

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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San Mateo County Health Department

Veteran Health Leader Chosen as Interim Chief of Newly Created San Mateo County Health System

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. – San Mateo County Manager John Maltbie today announced that Health Director Charlene Silva will serve as interim Chief of a newly created department responsible for all County healthcare functions.

The five-member Board of Supervisors on August 12 approved a proposal by Maltbie and Assistant County Manager David Boesch to place all healthcare functions in a single department, the San Mateo County Health System.

The move is expected to strengthen the County's leadership role in local health issues and provide a unified health agenda by organizing the San Mateo Medical Center and the Health Department under a Chief of the Health System.

“San Mateo County and the entire community will benefit from Charlene's experience while the County recruits from throughout the country to fill this vital position,” Maltbie said. “The Board's strong emphasis on prevention and collaboration will guide the continuation of work across the health system.”

Silva will play a key role in aligning all health functions in the months before her long-planned retirement. Prior to becoming Health Department Director, she was head of Aging and Adult Services.

That new Chief will be responsible for functions currently provided by the Health Department and San Mateo Medical Center and will work closely with the Health Plan of San Mateo, a managed care health plan that provides health care benefits to underserved residents.

“Our vision is that the alignment of health functions will enable us to find opportunities to enhance services, control rising health-care costs and improve our ability to work with our community partners,” Maltbie said. “We believe we will be in a better position to plan for the long-term healthcare needs of our community.”

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Under the new system, the Medical Center, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Correctional Health Services, Aging and Adult Services, Family Health Services and Community Health will be under the umbrella of the new Health Chief. The Health Officer and the division of Health Policy and Planning will also report to the new Chief.

“The San Mateo Medical Center, as the hub of the community’s medical care safety net, will continue its focus on excellence in healthcare delivery for the underserved,” Maltbie said. “The Medical Center has made significant progress over the past year in collaboration with other agencies and community resources and improved its fiscal performance and we expect that this combination will allow it to progress even further.”

The 2008-09 budget for the Health Department is \$274 million and the Medical Center’s is \$244.2 million.

The move to align all health services grew out of several recent initiatives from the Board of Supervisors. These include: the creation of a Health Policy and Planning Unit to address the long-term health challenges of San Mateo County; creating enhanced services and programs to improve public health and reduce risky behaviors such as tobacco use; and an assessment of ways to improve access to healthcare for the uninsured and improve the County’s financial position to address the healthcare needs of the uninsured.

Maltbie, Boesch, a member of the Board of Supervisors, leaders within the County’s health community and key community stakeholders are expected to serve on a recruitment search committee. With Maltbie planning to retire in December, it is expected both he and his successor, who will be appointed by the Board, would play a role in hiring.

Editors: Photos of John Maltbie, David Boesch and Charlene Silva are available upon request.

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