

# Public Health Commission's YEAR END REPORT 2004

## **ROLE OF THE BOARD**

The Public Health Commission advises the Board of Supervisors on preventive health programs and other responsibilities of the HSA relating to public health and clinical services. The Commission is also charged to educate the public about health issues and to advocate for the health needs of the public.

## **MEETING DATES, TIMES, AND LOCATIONS**

The Public Health Commission meets every other month on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month from 12:15 -1:45 p.m. Meetings take place at the 1060 Emeline Avenue Building Complex.

## **BOARD STRUCTURE FOR 2002**

1 <sup>st</sup> District Representative	Jean Poulos, Chairperson
2 <sup>nd</sup> District Representative	Vacant
3 <sup>rd</sup> District Representative	Matt Farrell
4 <sup>th</sup> District Representative	Kaylor Shemberger
5 <sup>th</sup> District Representative	Bernie Goldner

## **BOARD STAFF**

Betsy McCarty, RN, MS  
Chief of Public Health, Health Services Agency

Administrative Aide Denise Duarte

## **ATTENDANCE**

Please see attached roster

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## January - December 2004

During the year 2004 the County Public Health Commission members continued to focus on important public health concerns. The Commission had good attendance for most of the year. The Commission addressed the following areas of concern in 2004:

- County preparedness for bioterrorism and other public health emergencies.
- Emergency Room Crisis
- Control of communicable diseases, including West Nile Virus and Influenza
- State and County Budget problems

In 2000, the Commissioners were asked by a member of the local Hazardous Materials Advisory Board to monitor the occurrence and response to local sewage spills. The Commission agreed to undertake this task and continues to review reports of sewage spills as a regular agenda item. The Commission continues to receive briefings and information about this matter by representatives of the County Environmental Health Unit.

The Commission received reports about the local efforts to prepare for public health emergencies as a regular agenda item throughout 2004. Presentation was made to the Commission regularly concerning the Agency's plan to prepare for and respond to biological, chemical and radiological hazards. The Commission strongly supported the local planning efforts, particularly in the area of emergency infections. In 2004 the Commission first heard a comprehensive presentation on West Nile Virus by the County's Environmental Health Director, Bob Kennedy. He outlined the progress of the spread of the virus throughout the United States and described the County's response plan. Throughout 2004 the Commission received regular updates.

The Commission followed the County's preparation for the 2004 Influenza Vaccination campaign and were kept up to date on the sudden change in priorities for vaccination based on the unexpected loss of half the nation's supply of vaccine.

The Commission continued to discuss the overuse of the emergency departments at local hospitals by the uninsured population. There was concern expressed about the nursing shortage and the problems of emergency room crowding. During 2004 the Commission followed the implementation of the new nurse ratios for hospital care. They were pleased to learn that local hospitals were largely in compliance with the staff ratios, with the exception of meal and break periods. However, there was concern that the more stringent requirements would increase the cost of the hospital care. The Commission will continue to follow this issue in 2005.

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## January - December 2004

The Commission continued to add a strong voice in support of community water fluoridation. The members re-affirmed the earlier Commission position statement in support of water fluoridation and followed the campaign for water fluoridation in the City of Watsonville. Although, the Commission was disappointed that a local referendum in Watsonville failed to support water fluoridation, they were hopeful that eventually the State law requiring water fluoridation would prevail.

The Commission received comprehensive reports at regular intervals about the State budget problems in 2004. They expressed concern for the budget reductions required by the State's fiscal crisis and supported adequate funding for basic public health. The County's budget for 2004/05 was presented to the Commission. They were concerned about the loss of public health positions, but supported the intent to keep core services intact.

The Commission heard a presentation about the re-organization and computer upgrades in the County Clinics. They supported the County's efforts to improve services and productivity.

The Commission heard a presentation on the current status of The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Santa Cruz County. Better pharmaceutical treatment has resulted in a larger and growing population of infected clients. The need to coordinate care and prevention services to this population was discussed.

The Commission sent an information item to the Board relative to the need to reform the State Department of Correction. The Commission is concerned that the very significant cost of incarcerating a large and growing number of aging prisoners will compromise the resources available for health care in California.

# Goals and Objectives

## January - December 2004

1. Support local efforts to respond to control and prevent communicable disease, particularly emerging infections.
2. Monitor the County's All-Hazards Planning and Response efforts.
3. Continue to respond to the Board of Supervisors requests and emerging issues.
4. Continue to monitor and respond to a variety of Public Health issues such as Maternal, Child Adolescent Health (MCAH), Environmental Health (air and water quality issues, sewage spills and restaurant issues), HIV, tobacco education, and public health prevention programs.
5. Monitor health care access delivery issues in Santa Cruz County. **Monitor effort to increase Medicare reimbursement rates.**
6. **Monitor overuse of Emergency Room.**
7. **Monitor County Clinic re-organization and performance.**

Many of the goals and objectives are expected to continue into the year 2005. The Commission will examine goals and objectives in 2005 and modify as approved.

## ATTENDANCE RECORD- 2004

	Jean Poulos	Bernie Goldner	Kaylor Shemberger	Matt Farrell	Vacant
January	P	P	P	P	
February					
March	A	A	P	A	
April					
May	P	P	A	P	
June					
July	P	P	P	P	
August					
<b>September (Cancelled)</b>					
October					
November	P	P	P	P	
December					

P- present

A- absent