



Pat is HCA's Voice to the Public



vate partnership, Pat was responsible for fundraising her own salary through memberships in the non-profit foundation and through special events.

"My position at the Office of Protocol provided me with the opportunity to meet a lot of interesting people," Pat said. "I was able to plan Orange County itineraries for distinguished people including the King and Queen of Sweden, Members of Parliament from Great Britain and rising leaders of business, science, education and the arts from all over the world."

In 1991, Pat headed to John Wayne Airport as Chief of Public Relations where she found herself participating in a "trial by fire" media relations initiation a few weeks after beginning her position there. Pat had previously worked with the media at the Office of Protocol and at Bowers Museum, but nothing prepared her for the day when a newly resurfaced runway began throwing off pieces of asphalt when the first jet of the morning took off, causing the airport to close.

"Within the first hour, every network TV station, newspaper and radio reporter in the area arrived at the airport for an impromptu press conference, expecting me to explain things to the public," said Pat. "Media relations at the airport were never dull with activity ranging from fatal aircraft accidents, tenant issues, union strikes, criminal activity and human interest stories, which was great training ground to learn how to work with other County and private sector PIOs."

Pat soon found herself assisting Carole Neustadt in 1999, in establishing HCA's Public Information & Communications unit. Since then, she has been guiding the Agency through various media requests as well as some turbulent communication issues such as the aftermath of September 11, several grand jury reports, SARS, Mad Cow Disease, animal shelter concerns, revamping the Food Protection Program, budget challenges, and most recently with HCA's health information management system, IRIS.

"Pat's contribution to the Agency's position, perception and status in the community is immeasurable," said David Riley, HCA Assistant Director. "She has steered many HCA managers through high profile events, intense media scrutiny, important speeches and presentations, on-camera interviews, and other tough situations."

Pat recalls several memorable moments at the County when she accepted a temporary assignment to serve as County PIO in the CEO's office for six months during the County bankruptcy, which was a difficult time for all County employees with a lot of negative focus by the media.

A more recent event Pat remembers well took place during this past New Year's Eve. HCA issued a press release late in the day on beef recalled due to the Mad Cow incident in Washington State, some of which was sold to customers at a supermarket in Fountain Valley. She mentions that it was memorable not only because of the major media activity that evening and the next day, but especially because of the courage of Public Health and Environmental Health officials in informing the public of a poten-

As Public Information Officer (PIO) for HCA, Pat Markley, APR is most seen by employees as the Agency's voice or spokesperson. Many have either seen her name mentioned in newspapers, heard her voice on local radio stations or even seen her on TV station news programs providing information to the public on behalf of HCA.

As Agency PIO, Pat's position requires her to be on-call 24/7 every other week to respond to media inquiries, and switches off with Howard Sutter in Public Information & Communications. She is also responsible for media training, Agency communications such as brochures, newsletters and reports, translation of printed materials, implementing special events and management of HCA's Desktop Publishing Unit.

Prior to joining the County, Pat worked for several years at Bowers Museum as Administrative Director and was involved with fundraising, membership outreach, newsletter production, volunteer coordination, special events and media interaction.

She began her career with the County as an extra help employee in 1985 and worked to help establish the Office of Protocol. At this unique County office primarily funded as a public/pri-

... continued on page 6

START discussed at training workshop

Staff members from HCA's Senior Health Outreach & Prevention Program (SHOPP) and Substance Abuse Resource Team (START) presented an informational workshop at the San Francisco Hilton during a training conference held on Tuesday, April 13.

Mark Odom, LCSW, Service Chief II of SHOPP/START, and Cynthia Detweiler, MSW and Certified Addictions Treatment Specialist, discussed how the START program has successfully provided substance abuse services to homebound older adults in the County. They shared how the START program developed and its successes and challenges in providing a community based multidisciplinary approach to substance abuse and intervention.

The START program is a collaborative effort between HCA Behavioral Health Older Adult Services (OAS), Public Health's Preventive Health Care for the Aging (PHCA), the Alcohol & Drug Education & Prevention Team (ADEPT) and numerous community and senior center based programs. Working with these partners, START integrates prevention, intervention and rehabilitation services to older adults living independently in the community.

For more information about START, call (714) 972-3700 or visit their web page online at www.ochealthinfo.com/behavioral/amhs/start.htm.

IRIS Update

With several recent newspaper articles about the Medi-Cal billing component of our new IRIS/Cerner computer system, we'd like to provide you with an update on the current status of the system.

Why did HCA need a new computer records and billing system?

Initially, HCA needed a new Behavioral Health Medi-Cal billing system because the old system would not provide the billing in a new state-required format. After careful review of the options available, HCA decided to acquire a new computer system that could integrate patient registration, medical records and patient billings for a number of agency programs. Previously, our divisions were using separate computer systems that did not work with one another. For example, the records of a patient receiving service from Public Health would lack information about Behavioral Health treatment they had also received. This complete picture would now be available and help us to provide more comprehensive service to the public.

What is the problem with the Medi-Cal billing component and when will it be fixed?

The difficulties include specialized Behavioral Health billing requirements, new HIPAA regulations, and system development obstacles. Patient registration, services, and billing information has been entered into the system but technical problems have prevented submission of bills to the State.

HCA staff and Cerner representatives are working extremely hard to overcome the challenges with the Medi-Cal billing component. The new software code will be delivered by May 24 and is expected to be fully operational by the end of November.

Is the new patient registration system experiencing "crashes?"

No, there have been no software "crashes" – the IRIS patient registration system has never gone down. One of the security mechanisms built into the Patient Registration system does shut down the user's screen when it has been idle for 15 minutes. Staff training and familiarization with security safeguards will alleviate this.

Are other components of the system working?

The patient registration component and imaging system for Birth and Death records and the Jail are up and running and working well.

What are the costs of the new computer system?

Total payments for the Cerner contract, from fiscal year 2000-01 through January 2004, are \$10,370,151. Other project related costs for Information Technology support, equipment, services and supplies costs, and salaries and employee benefits for fiscal year 2000-01 through January 2004 total \$6,638,388. Under the approved contracts and agency budgets for the four fiscal years, the total project cost is \$17,008,539.

Many, many people in HCA are putting in a lot of extra effort and hours to submit patient Medi-Cal billings and to help make sure the new billing software code will work well. On behalf of the Health Care Agency, your attitude and willingness to roll up your sleeves to help is most sincerely appreciated. We are extremely grateful to all of you.

health care agency

WHAT'S UP
keeping staff informed & current

WHAT'S UP is a newsletter for employees of the County of Orange, CA, Health Care Agency.

Editors Tricia Arcelona Landquist
Howard Sutter
Anne Fialcowitz

Your Input

Phone . (714) 834-6644
E-mail . TArcelona@ochca.com
FAX . . (714) 834-7644
Pony . . Bldg. 38-S, 4th Floor

MAY HEALTH OBSERVANCES

Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

Clean Air Month

Hepatitis Awareness Month

Mental Health Month

National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month

National Stroke Awareness Month

Skin Cancer Awareness Month

National Women's Health Week 9 – 15

National Emergency Medical Services Week 16 – 22

World "No Tobacco" Day 31

Celebrating Public Health Week

In celebration of Public Health Week from April 5–11, several festivities took place to honor the efforts of HCA professionals who protect, promote and enhance the health of all Orange County residents. The weeklong celebration included a display at the Hall of Administration, which showcased HCA's programs and services along with colorful pictures and valuable information highlighting each service area.

A reception was held on the morning of Tuesday, March 30 at the Hall of Administration prior to the scheduled Board of Supervisors meeting. County Health Officer Dr. Mark Horton also accepted a resolution from Supervisor Wilson declaring April 5–11, 2004 as Public Health Week in Orange County. Reception attendees enjoyed a variety of healthy breakfast items and refreshments as they viewed display boards and chatted with visitors from the Board offices and HCA programs.

The 17th Street Clinic also hosted a Mini Health Fair for visitors and staff on Monday, April 5 to promote the Agency's outreach and educational programs.

Each year during Public Health Week, the Orange County Coalition for Health Education honors a health care professional in Orange County who demonstrates exceptional commitment to health education and presents him/her with the Gerald Wagner Excellence in Health Education Award. Keep an eye out for the next issue of What's Up, which will include information about this year's winner, and the winners of the Public Health Week Scavenger Hunt.



A Public Health Week display at the Hall of Administration included information about HCA's programs and services as well as copies of the Guide to Services and a Free and Low Cost Health Care Services Resource List.



Agency Director Julie Poulson chats with Joe Vargas of the Safe Healthcare Project and Pat Markley, Agency Public Information Officer, at the March 30 Public Health Week reception.



County Health Officer Dr. Mark Horton accepted a Public Health Week proclamation from Supervisor Wilson during the March 30 Board of Supervisors meeting at the Hall of Administration.



A reception was held on March 30 at the Hall of Administration to celebrate Public Health Week and the presentation of a Public Health Week proclamation by the Board. Attendees mixed and mingled as they viewed display boards and enjoyed a variety of breakfast items.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week 2004

Schedule of Events

Saturday, May 15 - Bike Helmet Safety

Garden Grove Police Department will be on hand distributing helmet safety and pedestrian education information at the Annual Boy Scout Scout-A-Rama. For more information, please contact Monica Escobar at (714) 546-8558, ext. 101.

Sunday, May 16 - Super CPR Sunday

The Orange Fire Department and California Paramedic Institute are organizing free CPR classes for O.C. residents. Training sites will be located in Anaheim, Lake Forest and Huntington Beach. For more information, class times or to register, please call (866) CPI Medic or (949) 452-0606.

Monday, May 17 - Gun Safety

The Orange County Sheriff's Department will be educating the public on the importance of gun safety. The Mounted Enforcement Unit will also have a few horses on hand to perform special tricks to educate children about gun safety. For more information, please contact Sergeant Tom Griffin at (714) 538-0173.

Tuesday, May 18 - Booster Seat Distribution

The Orange County Child Passenger Safety Task Force, OC SAFE KIDS and the County of Orange Health Care Agency will be hosting a booster seat training and giveaway for families. Unfortunately, the class is already filled. For more information, please contact Paul Ramirez at (714) 530-0430.

Wednesday, May 19 - Water Safety

The Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) will be hosting presentations on water safety and pool safety. The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Blue Buoy Swim School located at 1702 Nisson Road, Tustin. For more information, please contact OCFA Community Relations and Education at (714) 573-6200

Thursday, May 20 - Free Blood Pressure Checks (BPC)

The Anaheim Fire Department is coordinating free blood pressure checks throughout the entire county. A number of cities and hospitals will be hosting blood pressure check sites. For a site close to you, please contact Denise Mitchell at (714) 765-4035.

Thursday and Friday, May 20 & 21 - Every 15 Minutes Program

The Garden Grove Police Department will be hosting this two-day program, where students from Santiago High School will participate in a realistic simulation designed to personalize the grim cost of drinking and driving. For more information, please contact Steve LaFond at (714) 741-5762.

Friday, May 21 - Fire Safety Day

The Orange County Fire Chief's Association will be hosting a fire safety day for Orange County's elected officials. The elected officials will get to experience first hand what it is like to be a fire fighter. For more information, please contact Patti Van Voorst at (714) 288-2531

Friday, May 21 - Bike Rodeo Safety

Crosby Elementary will be hosting a carnival and the Garden Grove Police Department will join the festivities by hosting a rodeo distributing pedestrian safety tips. For more information, please contact Kris Backouris at (714) 741-5761.

Friday, May 21 - DUI Checkpoints

As we approach the spring holiday season, a number of police agencies will organize DUI Checkpoints to educate drivers on the importance of not driving while under the influence.

Friday, May 21 - No Fear Conference

This conference is designed for all Emergency Medical Services (EMS) professionals. Exciting presentations will be presented by some of Orange County's top doctors, nurses and EMT's. We will also be honoring the EMS Awards of the Year. For more information, please contact Fran Cohen at (714) 843-5046.

Saturday, May 22 - EMS Week Tailgate Celebration 2004

Come visit with EMS professionals and hear live music while viewing fire trucks, ambulances, police cars and many safety displays at Angel Stadium of Anaheim. The tailgate celebration will begin at 4:30 p.m. and will conclude prior to the game between the Anaheim Angels and the Baltimore Orioles. For more information, please contact Steve Ambriz at (714) 834-4653.



Health info privacy is essential

Riddle: You see it, hear it,
speak it, and protect it. *What
is it?*

It's patient information, and more specific to many of our service-oriented programs, it could be protected health information.

That should be a very familiar term to you now. It has been a year since we implemented Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy policies at HCA. HIPAA compliance is an ongoing requirement for HCA and you will be seeing more about HIPAA Security as it is being implemented. You'll also be receiving reminders about our Privacy policies and procedures—and each employee's responsibility to be aware of them and to follow them. Of note, National Health Information Privacy and Security Week was celebrated April 11 thru 17, recognizing the nationwide importance of following these new health care industry guidelines.

Don't forget that information about HIPAA privacy is as close as the HCA Intranet at <http://ocintranet.ocgov.com/hipaa/>, with information available about HIPAA policies, frequently asked questions and many other useful resources.

The HCA Compliance Program offers a confidential telephone hotline to voice your concerns about any situation that may conflict with Compliance Program principles. You may call the hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at:

(866) 260-5636

*The wealth of a soul is
measured by how much
it can feel; its poverty
by how little.*

—William R. Alger

Tips to achieve a successful team

from LMC's Team Excellence Award winners

In last month's issue of What's Up, we introduced you to the HCA/OCEA Labor Management Committee's (LMC) first Team Excellence Award winners from Environmental Health's Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA)/Used Oil Program. This month, we'd like to share with you some of the team's insights that we gained when we interviewed them last month. Specifically, we wanted to share those personal characteristics and group dynamics that contributed to this highly effective work team, and encourage other teams to try out some of these ideas to help make them more successful in achieving their goals in the future.

Tips for getting team members to buy in and share the same goals:

- Bring all team members in at the start of a project
- Dialog and establish goals together
- Encourage open communication to come up with the best ideas
- Help each member have a sense of ownership during the process

Advice to other teams who are struggling with working as an effective team:

- Meet often
- Create an environment where all are allowed the freedom to say what they feel
- Be honest and respectful; let others know what you are thinking
- For the good of the project, say what needs to be said
- Don't take it personally or too seriously if someone doesn't agree with your ideas

Techniques to use in your team to enhance cohesiveness and reduce friction:

- Use humor, often
- Purposely try to do things as a group outside the office at least once a month – go out to lunch or breakfast, the rough edges often come off in a different setting
- Get to know your teammates on a personal level, one-on-one

Characteristics for Team Leaders to foster, in order to help build effective teams:

- Direct staff to do the project, oversee it, but be hands off
- Be available to staff so that they can run ideas by you as they are developing the project
- Clear the way of the extraneous issues so your team members can do their jobs
- If the team is not working effectively, it's up to the team leader to step in and make changes that will allow the team to work effectively

Ways to help teams perform better:

- Look back at projects after they are done to analyze what went right and what could have gone better
- Don't try to do it the same way the next time; it can be different and better
- Reduce red tape and bureaucracy, wherever possible
- Don't buy into "it has always been done that way"
- Generate ideas for solutions to problems

Environmental Health's CUPA/Used Oil team and the LMC have a common goal - having effective teams share those things that they believe have made them successful in an effort to improve the effectiveness of all work teams. The LMC believes that the award-winning teams will also have ideas on what factors limit their ability to work successfully, and that this, in turn, may encourage changes in the way we get things done. As we speak with future winning teams in our Team Excellence Awards program, we hope to identify common factors that lead to team effectiveness, and to also come up with suggestions that could proactively effect positive change and overcome barriers to productivity.

Keep an eye out for the next HCA/OCEA LMC Team Excellence Award nominations, coming soon. For more information regarding the Team Excellence Award and how you can nominate a team (*maybe your team!*), visit the HCA Intranet online at <http://balsam/intranet/lmc/team.asp>.



MHB sends Patti off with good wishes



Best wishes to Patricia Huff, RN, BSN who recently retired from her post on the Orange County Mental Health Board (MHB) after serving for the past 6 years. Patti was honored and presented with a proclamation from Supervisor Chris Norby at the March 24 MHB Meeting held at the Hall of Administration.

Patti's MHB contributions include serving as Chair from 2000-2001, Vice Chair for 2 years on the Board's Housing Subcommittee, participating on the Legislation, Membership and Nominating Committees and as liaison to the Orange County Quality Improvement Committee.

She has also represented the Board as a Delegate to the California State Association of Local Mental Health Boards and Commissions (CALMHBC) and currently serves on the CALMHBC Executive Committee as Secretary.

Character is much easier kept than recovered.

—Thomas Paine

Volunteers needed for smallpox exercise

On Wednesday, May 26, 2004, the Health Care Agency and the Orange County Chapter of the American Red Cross will host a smallpox vaccination field exercise at the Crystal Cathedral located at 13280 Chapman Avenue in Garden Grove from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that local health department sites be able to vaccinate 350 people per hour in order to ensure that the affected population is vaccinated in a timely manner. To ensure the effectiveness of the mock smallpox vaccination clinic, 1,400 patient volunteers are needed.

Everyone is encouraged to volunteer and no medical experience is necessary. Those volunteering will not receive the actual smallpox vaccine. Only 1 hour of individual time commitment is needed.

Those interested in volunteering may register online at

<http://www.ochealthinfo.com/ready>.

All HCA personnel are encouraged to participate in the exercise on County time, but must obtain a supervisor's approval prior to registering for the exercise. Volunteers will be given a free first aid kit, and snacks and beverages will be provided.

HCA has developed a smallpox response plan with the assistance of funds from the CDC. Components of this plan include epidemiological investigation and surveillance, public education and awareness, and mass vaccination of affected populations. This event will enable the County to exercise the Agency's plan, and to help identify gaps in preparedness and improve the ability to respond to a smallpox threat. For more information regarding the exercise, please call (866) 613-5177.

HCA honors volunteers

Thank you to HCA volunteers Nancy Bresnan, Vicki Byrd, Linda Campbell, Malinda Campbell, Stanley Hall and Margot Harps, who were recognized by the Board of Supervisors during the County's Eighth Annual Volunteer Recognition Awards.

The honorees were selected for special acknowledgment from more than 26,635 individuals who volunteered within County agencies/departments during the past year. In 2003, County volunteers contributed more than 943,000 hours of services, which represents an estimated \$24 million in avoided costs for County government.

Our appreciation is extended to this year's HCA volunteers for contributing their time and talents to the Agency.

ACS hosts Pet Fair 2004

Calling animal lovers of all kinds! Come see the latest in pet care needs, products and services at Animal Care Services' annual Pet Fair on Saturday, May 8 at the Orange County Animal Care Center located at 561 The City Drive South in Orange from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

This FREE family event will include information on animal emergency first aid, working dog demonstrations, wildlife and exotic animal exhibits, and product samples and giveaways. And don't forget the stars of the day... hundreds of dogs, cats, puppies, kittens, birds, reptiles, and other critters available for adoption!

For more information on Pet Fair 2004, please call Ryan Drabeck, Animal Care Services at (714) 935-6301.



Gold Star

continued from page 1
tial health threat.

"While the public quickly forgets news stories, we remember the incredible effort involved in responding to various media related issues," added David Riley. "Pat is a shining example of excellence in action."

Pat attended Golden West Junior College in Huntington Beach and California State University, Long Beach where she received a BA in Anthropology with a focus on Archaeology. She is also an Accredited

Public Relations (APR) professional and received her APR designation from the Public Relations Society of America where she is a member of both the national and local Orange County chapters of the society.

In the next 10 years, Pat would like to retire, and pursue her interests in archaeology and do some writing. Her lifelong interests in archaeology have led her to work on various local digs as well as a project in Costa Rica. She also enjoys reading, gardening, feng shui and scuba diving with her husband.

Date set for No Fear Conference

Mark your calendars for the upcoming "Emergency Care: No Fear" conference on Friday, May 21 from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Mission Hospital in Mission Viejo.

This half-day seminar is designed to educate healthcare and pre-hospital professionals in the current trends of state of the art emergency care management, and will also include presentation of the annual Emergency Medical Services Recognition Awards to key professionals in the emergency care field.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to view equipment, supplies and services on display from various companies and organizations related to care of pre-hospital and emergency patients.

Cost to attend the conference is \$10, which includes four (4) continuing education units with certificate of attendance, syllabus, full breakfast and scheduled refreshments. To register or to obtain more information, call Fran Cohen from the Prehospital Care Office in Huntington Beach at (714) 843-5046.

