Health Services
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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To ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, cost-effective health care to Los Angeles County residents through direct services at DHS facilities and through collaboration with community and university partners.

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February 7, 2011

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Mitchell H. Katz, M.D.
Director

SUBJECT: **TELE-HEALTH SERVICES**

On December 7, 2010, your Board instructed the Chief Executive Officer, Interim Director of Health Services and the Chief Information Officer to report back in 60 days on the following: 1) Collaborate with the Community Clinic Association on drafting policies and procedures that would facilitate the use of tele-health to provide prompt screening assessment and treatment in underserved regions and 2) Explore the possible uses of funds to establish a Tele-Health pilot project at the High Desert Health System in the Antelope Valley.

COMMUNITY CLINIC ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The Director of the Office of Ambulatory Care discussed options for collaboration with the co-CEOs of the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County (CCALAC). There are several CCALAC members who are implementing tele-health projects in their health centers. A small project team will be established to build on the current initiatives within DHS and the CCALAC membership with the goal of implementing tele-health best practices as part of ambulatory care restructuring. This effort will include an assessment of underserved regions and the establishment of policies and procedures to implement any new programs. Regular Board status reports regarding ambulatory care restructuring will be provided to your Board and will include the development of tele-health services for DHS patients.

CURRENT DHS PROJECTS AND HIGH DESERT HEALTH SYSTEM PILOT

DHS currently has tele-health projects underway at the various DHS facilities, such as retinal telemedicine, teleradiology, and teledermatology.

The High Desert Health System (HDHS) currently offers a Retinal Telemedicine Program funded by a collaboration with the Los Angeles County Productivity Commission and the Kaiser Foundation. The purpose of this grant is to streamline screening for diabetic patients and determine who is at risk for eye damage due to diabetic retinopathy. The outcome goals of this project include decreased utilization of the emergency room, improved provider productivity, decreased wait time to see a provider, interventions for serious diabetic eye disease once identified, and improved patient education. This program will commence in Spring 2011. Although the grant period is 12 months, HDHS will retain the equipment to provide services after the grant ends.

HDHS also has a tele-radiology service which allows the radiology films to be read off-site with consultations provided to the patients and medical providers.

HDHS regularly monitors grant funding opportunities for tele-health, as well as other types of clinical services, to improve services and address geographical challenges faced by some of its patient population.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CAPABILITIES

DHS consulted with the Chief Information Officer (CIO) regarding current information technology capability for tele-health services as well as future options for implementation. DHS will incorporate Countywide tele-health capabilities into the planning required for an Electronic Health Record and ambulatory care restructuring efforts, and will continue collaboration with the CIO and the Internal Services Department in these efforts.

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact John Schunhoff at (213) 240-8370.

MHK:pm

c: Chief Executive Office
County Counsel
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors