

Health Director's Report
April 2021

- March 31, 2021 – Panelist for Brunch with Jaz Roundtable. I joined two other Local Public Health Directors to discuss vaccine deployment, vaccine importance as it relates to herd immunity, vaccine misconceptions, vaccine communication to the marginalized/underserved communities, and pandemic next steps (education outreach, community's part/involvement).
- April 1, 2021 - Orange County Department Directors Meeting (Virtual)
- April 6, 2021 - Partner Information Sharing Group (formerly MAC group) meeting (Virtual)
- March 10, 2021 – COVID-19 Update for Chapel Hill Town Council Meeting
- April 8, 2021 – FSA Partner Meeting (Virtual)
- April 8, 2021 – SHCCC; Long term Behavioral Health Committee
- April 9, 2021 – Town of Chapel Hill EOC Appreciation Celebration with special guest appearance from Secretary Mandy Cohen (Virtual)
- April 13, 2021 – Child Fatality Prevention Team Meeting (Virtual)
- April 14, 2021 – Attended Day 1 of Health Director Legal Conference hosted by UNC School of Government
- April 15, 2021 – Served on the interview panel for the OC Animal Services Director recruitment
- April 16, 2021 – Attended Day 2 of Health Director Legal Conference; presented as a Panelist for session titled “Lessons from the Field; Working with a Local University”
- April 19, 2021 – Attended Day 3 of Health Director Legal Conference
- April 23, 2021 – Orange County Housing and Community Development recognized the Family Success Alliance for their incredible partnership over the last year with the [Emergency Housing Assistance](#) program and thank the team for their efforts to connect Orange County residents to housing resources and services. In 2020, the Emergency Housing Assistance Program and the HOPE Program served 1,245 households and provided over \$4 million in financial assistance, preventing eviction and homelessness and ensuring that residents remain stable in housing during the pandemic. This would not have been possible without their support and advocacy for the clients we serve.
- The team and I continue to work with UNC, both the school districts, and several community agencies to discuss COVID re-opening plans.
- Governor Cooper has declared April Second Chance Month in North Carolina. To observe this important month, the Local Reentry Council has scheduled several important events.
 - [Wednesday, April 21 – 10:00 am](#) – JAC member Troy Manns presented on Stigma and Recovery Support
 - [Tuesday, April 27 – 10:00 am](#) – The Orange County Rape Crisis Center will present on Understanding and Supporting Survivors of Sexual Trauma. Please register for the event: www.orangecountync.gov/Survivors
- North Carolina's work to reach underserved and historically marginalized populations and deliver equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines is a model approach for the country, according to a new report released this week by the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA).

The report, [Prioritizing Equity in COVID-19 Vaccinations: Promising Practices from States to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities](#), highlights promising actions states can take to promote equitable vaccination within historically marginalized communities, reduce systemic barriers to vaccine access, and improve race and ethnicity data to inform vaccine distribution.

County Alert System

- **NEW TIERS** added to County Alert System: The yellow category from previous reports (significant community spread) has been expanded to include two new lower tiers: **Moderate** (light yellow) and **Low** (green) community spread).
- As of April 15th, One of North Carolina's counties are currently red. There are now 20 orange counties, 48 yellow counties, 30 light yellow counties, and 1 green county. In comparison, the previous report posted April 1, 2021 showed 21 orange counties, 47 yellow counties, 31 light yellow counties and 1 green county.

- 63 counties are in the same tier as the previous report. 18 counties have move up a tier (toward red) since the last report, 19 counties having moved down a tier (toward green) and 63 counties remaining in the same tier.
- Orange County maintains the yellow tier, meaning we continue to have significant community spread. At this time our case rate, % positive and hospital impact does not meet the threshold of substantial community spread.
- The latest report may be found here: <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/dashboard/COVID-19-County-Alert-System-Report.pdf>

COVID-19 Vaccination

- OCHD has administered 10,000 first dose vaccinations as of April 15th ! See the full story here: <http://orangecountync.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=720> Great Job by all our partners and volunteers!
- OCHD is currently offering appointments to those on the waiting list and all individuals 18 and older that want COVID -19 vaccinations. The decreased demand has resulted in fewer appointment slots being filled. We are now offering hours for walk-in appointments during the weekly clinics. To address some potential barriers we are also offering a couple clinics each week with hours after 5pm to make vaccinations accessible to those working during the day.
- We will continue to support vaccine projects for historically marginalized populations that promote equitable access planned in conjunction with community partners.
- OCHD continues providing vaccination to homebound community members that call to make this request.
- County vaccination efforts are transitioning from the RR Lot in Chapel Hill to the Whitted Building in Hillsborough at 300 W. Tryon Street. As we move into the Spring/Summer season the outdoor testing model will be problematic for heat safety for staff/volunteers and the inability to quickly access safe shelter as afternoon storms occur.

Legislative Updates

House Bill 61 (Communicable Disease Funding) was introduced in the House Health Committee on March 31, 2021 by Rep. Donna White and Rep. Larry Potts. Rep. White shared that in the last 10 years, there has been no increase in funding to public health departments and the local health departments have taken the lead on the pandemic with limited staff and limited resources. Rep. White noted that even with ranking 46th in the country for public health funding, local health departments have responded to the crisis. The bill would provide funding directly to local health departments through DHHS with no administrative costs and a reporting measure in effect Sept. 1.

Rep. Insko shared that we are missing out on a lot of interventions that public health provides that have over time increased life expectancy and shared her support for the bill.

It is available at: <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewBillDocument/2021/2061/0/H61-PCS10205-SHa-12>.

There were no opposition votes and the bill now moves to the Committee on Appropriations.

COVID Testing Events

Please check this link for the most up to date testing schedule: <https://www.orangecountync.gov/2451/Testing>

- Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm – OCHD, Whitted Building, 300 West Tryon Street, Hillsborough, NC 27278
- **Beginning Thursday, April 1, 2021**, Optum Serv Testing moved from the R7 lot to the Southern Human Services Center, 2501 Homestead Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516; Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm (closed for a hour break for lunch) .

