



County of Santa Cruz

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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SUSAN A. MAURIELLO, J.D., COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

September 20, 2001

Agenda: September 25, 2001

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, California 95060

Recommendations Regarding Farm Worker Housing and Health Survey

Dear Members of the Board:

On June 5, 2001, both the Santa Cruz and Monterey County Boards of Supervisors were presented with the Farm Worker Health and Housing Survey and Needs Assessment. At that time, your Board directed the CAO to coordinate a response from various County departments to address the needs of farm workers and their families and provide a report back to your Board and the following elements:

Redevelopment and Planning staff to:

- identify farm worker housing grant opportunities, including a brief program description of each grant and application timelines;
- explore the development of a second Migrant Center through the State Office of Migrant Services;
- evaluate potential on-site farm worker housing projects, consistent with State law provisions which allow for employee housing projects serving **12** or fewer employees;

HRA staff to:

- review funding opportunities for farm worker housing under the federally funded Continuum of Care/Housing programs;

HSA County Health Officer to:

- review the report and analyze the data to identify potential health measures to improve farm workers health, including improving access to primary care physicians and prevention services for children.

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Attachments 1 and 2 in this report provide for an in-depth response to the Social Service and Health issues raised by your Board. The key issues and recommendations identified in the report are summarized below:

Social Service and Health Issues (Attachments 1 and 2)

- Direct Continuum of Care Coordinating Group to specifically address housing for homeless farm workers;
- Continue efforts to assist community based outreach programs designed to promote ready access to health care coverage through Medical and Health Families, in addition to well-child and pregnancy related services;
- HSA and stakeholders are planning a "Health Summit" in late autumn or early 2002;
- Improved access for farm workers to Planned Parenthood, Salud, and Womens Health Center;
- This past year, a new community education position was established in HSA through funding provided by the Children and Families Commission;
- Salud has opened new 4-chair dental clinic to expand dental care in the South County;
- **HSA** staff is supporting efforts to fluoridate water in the Watsonville area;
- HSA will pursue California Endowment grant funds for improving the health of agricultural workers; and
- HSA staff will explore the possibility of establishing a Promotores program in Santa **Cruz** County.

Housing Issues

The farmworker housing issues raised by your Board are proposed to be discussed in detail in the October 2nd workshop on Affordable Housing. At that time, specific recommendations concerning are proposed to be included in a follow-up action plan.

Conclusions/Recommendations:

The social service and health efforts and new initiatives discussed in this letter will enable your Board to address some of the critical needs identified in the Farm worker Health and Housing Survey and Needs Assessment. In addition, the Affordable Housing Workshop scheduled for October 2nd will provide an opportunity for your Board to more fully address the myriad of farm worker housing issues discussed in the Report.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board take the following actions:

1. Accept and file this report;
2. Direct staff to include a report on farm worker housing issues as part of the October 2nd workshop; and
3. Direct staff to implement the recommendations outlined in this letter pertaining to Social Service and Health issues.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan A. Mauriello". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a checkmark-like flourish at the end.

SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer

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County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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HEALTH OFFICER
MEDICAL SERVICES DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

To: Erik Shapiro
From: Rama Khalsa and Dave McNutt
Subject: Farmworker Report: Report to Board of Supervisors
Date: September 12, 2001

Key health-related findings from the Farmworker Survey include:

- It is important to distinguish between the Monterey County results and the Santa Cruz County results; in most cases, the Monterey County results are worse or less favorable than those from Santa Cruz County.
- While the overall survey included 780 respondents, there were only 231 respondents who resided in Santa Cruz County.
- The survey was *not* a random sample of Farmworkers, and it does not include seasonal workers who were not working in Santa Cruz County when the survey was conducted. The estimate for total numbers of seasonal Farmworkers in Santa Cruz County is very broad: 18,069 - 32,155.
- Extrapolating data from several questions on the survey, the 213 respondents who are Santa Cruz County residents appear to have 128 children ages birth through five years; 184 children ages 6 - 12 years; and 112 children ages 13-17 years, for a total of 424 children under age 18 years who are living with the respondents in Santa Cruz County.
- Only 37.8% (87/230) of the Santa Cruz County Farmworkers had any type of health insurance, compared to 83.1% countywide and 68.2% in South County in the 2000 United Way Community Assessment Project (CAP) survey. Of those with health insurance, most family members were covered (88.4%).

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Families outreach services through Adelante, Davenport Resource Center, Familia Center, Mountain Community Resource Center, Pajaro Valley Unified School District Health Assessment Center, Planned Parenthood, Santa Cruz City Schools, United Way, WIC and Youth Services.

HRA, in partnership with the Second Harvest Food Bank, also promotes farmworker family nutrition through its Food Stamp outreach program, which allows callers (in both English and Spanish) to the Food Bank Hotline to be connected directly with an Food Stamp Eligibility Worker to assist them with the Food Stamp application process.

In addition to these ongoing outreach efforts, HRA also promotes access to available benefit services such as Medi-Cal and Food Stamps by participating in many community outreach events, including a recent information fair at Golden Torch Trailer Park and Watsonville Farmers Market information booth.

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HRA Analysis of Farmworker Housing and Health Needs Assessment

Your board also asked the Human Resources Staff to review funding opportunities for farmworker housing under the Continuum of Care/Housing and Urban Development program.

As your Board is aware, each year the Continuum of Care Coordinating Group, through the Human Resources Agency, submits a consolidated application of local agency proposals to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance funds. Based on HUD guidelines, applications are limited to the three types of homeless funding programs; two of which must target homeless individuals with disabilities, and the third which provides funds for rehabilitation of existing structures to create single-room occupancy housing for all qualified homeless persons.

Projects funded through HUD's Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs are generally targeted to the disabled, and to those persons with substance abuse issues. Unfortunately, farmworkers are not identified as a priority target population under the HUD guidelines, although this does not preclude farmworkers from being considered as a subset of the larger population for whom this housing is available.

As you may recall, on September 26, 2000, your Board directed the Continuum of Care Coordinating Group to expand its membership and scope and to develop a five-year strategic plan on homelessness. HRA recommends that your Board direct the Continuum of Care strategic planning group to specifically address housing for homeless farmworkers in the Five-year Strategic Plan on Homelessness, and to coordinate with County Redevelopment and Planning Departments in identifying potential funding sources for this purpose.

Your board has also asked staff to report on measures in place to improve farmworker health and assure access to health care. HRA staff has a number of community-based outreach programs designed to promote ready access to healthcare coverage through Medi-Cal and Healthy Families, in addition to well-child and pregnancy related services.

Outstationed bi-lingual Medi-Cal eligibility workers are assigned to Adelante, Dominican Hospital, Familia Center, HSA Health Clinics, Mountain Community Resources, Pajaro Valley Unified School District Health Assessment Center, Planned Parenthood, Salud par la Gente, Santa Cruz Women's Health Center, and Watsonville Hospital.

HRA participates in the Santa Cruz County Health Care Outreach Coalition, whose mission is to provide access to health care insurance to all Santa Cruz County residents. The Coalition is comprised of Community based organizations, health clinics, hospitals, and HRA and HSA. Bilingual outreach workers hired by the Coalition provide Healthy

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- Surprisingly, only 4 Farmworkers out of 230 (1.7%) indicated that they had needed health care in the past year and been unable to obtain it. This compares with 17.2% countywide in the 2000 CAP. All four stated that they could not afford needed care.
- Only ten percent of Farmworkers appear to have a private medical provider for needed medical care. The overwhelming majority (89.6%) use community clinics, while 53.2% also use hospitals/emergency departments for needed care.
- Question 39 on page F23 is a bit confusing. The question is: "Do you, or a family member living with you have any of the following (list of medical problems)?" Only 120/231 Farmworkers in the Santa Cruz County sample responded to this question, but one response was "Prefer not to answer" and that is shown as 40%. Presumably, this means that 40% of the 120 respondents or 48 Farmworkers preferred not to answer this question. It is unclear whether the other 111 Farmworkers said that they did not have any health problem or also declined to answer this question.
- The major health-related problems cited were asthma, diabetes, hepatitis, job-related injuries and illnesses, substance abuse, mental health issues, and domestic violence.
- There were questions on pesticide exposures and toxicity, but this issue was not fully explored in the survey. Three people out of 229 (1.3 %) Santa Cruz County Farmworkers reported that they had had some harm from pesticides while working in California.
- Santa Cruz County Farmworkers appear to have a thirst for information on a host of issues, including dental health, maternal and child health, immunizations, mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse, and health insurance options and eligibility.

Health Services Agency and Community Responses to Farmworker Survey:

- Health Insurance and the uninsured, including Farmworkers, represent a major challenge to every region of the country. The recent 2000-2001 Santa Cruz County Grand Jury Report called for sweeping actions to improve health services. The Health Services Agency and other community stakeholder organizations and individuals are planning a "Health Summit" late in the autumn or early in 2002. It is likely that several working groups will come out of this "summit" to develop system-wide improvements in access to health services. The greatest challenge will be to secure the funding necessary to support expanded services and insurance coverage for very low income individuals and families.
- Farmworkers and their families may well be eligible for more public health and social services programs than they are accessing. The Health Care Outreach Coalition

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was formed in 1997 to expand health care coverage for all uninsured residents of Santa Cruz County, with a specific focus on children and their families. Efforts are underway by Coalition-affiliated agencies in north and south county to provide outreach, enrollment and retention efforts that target Farmworkers. Additional albeit limited funding has just been received to support this effort. Nearly all - if not all - of the children of resident Farmworkers covered in this survey should be eligible for one or more of the existing funded medical care programs operating in this county, including Medical, CHDP, CCS, Healthy Families, AIM, California Kids, and MediCruz. Some of the parents may also be eligible after October 1st for Healthy Families.

- The existing community health center system of the county, consisting of two general medical clinics operated by the Health Services Agency, two general medical care clinics operated by Planned Parenthood, Salud Para La Gente, and Women's Health Center all provide services to low income individuals. Some limited capacity exists within this community clinic system to provide additional services to Farmworkers if they can be helped to access them. The Outreach Coalition should help to promote this access. The Health Services Agency has ongoing dialog with these clinics to improve after-hours care and alternatives to the emergency room, and will bring together these clinics to help develop the agenda for the "Health Summit" and also to explore ways to further improve access for Farmworkers.
- Two known major health problems faced by Farmworkers and other Latinos are asthma and diabetes. The Central Coast Lung Association recently received a major grant from the California Endowment for a five year Comprehensive Asthma Project that will include development of new funding sources and programs for people suffering from asthma. This will cover five central coast counties including Santa Cruz. The Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust is funding a Diabetes Health Center in the valley. County agencies and health care providers, both public and private, should be encouraged to support and expand the work of the Trust.
- Dental health information was the largest cited information need in the survey - 79.5 % of 229 respondents. Dental health was recognized as a major need by the Children and Families Commission which has funded new education, screening and treatment services. A new community education position was also funded by the Commission in the Health Services Agency. Salud Para La Gente has opened a new 4-chair dental clinic, and Dientes! is planning to expand services, as well. The Health Services Agency also is actively supporting the community coalition in Watsonville that is moving the process to fluoridate the community's public water supply, which will help greatly to reduce the overwhelming dental care needs of the community.
- While pesticide use and misuse attract much attention in South County, this survey did not shed much light on the extent of the problem. Only three of 229 Farmworkers reported *ever* having been sickened, injured or harmed by exposure to a pesticide while working in California. More information is needed to evaluate this possibility.

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- The California Endowment announced on September 7th a \$10 million grant program to improve the health of agricultural workers across the state. Details have not been released yet. This may provide an opportunity for the Oversight Committee to develop a joint proposal that will address some of the findings of the Farmworker Survey.
- Monterey County has a Farmworker education and advocacy program called Promotores. This program might be an asset in Santa Cruz County to address outreach and education needs. More information is needed on this program and how it is financed. (Similar programs elsewhere have been hampered by high turnover of staff who, upon completing training as Promotores, move into better paying positions.)

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