



Program Performance Award Official Entry Form

The Program Performance Award recognizes and rewards County programs that show significant improvement in performance measure results or that sustain a high level of performance over a period of time. One program is selected as the recipient of the STARS Program Performance Award each year. Additional programs may be selected for Honorable Mention. Selected programs receive a cash award and County-wide recognition. Additional information about the Program Performance Award and a sample of a completed entry form can be found on the County's intranet website.

Department: Health System - San Mateo Medical Center

Program being nominated: Ambulatory Electronic Medical Records

of clients/customers served: 5,000+ patients and 200+ providers

Contact person: Karen Pugh Phone: 650-573-2796

Email address: kpugh@co.sanmateo.ca.us

Please attach a list of Program employees and their Pony mail addresses. Also attach a narrative that does not exceed two pages, 8-1/2 by 11, with the following information:

1. Describe the program. What are the program services, goals and objectives?
2. Identify the methods used to measure the program's performance, and the process used to gather data.
3. Discuss the program's performance. What specific actions were taken during the year to improve performance measure results or what has been done to sustain a high level of performance?
4. What is the impact of program results on outcomes (at the program, department or County level)?
5. What is the program's plan for sustaining high performance?

Email your entry to stars@co.sanmateo.ca.us. The deadline for submissions is October 29, 2010. Selected programs will be notified and awards will be presented in January.

Good luck and thank you for your participation!

1. Describe the program. What are the program services, goals, and objectives?

Before the implementation of the Ambulatory Electronic Medical Record (AEMR), San Mateo Medical Center (SMMC) had a dictation-based medical record. Although most notes were transcribed, some specialties continued to document through handwritten notes in the paper record. This documentation was not always available to other medical providers in the satellite clinics, emergency department, or inpatient services. While the transcribed notes were available to all providers through an integrated computer system, they existed only as separate documents. Discrete data elements such as medication lists, lab data, and process data were not easily available for compilation and analysis. In response to this data need, SMMC used free-standing disease registries but was limited to a select number of patients who were manually input into the registry by certain providers and certain clinics. The use of manually entered data entry created the potential for inaccurate and incomplete information which could have a serious negative impact on quality of care. At best, it was difficult to review and compare data.

In late 2009, SMMC implemented an AEMR to improve chronic disease management and continuity and quality of care. The AEMR would help SMMC meet that goal by (1) facilitating and improving provider to provider and provider to patient communications, (2) reducing potential for medical errors, and (3) providing real-time tracking and management of chronic disease.

With more than 200 providers now using AEMR, we are able to track the thousands of clinic patients who enter our system. SMMC providers can easily share critical lab results, accurate medication lists, and notes from patient visits with other providers, creating a continuity of care. The information also is now easier to share with patients and gives the provider an effective way to get the patients more involved in their care, a proven way to improve health outcomes.

2. Identify the methods used to measure the program's performance, and the process used to gather data.

Patient care teams, including providers, use AEMR to gather and track patient data. All clinical outpatient documentation occurs in the AEMR. This includes all episodic progress notes. Medical, surgical, social and family histories are constantly available and updated within the system. The system also includes computerized physician order entry for labs and diagnostic imaging. Test results are automatically interfaced back into the system from the lab and radiology systems. The AEMR includes electronic prescribing which provides direct communication to pharmacies and automatically populates and updates the patient's medication list. There also is an embedded registry function that allows for data collection and reporting on chronic disease and preventative health quality metrics. The AEMR includes a variety of tools that facilitate direct communication between staff members.

3. Discuss the program's performance. What specific actions were taken during the year to improve performance, measure results, or what has been done to sustain a high level of performance?

No Loss of Access During Implementation: In less than 10 months, SMMC successfully implemented the AEMR in all outpatient clinics. Using a strategic method of rolling regional implementations, SMMC was able to maintain access and clinic volumes throughout the implementation. For FY 2010, clinic volumes were within 1% of

budgeted volumes (which had not been adjusted down for the implementation) and 2 % above prior year volumes.

Reduction in Expenditures: Because providers enter their notes directly into the electronic patient record, medical transcription costs have reduced from \$1.2 million in FY 2009 to \$521,218 in FY 2010. These cost savings far exceed the annual licensing and maintenance costs of the AEMR.

Improved Quality of Care: AEMR’s clinical alerts help guide providers toward best practice in real time rather than solely by retrospective analysis. The use of electronic prescribing has eliminated the potential for errors due to legibility and has improved the ability to track appropriate medication use. The AEMR tracks patient data such as the date listed below:

	<i>Number of patients entered in registry</i>	<i>Diabetics with good diabetic control</i>	<i>Diabetics with good cholesterol control</i>
<i>October 2008 (before AEMR)</i>	1,941	29.2%	40.6%
<i>July 2010 (after AEMR)</i>	4,860	47%	65%

4. What is the impact of the program results on outcomes? (at the program, department, or County level)

As part of the County’s shared vision 2025, SMMC uses the chronic care model of care in its ambulatory services as one way of achieving a healthier community. AEMR is an integral part of providing chronic disease management. SMMC’s goal of being recognized as one of the best integrated healthcare delivery systems in the country can’t be achieved without a way to track the treatment of chronic diseases. The AEMR helps SMMC create true medical homes for patients which is not only a critical part of healthcare reform, it’s the best way to provide the highest quality of care.

5. What is the program’s plan for sustaining high performance?

The implementation of the AEMR is an impressive accomplishment. In fact, we are one of the first healthcare organizations in the state with an AEMR. To continue to improve quality of care, SMMC is now looking to integrate the AEMR with other sources of patient care data used in areas such as the emergency room. Additionally, an inpatient electronic medical record is being pursued to “close the loop” on patient information. SMMC is developing an online forum for providers and care teams to share AEMR best practices, templates, questions and solutions with each other. An open dialog will allow the to users share their experiences and improve the AEMR resulting in improved quality of care for the patients. Future plans also include a “patient portal” giving patients online access to lab and test results and the ability to communicate with their provider and make an appointments.

Program Employees:

Dr. CJ Kunnappilly (PONY: HOS316AD)

Brenda Macedo (PONY: HOS316AD)

Cecilia Diaz (PONY: ISD 348)

Mary Ellen Reed (PONY: ISD 348)

Meg Gilmore (PONY: ISD 348)

Dr. Mike Aratow (PONY: HOS316AD)



Customer Service Award Official Entry Form

The Customer Service Award recognizes and rewards County programs that demonstrate innovation and/or resourcefulness in providing outstanding customer service. One program is selected as the recipient of the STARS Customer Service Award each year. Additional programs may be selected for Honorable Mention. Selected programs receive a cash award and County-wide recognition. Additional information about the Customer Service Award and a sample of a completed entry form can be found on the County's intranet website.

Department: Health System-Behavioral Health & Recovery Services

Program being nominated: BHRS Quality Management

of Program employees: 7

of clients/customers served: Estimated 570 (BHRS employees + contractors)

Contact person: Keith Clausen Phone: 650 - 573 - 2331

Email address: kclausen@co.sanmateo.ca.us

Please attach a list of Program employees and their Pony mail addresses. Also attach a narrative that does not exceed two pages, 8-1/2 by 11, with the following information:

1. Describe the program, services provided, and population served.
2. Describe a particular challenge associated with this program's customer service delivery. How was this challenge addressed?
3. What methods are used to measure and monitor customer satisfaction (if a survey is used, please attach a copy of the survey)?
4. What is the impact of customer service improvements on program outcomes?
5. What is the program's plan for sustaining a high level of customer satisfaction?
6. How might other departments or programs learn from or apply the successes you have achieved?

Email your entry to stars@co.sanmateo.ca.us. The deadline for submissions is October 29, 2010. Selected programs will be notified and awards will be presented in January.

Good luck and thank you for your participation!

Health System: Behavioral Health & Recovery Services
Nomination Category: Customer Service (Internal Customers)

1. Describe the program, services provided, and population served.

The Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (BHRS) Quality Management (QM) team is a small group of mental health professionals who work as a team to help all programs within BHRS comply with all local, state and federal regulations and laws, and to help continuously improve the quality of the services that our system delivers to behavioral health clients and their families. Our services are quite diverse and range from creating and amending policies and procedures; educating the system about those P&P's; creating and delivering trainings on clinical, compliance, privacy and other issues; developing and updating clinical forms; designing ways to disseminate our materials; providing technical support to staff and contracted providers on privacy laws, subpoenas and many other issues; certifying mental health provider sites; reviewing client hospitalizations; and helping to manage and resolve client complaints and grievances. The QM team provides support to both the direct county employees of BHRS (n=420) and contract agencies and private providers (est. 150 staff). Those served include administrative, clinical, and management employees and contractors.

2. Describe a particular challenge associated with this program's customer service delivery. How was this challenge addressed?

A major, ongoing challenge when working with a dry, yet incredibly important issue such as regulatory compliance is how to communicate the information in a way that will be engaging and interesting to staff, thus encouraging them to actually *read* and assimilate the crucial details. QM has wrestled with this problem historically, finding that sending out email memoranda attached to policies etc. is ineffective as a means of communicating. Recently, the QM team has taken a fresh approach, devising an attractive and frequently updated intranet site, creating several new e-learnings on various topics and using humorous emails to pique staff interest. Please visit the following site, to see some of these materials:
<http://intranet.co.sanmateo.ca.us/health/mh/qi/smai.htm>

A shorter-term challenge that QM has recently tackled is providing support for BHRS's move from paper charts to an electronic clinical record. This transition has necessitated major changes to our documentation, including new clinical forms and billing codes. QM has responded to this challenge, by developing a whole host of new materials and educating the BHRS system about them. One of the most impressive items that we have created is a streamlined, visually appealing documentation manual that matches our e-clinical system:

<http://intranet.co.sanmateo.ca.us/health/mh/qi/doc/DocManual10-09.pdf>

3. What methods are used to measure and monitor customer satisfaction (if a survey is used, please attach a copy of the survey)?

QM surveys BHRS staff periodically, to get an overall sense of how well we are doing serving our internal customers. (A copy of the 2010 survey is attached.) Overall staff satisfaction with QM has improved considerably between 2006 and 2010: in 2006, 49.4% of respondents reported being satisfied, with 48.1% somewhat satisfied, and 2.5% unsatisfied. In 2009, the fully satisfied staff increased to 85.1%, with 10.8% somewhat satisfied, and 2.7% unsatisfied. The fully satisfied staff increased even more in 2010, to 87.8%, with 11.2% somewhat satisfied, and only 1% unsatisfied.

In addition to increasing overall customer satisfaction, QM has also responded to requests for specific types of resources. For instance, in 2009, survey respondents requested both online trainings (44.8%) and instructor-led trainings (28.0%). In 2010, QM responded to these requests by creating several attractive, mixed-media, e-learnings narrated by QM team members, as well as providing a live webinar that all staff and contractors were invited to attend in person or online. Responses to these e-learnings, which range from brief 5-10 minute "quality alerts" on critical timely issues to much longer, comprehensive trainings have been overwhelmingly positive, exemplified by the following comment on our 2010 survey, "Love the webinars! I look forward to that technology becoming more widespread."

These innovations over both labor-intensive, one-time instructor-led trainings and run-of-the-mill, text-heavy Powerpoint slideshows has created the best of both worlds and has helped QM to rapidly ramp-up the number of useful, up-to-date resources available to staff and contractors. Many of our customers have expressed their appreciation for these resources, lauding both the quality of the materials and their accessibility.

One more indication of staff interest in QM topics is that the number of staff taking the survey itself has increased significantly between 2006 and 2010. Survey response rate jumped from 24% in 2006 to 37% in 2010, which itself helps us to improve our services by better understanding a greater range of staff opinions.

4. What is the impact of customer service improvements on program outcomes?

Most of these improvements are too recent for us to have data showing improved program outcomes, however, we expect that there will be concrete gains which we will assess in the coming months. One improvement that we can report, is that now that our basic documentation training is available through the LMS as an e-learning, staff can take this training immediately, whereas in the past they had to wait up to several months to attend an in-person training. This earlier, standardized training allows our staff to learn quality documentation and correct coding, thus preparing them to provide superior customer service to our clients/consumers right away. This training is also available anytime for them to review as necessary. We anticipate that these improvements will result in fewer documentation errors, which means that we will need to disallow fewer services. This means more

billable services, which is of major importance during this tight budgeting time.

5. What is the program's plan for sustaining a high level of customer satisfaction?

The QM team intends to continue using annual surveys, including specific questions that get at what type of additional supports/resources would be of use to our customers. In addition to that, we are always looking for ongoing opportunities to interact with the staff members we support, in ways that will be welcomed and fruitful. The QM team believes that by carrying forward the innovations we have begun in the past year--expanding the e-learning available, keeping our attractive intranet site updated and visually appealing, and welcoming input—that we will be able to sustain and continually build on these recent improvements.

6. How might other departments or programs learn from or apply the successes you have achieved?

Our successful techniques could be used by any other program that needs to create and distribute a large amount of information to its customers—whether they are internal or external to the County. The needed ingredients are creativity, an eye for devising visually attractive documents, technical savvy, and a willingness to listen to and respond to what your customers are requesting.



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Department: San Mateo County-Department of Parks

Program being nominated: Sign Shop

of clients/customers served: FY2007/08 to present 200

Contact person: Dave Moore/Ty Kang Phone: 650 -363- 4020

Email address: dmoore@co.sanmateo.ca.us tkang@co.sanmateo.ca.us

Please attach a list of Program employees and their Pony mail addresses. Also attach a narrative that does not exceed two pages, 8-1/2 by 11, with the following information:

1. Describe the program. What are the program services, goals and objectives?
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4. What is the impact of program results on outcomes (at the program, department or County level)?
5. What is the program's plan for sustaining high performance?

Email your entry to stars@co.sanmateo.ca.us. The deadline for submissions is October 15, 2010. Selected programs will be notified and awards will be presented in January.

Good luck and thank you for your participation!

San Mateo County Program Performance Award Nomination (STARS)

Department of Parks-Sign Shop Program

Program Description

In early 2007, the Department of Parks embarked on researching and developing a Sign Shop Program. Several professional companies were contacted and Department staff also had the opportunity to visit the Presidio's Sign Shop. Implementation of the sign program was also based on providing immediate and cost effective signage for the County's pending policy of "No Smoking" in all County operated parks. After extensive research on sign production, materials and equipment, the County helped fund the Sign Shop Program for start up operations. From the beginning of this process, many steps have been taken to emplace "Green" concepts and ideals when building and operating the Sign Shop.

Creating a "Green" Sign Shop working area was achieved by using recycled materials when possible. The Sign Shop was built into an existing space which previously housed mowers and other Park equipment. Unused paint from other projects was used to paint the interior walls and the table, desk, cabinets and chairs were salvaged from County surplus for re-use. Energy efficient light fixtures accompanied with motion sensor light switches were installed to conserve energy and met new energy standards. The new Sign Shop plotter which is used to print the signs uses eco-friendly inks and automatically switches to "sleep" mode when not in use to conserve energy. As for material, the initial set-up of the sign shop was supported by gathering used signs from throughout the Department and using the materials to make new signs. To date, approximately 500 pounds of old aluminum signs have been salvaged and cut down, re-surfaced and mounted for life as a new sign. In addition, other materials suitable for use as sign backing have been recycled and re-used (plexi-glass, cardboard, other plastics and even wood).

With the initial investment by the County and backing material stock on hand, the Sign Shop went into production and signs were made for the implementation of the County's policy of "No Smoking" in County Parks. The Sign Shop allowed every park to have signs made and installed when the new "No Smoking" policy went into effect. The Sign Shop Program since then has allowed the Department to replace vandalized signs in a timely and cost effective manner, create current and up to date signs for various projects and has provided the Department the ability to post immediate information for public viewing. In addition, the Sign Shop has completed various jobs (sign requests) for other County Departments (Human Resources, DPW), as well as for other public agencies (State Parks, local cities) and partnerships (Coyote Point Museum, Parks Foundation).

Program Performance Measurements

Since the Sign Shop operation went into production (2007) from FY2007/08 to present, the costs of having signs made for use throughout the Department has been calculated at almost half of what it would have cost the Department elsewhere. Each Park District has a small sign budget and tracking costs has been kept on file at the Sign Shop. Savings have come in the form of reusing aluminum and other metals, the re-use of banners and signs and from the re-use of cut-off material (light switch stickers, logos, labels, etc.). Recycling within the Sign Program is also measured in the re-use of cut-off material and recycling of all paper/cardboard that is generated during the sign making process. Cut-off aluminum and other metals from the sign making process are also recycled.

The Sign Shop Program's ability to produce signs and banners for other County Departments, government agencies and related entities at a reduced cost to them and/or replenishment expenses for manufacturing materials have been recorded. Department Park Districts have benefitted from having signs replaced and/or updated in a timely manner. Besides the initial run of "No Smoking" signs, the Department also began its use of a new on-line computer reservation system for picnicking and camping. This required new signage which was made possible for identifying all the campground sites at Memorial Park and the new reservation areas at Coyote Point Recreation Area when the system went on-line.

The standardization of signs used throughout the Department in each of the County parks, preserves and natural resource areas have been another goal of the program. The Sign Shop Program has allowed the Department to begin standardizing signage used throughout all of its Districts. The concept has been based on the California State Parks Guidebook for signs. Uniform, standard and recognizable signs

help the visiting public identify with being in a park environment/setting.

Performance Results

Besides the general cost savings the Department of Parks has recorded, the Sign Shop has been able to complete various sign requests for a host of other agencies and departments, allowing them substantial costs savings as well. The money received from these requests has been used to purchase more material to be used in the process of making signs. Sign requests orders have been completed for the City of Brisbane, the City Commerce of Brisbane, California State Parks, Coyote Point Environmental Museum, the Parks Foundation, SFPUC and POST. In addition, signs/banners have been completed for Human Resources, Public Works, SM Copy Center and the Sheriff Department.

Signs were also completed to fulfill grant and funding requirements for several projects (Bay Trail Improvements at Coyote Point, Meadowview Playground at Junipero Serra Park, and the Seal Cove Stairway at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve) and to promote several special events such as Coastal Clean-up, National Public Lands Day, Take a Hike, Farmer's Market, Volunteer programs and Tour de Peninsula.

The Sign Shop has enabled the Department to begin to "brand" its image and promote "product recognition" of County Parks. The beginnings of our "Park Sign Guidebook" are currently in the form of files for each District. All signs produced to date have been recorded (CD/computer files) and eventually could be used in conjunction with GIS or other related programs.

Program Impact on Outcomes

Besides the dollar savings on signage, the Park Districts throughout the County have been able to replace vandalized signs, replace old deteriorated signs and missing signs as needed. This helps to maintain a high standard (appearance-"fresh look") and provide continued service to the community (trail directional markers, general information signs and interpretative signs) in a very efficient and timely manner. The Department is able to provide up to date information and material to the public as it may relate to their use and safety when visiting in our parks (Mountain Lion & Rattlesnake Warnings, High Fire Danger, Closures/Notices, and Community Outreach). The Sign Shop Program has partnered with other agencies in a collaborative effort to educate the public when out in the Parks (Local Cities-Brisbane Marsh Interpretative Bird sign donation project, CA State-Corvid project, POST-Pillar Pt/Mid-Coast/Mirada Surf cooperation and SFPUC along Sawyer Camp Trail). The Sign Shop Program has partnered with others to promote education and to experience our parks and the outdoors (Coyote Point Museum and Parks Foundation). The Sign Shop has also supported volunteer and intern interests (via the Department's Volunteer Program). Individuals have been trained in the Sign Shop and have had the opportunity for "hands-on" experience. The Sign Shop Program supports the County's efforts in recycling and re-using materials when ever and where ever possible (OBM Quarterly reports).

Plan for Sustaining Results

- Continued collaboration with other Departments, government agencies and partnerships to help each of us reduce expenses as they relate to signage.
- Complete sign requests for others that would cover all costs associated with sign production for that specific project/event (time and material).
- Explore opportunities for funding when developing projects and/or add to budget for signage where applicable.
- Encourage reuse of old signs and other useable backing materials whenever and where-ever possible (deconstruction projects-plexi-glass or flat surface sheet metal).
- Continue cross training of available Department staff-each Park District would have a person who could work in the Sign Shop and produce signs for their respective District.
- Develop Sign Shop Internship program (currently a non-pay advertisement) and continue to support of the Department's Volunteer Program.
- Continue the re-use of existing signs and banners-generic information and/or changeable information spaces.
- Continue use of cut-off material and lay-out jobs to maximize material use.



Green Award Official Entry Form

The Green Award recognizes and rewards programs/projects that demonstrate leadership and creativity in "greening" their facilities, operations and/or programs and increasing the visibility of climate change actions by San Mateo County government. Programs that have implemented innovative greening projects are encouraged to submit entries. Additional information about the Green Award can be found on the County's intranet website at <http://intranet.co.sanmateo.ca.us/countystars>.

Department: Health System – Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

Program / Project
being nominated: "The Cordilleras Vegetables Garden"

Contact person: Sandra M. Santana-Mora, MA

Phone: 650.573.2889 Email address: sSantana-Mora@co.sanmateo.ca.us

Please attach narrative (not to exceed two pages, 8-1/2 by 11) addressing the following:

1. Describe the green project. Who initiated the project? What issue/problem was addressed? How was the issue/problem addressed? What facility, environment and/or population benefited from the greening project?
2. Identify the costs and all environmental, fiscal and organizational benefits of your greening project. How are these benefits measured? Include data supporting the success of your greening project/program. (For assistance with environmental benefit calculations, contact the RecycleWorks staff in the Department of Public Works.)
3. What is the plan for continuing the program or project?
4. How might other departments or public agencies learn from or apply the successes you have achieved?

Email your entry to stars@co.sanmateo.ca.us. The deadline for submission is October 29, 2010. Selected programs will be notified and awards will be presented in January.

Good luck and thank you for your participation!

1. Describe the green project. Who initiated the project? What issue/problem was addressed? How was the issue/problem addressed? What facility, environment and/or population benefited from the greening project?

Cordilleras Mental Health Rehabilitation Center serves San Mateo County residents ages 18 and older with histories of mental illness and multiple episodes of acute psychiatric hospitalization. Cordilleras works to allow individuals who would otherwise be in an acute care setting to develop the skills and supports needed to live independently in the community.



Over the last three years, an area behind the Cordilleras Mental Health Center has been transformed from an unused patch of turf into a large and vibrant garden, overflowing with delicious fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs and beautiful flowers. This has been accomplished not by professional gardeners, but by some of the residents who are living with serious mental illness and the Cordilleras staff. This group, called the "Green Team," has created, developed, and maintained this thriving organic garden. The original inspiration for the project grew out of a program initiated by Social Worker Stephanie Small to increase the residents' food and environmental awareness, and

to encourage healthy eating habits while developing a sense of connection with and responsibility for the environment. It soon became clear that the best way to achieve these goals was to encourage the residents to grow some of their own food. There was a sizable parcel of land available for the purpose, but transforming it into a productive and sustainable garden was a huge undertaking. Horticultural Therapist Sue Redell was brought in and soon, staff members set to work, planning the garden and organizing interested residents.

After three years, the garden has grown far beyond its initial goals. A wide variety of produce has been grown and used in meals prepared by the kitchen staff and residential cooking groups led by Rehab Therapists and Social Workers. The garden has been awarded the status of Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Foundation.

Please follow this link to see how the garden has grown:

<http://sanmateo.networkofcare.org/mh/CountyContent/San-Mateo/gardening-at-cordilleras.cfm>

2. Identify the costs and all environmental, fiscal and organizational benefits of your greening project. How are these benefits measured? Include data supporting the success of your greening project/program. (For assistance with environmental benefit calculations, contact the RecycleWorks staff in the Department of Public Works.)



As the project unfolded, benefits emerged beyond the two original goals of environmental stewardship and healthy eating. The simple act of working as a team to plant the initial crop had immediate benefits for the participants, witnessed by trained staff who can attest to the transformation. Teamwork aimed at the concrete practical goal of creating the garden provided many opportunities for exercising and strengthening social skills. The natural unhurried pace of garden growth provided a venue for enhancing individual focus and follow-through over periods of weeks and months, which built a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction and self esteem for the residents. Eating food they grew themselves provided these seriously mentally ill residents a personal

understanding of where healthy food comes from. For the long term, the residents' experience building and maintaining the garden will provide vocational benefits. Some participants will become skilled enough that some form of horticultural work may be possible as a part of their recovery. But more generally, gardening activities strengthen basic functional abilities such as problem solving and attention span that can be an asset

for achieving vocational goals not specifically related to gardening and can provide an ongoing rewarding leisure activity. Incorporating organically-grown vegetables, fruits, and herbs into the residents' diets is an enormous achievement, as are the environmental benefits yielded from consuming locally-produced food at Cordilleras.

In terms of concrete environmental benefits, we know that the food system is estimated to account for 16% of total U.S. energy consumption¹, with agricultural activities in the last decade of the past century responsible for 8% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. We also know that in the U.S., about 1.2 billion pounds of



pesticides are used annually, which accounts for nearly 23% of the world's use. Applying organic or integrated pest management production methods (which the garden at Cordilleras does) greatly reduces the environmental impact. Before the creation of the garden, there were no measurements of emissions generated by transportation of vegetables, fruits, and herbs to the Cordilleras facility (see map), but we can safely state that those emissions have been reduced at least 20% in the last 3 years, based on the

garden's contribution to the in-house food preparation for residents and staff.

It soon became obvious that a perfect supplement for the organic garden undertaking would be composting. This realization led to a joint effort by the residents and staff to build a large new wooden composting unit from scratch. The soil produced in the composting process is reused in the garden. Compost enriches soils, remediates contaminated soil, helps prevent pollution and, in the case of the Cordilleras garden, reduces water use, and eliminates the need for fertilizers and pesticides.

3. What is the plan for continuing the program or project?

The plan is to continue incorporating different vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers into the project; we hope to continue expanding the number of beds and increasing the amount of food produced. Additionally, we hope to continue educating residents and staff on the environmental and health benefits of locally produced, organically grown produce.

4. How might other departments or public agencies learn from or apply the successes you have achieved?

We would be delighted to share our experiences – especially our successes and challenges – with other County facilities and partnering agencies. Perhaps treatment centers will consider setting aside a small plot of land to replicate this and integrate environmental stewardship and therapeutic gardening as part of their service provision philosophy. We would be delighted to help!

Thank you for considering this application!

¹ Environmental Protection Agency. 1999. "Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-1997." EPA 236-R-99-003. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D.C. Web site April 2001 (<http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming/publications/emissions/us1999/index.html>)