



# Lifeline

## NEWSLETTER

### CALIFORNIA PRISON HEALTH CARE SERVICES

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#### DO YOU KNOW?

**THE MOST EXPENSIVE 1% OF INMATE OUTSIDE SPECIALTY CARE VISITS ACCOUNT FOR ALMOST ONE-THIRD OF THE TOTAL COSTS OF OUTSIDE SPECIALTY CARE FOR CA PRISON HEALTH CARE SERVICES.**

## Halting Medication Waste Saves Needed Funds



**Pharm Techs Julie Salinas and Marissa Rodriguez at SVSP return unused medications to stock for future use.**

As the State financial crisis continues to escalate to new levels, medication is one of the biggest cost drivers in our prison healthcare system. Staff are now more conscious of medication waste than before and are working together to return unused medication for potential cost savings through the "Return to Stock" (RTS) program.

From July through December 2009, medical, nursing, and pharmacy staff saved over \$6.4 million through the RTS process. RTS is commonly used in community pharmacies and hospital pharmacies to return medication back to stock for drugs that have not been in the patient's hands. In our prison health care system there are three medication administration methods, all of which have impacts on the RTS process:

1. Keep-On-Person (KOP) – Prescription medication that is dispensed and is given to inmates to keep in their cell. If the medication is not used or returned to the pharmacy for any reason, it must be disposed of according to the law. However, we also have a zero waste policy that directs these medications to be returned to a contractor for potential credits. The pharmacy does not apply the RTS process on KOP medications unless we can prove that the medication has not been in an inmate hands (e.g., the inmate refuses the medication prior to the nurse giving it to him). For expensive medication like those for cancer and HIV medications, we use a red sealer that helps us further improve our RTS rate.
2. Nurse Administered (NA) – The pharmacy delivers this medication to the yard clinic nurse. It never leaves the nurses sight and is administered a dose at a time

to an inmate. This medication could be returned to the pharmacy if it is not used and proper documentation is maintained. This medication can be re-dispensed to the next patient.

3. Direct Observe Therapy (DOT) – This is similar to the NA process but it is at a higher level of nurse oversight of the medication administration process. The RTS process could also apply.

To help maximize these savings, staff help ensure that discontinued or unused medications are returned to the pharmacy clean and properly stored. Sometimes medications that are returned to the pharmacy are contaminated with food and trash, and all the medication returned in this wasteful matter must be destroyed. Other times, unused refrigerated medication is left outside for an extended period of time prior to being returned. Institution clinical staff are working together to maximize our RTS by providing training to reduce avoidable medication waste.

To improve the success of this program throughout our health care system, staff at each institution should always consider RTS a mandatory daily process. To improve RTS rates, medications should be purchased in unit dose versus loose tablet when the cost is similar.

The RTS process works well as a group effort. The Pharmacist-In-Charge should collaborate with the nursing and medical staff to ensure medication is returned to the pharmacy in a proper manner in compliance with State rules and regulations. Through our continued teamwork and vigilance, we can continue to save the taxpayers millions of dollars each year.



## CENTRAL DICTATION & TRANSCRIPTION ROLLOUT "ON SCHEDULE AND UNDER BUDGET"



The Central Transcription Services Pilot began on July 1, 2009 and was scheduled to run through December 31, 2009. The pilot was initiated at the following institutions: Central Valley Women's Facility, Val-

ley State Prison for Women, and California State Prison, Los Angeles County. It was so successful that plans to implement transcription services at the remaining institutions were approved on November 15, 2009. "[We are] ahead of schedule on this project, and 48% under project expenditures," said Debra Stinson, Chief of Central Transcription Services.

Wasco State Prison joined the program on November 4, 2009, while North Kern State Prison's implementation date was December 2, 2009. In January 2010, services were implemented at Pleasant Valley State Prison and San Quentin State Prison. The rollout of centralized transcription services will continue at two institutions per month until the targeted project completion date of June 2011. In order to roll out services to two institutions per month, the Central Transcription Unit is actively recruiting medical transcriptionists. Thirty positions are expected to be filled by February 2010. Anyone interested in applying for a position with the Central Transcription Unit should contact Veronica Nunez at (916) 379-3700.

The Central Dictation and Transcription Unit has received 17,893 dictated reports since July 1, 2009. So far, approximately 135 clinicians have used the central dictation and transcription platform to improve workflow. The program averages 198 dictations per day from the three institutions where the system was initially implemented.

Reports are transcribed and made available for clinician review in as little as 6 hours from time of dictation. This is a huge improvement from the previous turnaround timeframes prior to the implementation of this program. The bar has been raised regarding the accuracy of medical reports thereby contributing to improved patient-inmate care. As of September 30, 2009 the Centralized Transcription Services office is located at the Depot Park Center, Sacramento.

## DVI Saves more than \$1 million in Pharmaceutical Purchases



The Pharmacy Team at Deuel Vocational Institute recently achieved several milestones including a reduction of more than \$1 million in pharmaceutical purchases between fiscal year 07/08 and 08/09, and a reduction in overtime expenses from approximately \$4,000 per month in 08/09 to the current level of less than \$500 per month. The DVI Pharmacy Team also

experienced an increase in efficiency that allowed for a reduction in 2 full-time registry pharmacy technician positions since June 2009 without interrupting pharmacy operations.

In recognition of their achievements, the health care administration at DVI presented the Pharmacy Team with an award of excellence. Rick Mott, Acting Health Care Manager at DVI, noted the progress of the Pharmacy Team since the implementation of the new Guardian system, saying "DVI has cut its medication costs by about 100,000 dollars per month since the rollout of Maxor. They are a remarkable group of people and we are lucky to have them here at DVI." DVI scored 92% from the OIG Audits for Pharmacy Services.

Upgrades in pharmacy procedures at the institutional level are an ongoing part of the Receiver's Turnaround Plan of Action to bring prison health care in California up to a constitutional minimum level of care.



## 2010 Tax Withholding Allowances

As we enter a new tax year, you may be thinking about changing your tax withholding exemptions/allowances. The Employee Action Request (EAR) form is the form you would use to, among other things, change your tax withholding exemptions/allowances. The Personnel Office strives to process EARs in time to update tax withholding/allowances for the next master (monthly) paycheck, if submitted to the Personnel Office by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.

### Withholding Allowances & Supplemental Pay

Regardless of the number of exemptions/allowances claimed, all supplemental pay (such as overtime pay) is taxed at a flat rate. Employees must be aware that by completing and signing an EAR to establish/change the number of withholding exemptions/allowances, employees are certifying, under the penalties of perjury, that the number of withholding exemptions/allowances claimed does not exceed the number to which they are legally entitled. When claiming exempt from withholding, the employee is certifying that they incurred NO tax liability for last year and that they anticipate that they will incur NO tax liability this year.

### Better Safe Than Sorry!

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) audits the State Controller's Office payroll records periodically to identify those employees who are fraudulently claiming tax-exempt status. Once identified, IRS requires that the employee provide justification for the tax-exempt status and if not provided, directs the employer to withhold taxes based on the number of exemptions/allowances IRS determines to be appropriate. The IRS may also levy fines against the employee for falsely claiming to be legally exempt from paying taxes. So, if you are unsure of your legal tax entitlements, it is recommended that you consult a tax professional before making any drastic changes to your tax withholding exemptions/allowances.

A copy of the EAR form can be picked up at the Personnel Office front counter or can be found on the Human Resources intranet page: <http://lifeline/HumanResources/Forms/tabid/919/Default.aspx>



## Teach Learn TRAINING

### CORNER

**S**tatewide Health Care New Employee Orientation (HCNEO) began in January of 2010! HCNEO will be offered at each institution, as well as in Sacramento for Headquarters staff (see below). Check with your local IST office for upcoming dates.

Refresher Sexual Harassment /EEO and Workforce Violence Prevention Training will occur during the months of February and March for all HQ health care employees. For specific dates please check with your local training coordinator as appropriate. For health care employees working at the institution, please see your IST staff for annual training schedules.

#### Upcoming Events:

**HCNEO:** March 22-24 at 3701 N. Freeway in Natomas (contact [Lisa.Blutman@cdcr.ca.gov](mailto:Lisa.Blutman@cdcr.ca.gov) for more information)

**Project Management Training:** see the calendar on the Lifeline INTRANET for dates and times (contact [Lisa.Blutman@cdcr.ca.gov](mailto:Lisa.Blutman@cdcr.ca.gov) for more information).

#### Useful Links

Microsoft Office training programs: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/training/default.aspx>

Safari Books: <http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com/>

# PMO TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IS A “COHORT’S SUCCESS STORY”



Thirty-two California Prison Health Care Services (CPHCS) employees were honored this winter during a ceremony at CPHCS Headquarters. The thirty-two were being honored for their participation in an on-going series of training offered by the CPHCS Project Management Office (PMO) in partnership with the CPHCS Workforce Development/ Education and Training team.

Participants completing 10 or more workshops received the CPHCS Project Management Training and Development Program Certificate issued by the CPHCS Training & Education Unit. The training introduced new projects, processes, procedures, and technologies and enhanced our ability to address the health care mission of CPHCS. The first session began July 23, 2009, and completed November 23, 2009.

Norman Franklin, Northern Workforce Planning Section, remarked,

“Employers must now accept the responsibility to train their workforce for essential skills in order to effectively staff a large-scale, complex organization where needed competencies are constantly changing.”

He went on to say, “We must adapt to the new budget reality with a willingness to teach critical, functional skills on an on-

going basis. Employees should have the opportunity to attend professional, medical, technical or administrative programs, and when they emerge from their training, they should be ready to assume critical, functional responsibilities for the organization.”

The PMO requested that each participant share their comments and suggestions, and evaluations were very positive. Even though the PMO extended the workshops to two hours, participants were still commenting about the need for more time for questions and exercises. Eventually 120 participants were tracked throughout the program.

## PMO Training and Development Workshop Certificate Cohort\*

|                         |                        |                           |                         |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Qais Arsala</b>      | <b>Ernie Arvizo</b>    | <b>Lisa Blutman</b>       | <b>Sherri Bridges</b>   |
| <b>Lindsay Burkhead</b> | <b>Lisa Calvillo</b>   | <b>Alani Cridge</b>       | <b>Catherine Cuento</b> |
| <b>Joanne Flinders</b>  | <b>Norman Franklin</b> | <b>Dennis Hirning</b>     | <b>Cheryl Larson</b>    |
| <b>Julie Leach</b>      | <b>Brian Lemley</b>    | <b>Shawn LeTourneau</b>   | <b>George Lolas</b>     |
| <b>Breanna Long</b>     | <b>Eric Ma</b>         | <b>Larry McCabe</b>       | <b>Karen McGinty</b>    |
| <b>Keith Meyerhoff</b>  | <b>Jan Mlejnecki</b>   | <b>Bob Morthole</b>       | <b>Jatin Nagin</b>      |
| <b>Claudina Nevis</b>   | <b>Tess Rico</b>       | <b>Slawomir Sieminski</b> | <b>Patty Thomas</b>     |
| <b>Alex Thomson</b>     | <b>Debra Truelock</b>  | <b>Jamie Wong</b>         | <b>Joan Ysunza</b>      |

\* Cohort (n): 1. A company of companions or supporters.

2. A band of warriors (originally a unit of a Roman Legion).

The CPHCS PMO staff offered a series of 17 Project Management workshops for managers and staff. The workshops were free and covered basic to intermediate project management concepts and skills in the areas of project management fundamentals, effective meeting planning, business requirements, program workflow development, project change management and communications, risk and issue management, project budgeting, contract management, project scheduling, use case methodology, systems development life cycle, transitioning projects to maintenance and operations, scheduling in Open Work Bench, and contract management. The workshops were presented by some of our project managers. The workshops were offered, in Sacramento, in a classroom setting at headquarters, and were attended either in person or online via WebEx (a system for holding meetings over the Internet).

## CALIFORNIA PRISON HEALTH CARE SERVICES

P.O. Box 4038 Sacramento, CA 95812-4038

Phone: 916-323-1923 [www.cphcs.ca.gov](http://www.cphcs.ca.gov)

RECRUITMENT : DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR HEALTH CARE TEAM?

[www.ChangingPrisonHealthCare.org](http://www.ChangingPrisonHealthCare.org) 1-877-793-HIRE (4473)

## 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 integrate the delivery of medical care with mental health, dental and disability programs.



**Inmate health-related concerns or complaints? Call the CALIFORNIA PRISON HEALTH CARE SERVICES HOTLINE: (916) 324-1403**

EMAIL STORY IDEAS, COMMENTS, OR QUESTIONS TO: [lifeline@cdcr.ca.gov](mailto:lifeline@cdcr.ca.gov)

FOR CPHCS EMPLOYEES: TO ACCESS THE CPHCS INTRANET, GO TO [HTTP://LIFELINE/](http://LIFELINE/) OR JUST TYPE “LIFELINE” INTO YOUR BROWSER’S ADDRESS BAR