State of the District – February 2010

Overview

The Sequoia Healthcare District remains strong and continues to engage the community in fulfillment of its mission to improve the health and well being of the residents of southern San Mateo County.

The district's record of achievement is due in large part to a stable tax base, a solid track record and a district leadership that responds enthusiastically and with due diligence to community health needs. The district continues to help the county and the nonprofit community sustain safety net programs that provide services to the most vulnerable and underserved segments of our society. Through increased support for the Sequoia Hospital Foundation, it also has taken on a more significant role in the hospital's ability to serve the district population.

In leading these efforts, the district either operates or funds programs in three areas, Major Initiatives, District Programs and Caring Community Grants. These programs represent an investment of more than $8 million annually — more than the district receives in property taxes. This State of the District report details changes in these programs, describes some of our successes in new initiatives and presents updated financial data.

Major Initiatives

Five major initiatives comprise this program: The North Fair Oaks Clinic, Samaritan House and its dental clinic, the Children's Health Initiative, the Ravenswood Health Clinic and the Sequoia Hospital Challenge Grant.

Operated by the San Mateo Medical Center, the North Fair Oaks Clinic is the primary source of medical care for low-income adults and families in Southern San Mateo County. In 2009, the district increased assistance for its operational support by $400,000 to a total $2 million.

Like Fair Oaks, Samaritan House and its medical and clinic serves low-income and uninsured individuals and families. The district increased its long-standing support of Samaritan House by $75,000 in 2009, bringing our funding to $575,000.

Menlo Park's Ravenswood Health Clinic serves the low-income Belle Haven neighborhood. This year saw funding of the first installment of a three-year district commitment to Ravenswood, as it provided $250,000 in funds. District funds allowed the clinic to hire additional medical staff, thus expanding patient care.

To some degree, the severely depressed local, state and national economies help explain the district's increased support for these safety net programs. The district continues to find itself in a position to assist as other funding sources shrink or disappear.

The fourth major initiative provides health insurance to minor children through San Mateo County's Children's Health Initiative (CHI). CHI's Healthy Kids program receives $1.35 million in district funding, making Sequoia Healthcare District the largest donor to this program in the county.

Finally, Sequoia Hospital, through its nonprofit foundation, continues to receive strong district support for capital improvements that help the hospital equip itself with the most advanced and effective technology available to serve the largest segment of the district population: Those who have health insurance or who can afford to pay for medical care.

The board has pledged $2.5 million to help the foundation raise money specifically for the district's aging female population. These funds will help build and equip a new women's center.

District Programs

The well-established HeartSafe program has placed nearly 275 Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in public locations throughout the district and has trained more than 4,500 community members in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and AED use. Working collaboratively with emergency agencies and Sequoia Union High School District, HeartSafe recently placed the first two-way communications equipped, 24-hour monitored, video equipped Code Blue tower at Sequoia High School's Terremere Field.

Our second program, the Nursing Education Program, is in its fifth year. The district received a detailed progress report on the status of this program, which represents a collaboration with the San Mateo County College District and San Francisco State University.

Caring Community Grants

The district's Caring Community Grants program currently provides significant financial support to 27 community nonprofits, which combined serve the needs of hundreds individuals and families in the district.

A special effort has been made to support safety net programs that feed the hungry as a result of the massive downturn in the economy. An example of this effort is St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room, which provides free, hot food to as many as 600 visitors daily. Our $100,000 award to St. Anthony's allowed it to serve an additional 10,000 meals annually.

Through district support, community health and wellness programs are sustained in the effort to promote health and wellness, physical activity, good mental health and improved nutrition. The district's concern about obesity, diabetes — particularly among young people, and cardiac health sustains the grants program.

This year district administration brought in-house the Caring Community Grants program, representing a substantial cost saving.

Communication and Community Relations

Great effort has been made to expand the district's presence in the community and to expand community awareness of district operations. This has been a continuing point of emphasis with the county, particularly with the civil grand jury, and strides have been made in fulfilling this district goal.

A new informational brochure has been designed and produced. Our first Annual Report to the Community has been prepared and distributed to more than 45,000 district households.

The district website has been redesigned to become more accessible and useful to the public and to more accurately reflect the goals and programs of Sequoia Healthcare District.

The district reaches out to the public through major media and through community leaders, all of whom now receive frequent distributions of press releases and other public communications.

The district has received significant exposure in local print and regional electronic media. For example, HeartSafe's placement of the Code Blue tower at Sequoia High School was reported in local and regional newspapers and was covered live by six television and radio news teams.

In the area of community involvement, district administration has prepared an informational Powerpoint presentation and has embarked on a public speaking initiatives. CEO Lee Michelson was featured speaker at a Good Morning Redwood City program sponsored by the Redwood City San Mateo County Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Michelson and Pamela Kurtzman, Director, Healthy Youth Initiatives, also represent the district in several community organizations, including the Get Healthy San Mateo Task Force, Redwood City 2020, Redwood City Schools Wellness Committee and the Wellness Committee of the Sequoia Union High School District. The district also is an active member in the Redwood City San Mateo County Chamber of Commerce.

Administrative highlights include our move into our new headquarters, hiring of our fourth staff member, rental of excess district office space and completion of our first human resources guidebook.