Prison and his daughter Tamra is now a registered nurse at Desert Regional. Both nurses also follow the family tradition of practicing martial arts.

Cris Bato has been practicing martial arts since he was four years old. Bato is a seventh degree black belt who went undefeated in mixed martial arts during his six years in the Marines. His service mirrors that of his father, a martial arts expert who served 30 years in the U.S. Army and fought in World War I and II. Representing the third generation is Tamra, a retired green belt. Master Chris Bato attended college at Philippine College of Criminology where he studied other martial arts such as judo, boxing, wrestling, fencing and karate as part of his curriculum. He has taught Shorin Combat Mixed Martial Arts for 34 years and now has 24 students. In the family tradition, Bato's two sons are also teaching alongside him. Like Cris, son Derek served in the Marines from 2003-2007, during which time he went undefeated in mixed martial arts and served a tour of duty in Fallujah. Cris's other son, Brian, is a local volunteer firefighter in Blythe and is also a martial arts instructor.

When he is not attending to his CDCR nursing responsibilities, Cris and his students compete in martial arts tournaments all over the world. In fact, Master Bato will be hosting an Ultimate Combat Martial Arts Championship featuring full contact kickboxing and mixed martial arts cage fighting this coming year. If anyone gets hurt, help won't be far away.

The Team Member Spotlight debuts in this issue as an occasional feature to introduce us to our co-workers. Submit story ideas to: Lifeline@CDCR.ca.gov

Guest Author: Stacie Minor-Amaya, AGPA Ironwood State Prison

New CMO for Long Term Care is Living Boyhood Dream

'Limiting' describes the jobs available to young men of Ashland, Kentucky during the 1960's. Swelter at the steel mill, endure a coal mine's murkiness or breathe in noxious fumes at the local chemical company; Jim Lett wanted none of that.

James Lett M.D.

As a youngster his career choice was medicine. "It was an honorable profession," he states, recalling the respect shown to local doctors from their patients in return for their knowledgeable and caring ministrations. His aspirations solidified when a childhood friend, a brother of country superstar Naomi Judd, died of lymphoma before reaching his 18th birthday.

Currently serving as the Receiver's Chief Medical Officer for Long Term Care, Lett's early medical training included the University of Kentucky College of Medicine in Lexington. An internship in Savannah offered a diversity of medical disciplines where he eventually focused on family practice. Upon establishing a practice in the retiree-abundant city of Clearwater, Florida, his interest in geriatrics and long term care sparked and grew. "Old people are not just middle-aged people with more illnesses any more than a middle-aged person can be compared to an infant." Often afflicted with *co-morbidities*, meaning simultaneous ailments like diabetes and heart disease, the multiple medication usage to combat afflictions also increases. Upon entering nursing homes or hospices, the elderly become members of population medicine where treatments encompass the whole unit of inhabitants not just the individual. Working on the 10,000 bed program Lett sees many similar correlations, especially with patient/inmates displaying debilitating physical conditions decades earlier than private sector health care consumers. Issues concerning dementia, increasing frailness, and safe transportation between diagnosis and treatment are just a few.

The ability to affect positive change in improving lives through more humane treatment stimulates Lett. Boyhood ambitions thrive still.

Constitutional Minimum

(Continued from Page 1)

Instead, the FPS calls for an integrated, efficient health care delivery model that conforms to the specific Federal Court orders stipulated to by the State of California in the *Plata*, *Coleman*, and *Perez* class actions." Kelso cited an example: "the FPS calls for the staffing and program space adequate to deliver chronic disease care under the time frames and quality standards required in *Plata*; The programs defined in the FPS do not exceed those requirements."

DON Meeting focuses on Worksite Issues

Attendees at the Statewide DON conference celebrate unity.

The Statewide Director of Nursing (DON) Conference was held in Sacramento in mid-December. Attending the 3-day conference were the Directors of Nursing from all 33 California prison facilities, as well as several Nurse Consultants for the different regions. Over 70 health officials came to the conference, which was hosted by the nursing team from the northern medical region. Arriving from all over the state, many conference participants shared success stories while others voiced continuing concerns. The quarterly conference provides a channel of communication between statewide medical leadership and nursing management, while at the same time updating nursing staff on the status of prison health care reform. Statewide Director of Nursing Karen Rea emphasized the importance of this collaboration by recalling the frustrating bureaucratic culture that used to hinder communication on all levels of nursing administration. "That barrier has been shattered with the receivership", she says. "In the past year, we've been able to give nurse leadership the tools they need to succeed." On the conference agenda were several items which will effect day-to-day nursing operations at all prison health care facilities. Among the most important topics was the introduction of a new utilization management program which will help govern and standardize outpatient referrals. Attendees were also asked to familiarize themselves with a new audit system from the Office of the Inspector General and to be patient with the implementation of the new Maxor Gaurdian Rx™ pharmacy system. The first statewide conference to include both nursing and physician professionals is expected in April.

Staff Retention

(Continued from Page 1)

equipment are often extremely frustrating for prison health professionals and can reduce retention rates if not addressed. The new 10,000 bed project, along with renovations being done at existing facilities, clearly demonstrates to all staff that the Receiver is serious about providing them with the medical resources they need to offer adequate care. Katie Hagen, Deputy Director for Workforce Development, says "It takes a coordinated effort to attract quality applicants to the California prison health care system, but now that they have arrived, we must develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to keep them."

We're on the Web at:

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Receivership's Mission

Reduce unnecessary morbidity and mortality and protect public health by providing patient-inmates timely access to safe, effective and efficient medical care, and coordinate the delivery of medical care with mental health, dental and disability programs.

Recruitment : Do you Know someone Interested in Joining our Health Care Team?

Website: ChangingPrisonHealthCare.org

Phone: 1-877-793-HIRE (4473)

Receiver & IT Team Awarded Best of California Honor

Award-Winning IT Team (Left to Right:) Liana Bailey-Crimmins, Deputy Chief Information Officer, J. Clark Kelso, Receiver; Jamie Mangrum, Chief Information Officer; Ben Williams, Deputy Director-Project Management Office.

Federal Receiver J. Clark Kelso has been selected as a Best of California Award Winner for Leadership in Solving Business and Policy Problems through Technology. The award recognizes California leaders who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to the application of information technology (IT) in both the public and the private sector.

Kelso accepted his Best of California award at a ceremony held at the Sacramento Convention Center on December 3rd. During his acceptance speech, the receiver thanked his IT management team, led by the Receivership's Chief Information Officer, Jamie Mangrum, for helping the Receivership achieve a level of technological efficiency not often seen on such a large scale in civil service. Kelso says, " Our executive-level IT leadership crew and their hardworking team fully understand the importance of their efforts in helping to bring the level of health care in California's Prison System up to constitutionally acceptable standards. They are working as if people's lives depend on their success -because they know that's exactly what is at stake here." Kelso and his team are implementing a new system of information technology as part of his Turnaround Plan of Action. One project they are working on will establish a system for the electronic management of medical records and medical scheduling in some of the most difficult locations- antiquated prisons. Mangrum appreciates the Receiver's commitment to IT development, saying "it really helps to have somebody who understands that technology-enabled progress needs to play a large part in turning the prison health care system around." The application of information technology in the prison medical system will not only streamline the patient care process but will also significantly reduce costs to California's taxpayers. Kelso has long been at the forefront of California's movement to incorporate more efficient technology as a means to improve State government. As the State of California's Chief Information Officer, he implemented a collaborative program among California business and IT leaders to further the effective use of technology within State government. Since Kelso's appointment as Receiver, the receivership has become a successful model for demonstrating how important an effective IT management team can be to the success of any project.

Mule Creek Next

Medical Construction Upgrade

Mule Creek State Prison, located in Ione in Northern California's beautiful Gold Country, is the third institution after San Quentin to have significant medical facility upgrade construction started. Improvements at Mule Creek include an outside-the-perimeter administrative building, expanded clinic space, a new pharmacy and lab area, relocated and improved trauma bays, new clothing exchange, and a new health services area for the AdSeg unit. All of these improvements are aimed at improving the delivery of medical services and cutting down on unnecessary inmate movement and trips through the sally port by staff. These efficiencies create long-term cost savings. Building an administrative building outside the security perimeter cuts down on the number of trips that staff who do not have direct inmate contact need to make through the sally port. Also, it enhances recruiting efforts and eases the burden on outside suppliers and contractors for the same reason. The pharmacy and lab were relocated within the perimeter from the Central Health Care Services (CHS) building in order to provide adequate space for these functions. This relocation provided space within the CHS building for additional specialty services, mental health treatment, emergency dental services and an expanded triage and treatment center.

Mule Creek State Prison