



# HEALTH DEPARTMENT

June 12, 2008

Catherine M. Peery, Chair  
Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council  
PO Box 249  
Pescadero CA 94060

Re: **Pescadero Public Health Nurse**

Dear Ms. Peery:

I write to explain the context and rationale for changes in public health nursing coverage in Pescadero, and to outline the steps that we are taking to ensure optimal service coordination for Pescadero residents.

As you know, the San Mateo County Health Department placed a single public health nurse in Pescadero in February 2007 on approximately a four day per week schedule. This was a change from a previous handling of Pescadero cases by three nurses. The single nurse placement was very well received by the Pescadero community and in particular, the staff of Puente de la Costa Sur. Unfortunately, we are in a difficult economic period in the County and the State. We need to balance needs around the county with fewer public health nursing positions than a year ago.

With the re-assignment of the single public health nurse to a program serving the medical needs of children in foster care, we are working with a total of seven general field nurses for the county. As we move forward in Pescadero, we will have Julia Wilson, PHN and Betty Rodriguez, PHN cover the adult medical cases and the pregnancy, childbirth and child health cases that are referred from Pescadero to Field Nursing and Prenatal to Three. Both of these highly experienced staff will utilize triage and care coordination approaches to determine needed public health nursing resources for the population's needs in a timely manner.

You mentioned that the previous model of public health nursing deployment was "fragmented, inconsistent, far less effective, and inherently much more expensive due to the inefficiencies inherent in the approach". I understand that your perception is that the one nurse model was superior in every way to three nurses. However, from our tracking of caseload, we know that under both models, approximately the same number of individuals and families (20) were referred and case managed. We cannot justify posting the nurses to Pescadero for the number of hours we were able to cover during the past year. However, we have worked to strengthen the communication to the Field Nursing and Prenatal to Three programs in the Health Department by assigning one Senior Public Health Nurse, Faye Jennings, with overall responsibility for serving as the primary point person for all public health nursing issues for Pescadero. The two Pescadero-specific public health nurses covering Pescadero cases (described above) will receive direction

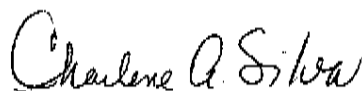
from Faye. In addition, we will bring flu vaccinations to Pescadero next year and into the foreseeable future.

Outside of public health nursing services to Pescadero, we have improved access to Women-Infants-Children (WIC) services over the past sixteen months by holding a WIC clinic twice a month; previously, residents had to travel to Half Moon Bay for this service. This locally accessible WIC service will continue. In addition, the Public Health Division will field the mobile clinic to Pescadero on a once a week basis and with hours expanded into the evening.

My managers from Family Health, Public Health and Behavioral Health and Recovery Services have met with Kerry Lobel from Puente de la Costa Sur to discuss the changes and continue grappling with service gaps that are seen by the community. Managers from the Human Services Agency joined the meeting in Pescadero. As a follow-up, Mary Hansell is convening a County workgroup that will evaluate the strategy being taken to improve services to the South Coast. Key to the strategy is an orientation towards prevention, combining County resources and coordinating service interventions.

I appreciate your bringing your concerns to our attention and having the opportunity to explain the constraints within which we must make our resource direction decisions. Please feel free to contact me again if you wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,



Charlene Silva  
Director

cc: Supervisor Rich Gordon, San Mateo County Board of Supervisors