

The Rapid Pulse

June 2004

Faces and
Places

The Director's Perspective

By Dr. Eugene Migliaccio

In this month's installment of *The Rapid Pulse*, I would like to discuss two initiatives within the Division that will help us achieve a more effective and efficient health care delivery system.

One of the major goals for this fiscal year is to provide our Registered Nurses (RNs) with the necessary training to conduct physical exams on the detained population we serve.

Allowing RNs to conduct physical exams is within the scope of nursing practice, and provides added value to DIHS in that: 1) it is cost efficient, 2) it allows RNs to upgrade their skills and 3) it allows standardization of the physical exam process in the SPCs.

RNs will be provided comprehensive training on physical exams, and thanks to LT Rebecca Singleton, we have made arrangements to obtain CEUs for this training. It is anticipated that by the end of June, all RNs (PHS and contract) will be certified by DIHS to perform physical exams. They will be re-certified annually. Kudos to Dr. Park and LT Martin Ruiz-Beltran for the implementation of this program.

Starting this month and ending in early September, DIHS will also deploy an Information Technology (IT) system that will automate our Medical Record and Treatment Authorization Request (TAR) processes.

The software is called Case Trakker. It will replace the existing TAR and hospitalization systems, and the paper medical record system. The Electronic Medical Record (eMR) and TAR will automate healthcare management

(intakes, physical exams, and patient visits) and simplify report generation (i.e. workload).

Information from the Detained Alien Control System (DACs) will flow directly into the DIHS eMR and allow DIHS to minimize data entry, improve continuity of care, and better coordinate patient care with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). It will also streamline the detainee processing and transfer procedures.

There will be two weeks of training at each site, to include two half-day sessions of classroom training, and 7½ days of on-the-job training. El Centro will be the test site, and the remaining sites will be complete by September 5th.

I look forward to the realization of these two initiatives. They will enhance and support our reputation as a first-rate health care delivery system.

Lastly, I want to thank the staff at Krome for hosting RADM Cristina Beato, M.D., Acting Assistant Secretary for Health at the Department of Health and Human Services, on June 10. She was most impressed with Krome's staff and our approach with telehealth.

WELCOME

Tacoma, WA:

David Smith

Washington, DC:

Juliannne Sutter-Patru

FAREWELL

El Centro, CA :

Maria Ramirez

Florence, AZ:

Barbara Sterett

Tacoma, WA:

Barbara Cook

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Congratulations to Dr. Diana Schneider on receiving the Young Scientist of the Year Award at this year's COA conference.

This is a very distinguished award! Thank you to Dr. Schneider for representing DIHS so well! Congratulations on a job well done!

Appointment Control

By LCDR Kirsten Warwar

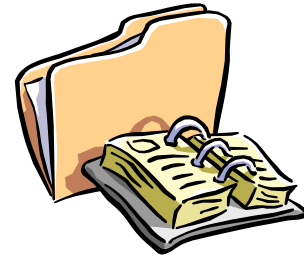
It's 0800 and time for the morning report. I was just notified that one of the PAs scheduled for the day shift is sick and another PA is on annual leave. That leaves one PA and the clinical director on the day shift. Two nurses are scheduled; one for the SSU and lab, the other for the screening clinic, triage and sick call.

The day's scheduled appointments are rattled off. It's Monday and there are 49 sick calls. There are 45 medical appointments scheduled and there were 14 charts rolled over from the weekend to be seen on the day shift today. How will we get through the day with such a load of appointments and round in the short stay unit? Sound familiar? Well it was familiar to us at Krome, and we decided to do something about it.

Krome developed an appointment control system in which all detainees in the camp were assigned to one specific mid-level or physician provider on arrival to the facility. The providers utilized appointment calendars to manage their appointments and began managing the entire care of the patients they saw, from sick call to diet renewals.

When a detainee first arrives at Krome they are assigned a provider during the physical exam process or during sick call, whichever comes first. If a detainee has

a chronic condition or needs to see a mid-level or physician provider on arrival, the triage nurse assigns the provider in a random process. When detainees request sick call appointments they are triaged by the triage nurse, scheduled for an appointment with their provider, or seen that same day if appropriate.



Once a detainee is assigned to a provider, they are always seen by that provider, unless the provider is not available and the detainee needs to be seen that day. The assigned provider is still responsible for the completeness of the entire chart and the entire healthcare "picture" of that detainee. As a result the assigned provider is kept abreast of the detainee's health, and detainees are prevented from "shopping around" to find who they can "get" care from.

By allowing providers to control the appointment scheduling, appointments are automatically adjusted according to the level of staff available in the clinic at any given time. When providers are sick, the scheduled appointments for that provider are reviewed by the other providers to determine if the appointment can be rescheduled for the next day or if they need to be seen that day by a different provider.

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**Congratulations
to LCDR
Priscilla Rodri-
guez for becom-
ing President of
the New York
City Branch of
the Commis-
sioned Officer's
Association
(COA).**

Appointments– From Page 2

Providers block their appointment calendars when they project annual leave or volunteer for escorts or TDYs. If patients need to be seen while a provider is absent, the provider arranges for another provider to see the patient.

We have been operating the clinic this way since November 2003. The process has worked remarkably well. And sick call was reduced by 50%!

We hypothesize that since the detainees are always referred to their assigned provider for sick call concerns, the detainees quickly discovered that they would not be able to manipulate the sick call system to their advantage.

Appointment control has improved continuity of care for patients, increased efficiency, and allowed the providers to take control of their appointment schedules, thus enhancing time management and improving overall functioning of the clinic.

No longer do we have problems with over scheduling of appointments or are we faced with what to do when a provider calls in sick. The clinic appointment system is manageable and flexible.

We are managing the appointments instead of the appointments managing us!

**A NOTE TO ALL DIHS
STAFF FROM BARBARA
HORN**

A friend of mine gave me a tote bag that had a saying on it “One Song– Many Voices,” which to me says a lot about DIHS and our mission to serve.

Our paths in life take us many places. I’m glad we’ve had an opportunity to walk along together for awhile.

It’s been a wonderful experience and an honor to work together with you. Be kind to each other. I wish you well. Thank you.

*Sincerely,
Barbara Horn*

Editor’s Note: As many of you are aware, Barbara Horn recently retired after an extraordinary federal career of 33 years. She wanted to share these thoughts with all DIHS staff as she departed the Division.

Congratulations to LT David Lusche, Assistant Health Services Administrator, San Diego, who won 1st Place in his category during the Surgeon General’s 5K Run at COA in Anchorage Alaska. LT Lusche was simply outstanding as he passed the rest of us like we were standing still! We at HQ would like to recognize him for his superb performance and say thanks for representing DIHS with such honor and pride.

El Centro Celebrates Nurses' Day!

In keeping with our global focus on care, the staff in El Centro celebrated International Nurses' Day on May 12, 2004. Nursing staff at this site includes three PHS officers – LCDR Sheryl Smith (Nurse Manager), LCDR Brenda Mitchell, and LTJG Elsa Rivera; six contract RNs – Rosa Peralta, Argelia Nunez, Deanie Pritchard, Flora Johnson, Gabriela Vaca, and Lizbeth Romo; and three contract LVNs – Dora Montesinos, Janice Barr, and Syllenia Jones.

The day began with an off-site breakfast for the nurses coordinated by LCDR Sheryl Smith. The time was used productively for team-building and problem-solving. Meanwhile the clinic functions continued, thanks to LCDR Xiomara Brown, Clinical Director; LCDR Eileen Falzini, RN, AHSA, and LT Adam Tahiru, PA.

The entire medical staff enjoyed a pizza lunch provided by LCDR Eileen Falzini. Later in the afternoon we somehow found room for cake and ice cream from CAPT Marian Moe. Each nurse received a crystal bud vase from the Nurse Manager with a flower from the HSA. Dr. Brown also recognized each nurse with a message of appreciation and a box of chocolates.

The nurses in El Centro are a talented and skillful team. They consistently go the extra mile and give their best to provide appropriate care for the detainees. With their hard work and dedication are we able to carry out the DIHS mission of protecting America by providing health care and public health services in support of immigration law enforcement.



Staff at El Centro celebrate Nurses' Day!



Our Vision:

By 2008, we will be the benchmark for detention health care systems and will be recognized as having the most prestigious, dynamic and rewarding workplace within the government.