

Director's Message

Dear OC Health Care Agency Team,

Like many of you, I know first-hand what it means to take care of an elderly parent. It can be emotionally draining to watch those who once were the rock of strength in our lives, to lose their physical and/or mental capabilities. Add to that the concerns that many of us as caregivers carry over our parents' health, as well as the decisions that need to be made for their comfort and safety, and taking care of the elderly can add years to our lives as well!

That's why I'm pleased to share with you the [Still Going Strong](#) campaign from the Centers for

... continued on page 3

Peer-to-Peer

Mary Young

"I made the move to the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) because I wanted to be more personally connected to contributing to the good of our community and help to effect real change in people's lives." As a Contract Administrator in Procurement & Contract Services, Peer-to-Peer recipient **Mary Young** said she is able to effect real change by partnering and collaborating with program teams and providers. "Although I am not directly interacting with our county residents, my role helps keeps the trains moving so-to-speak. I ensure the execution of contract requirements and delivery of services that are so needed in our community. It is important to me to provide knowledge, support, and encouragement to all my partners in the County of Orange (County) and in the Provider network in order to cohesively work together to innovate, streamline, and create effective and positive relationships and processes that enhance the County's ability to provide vital services to the community."



Mary came to the HCA after a variety of experience in the private sector. "I worked environmental construction and compliance for the fueling industry with clients including Chevron, Shell and Costco; garment manufacturing for clients such as Disney and Universal Studios; retail marketing for Pepsi and General Mills; even television production for ESPN. Those experiences provided a lot of life lessons and exposure which have been valuable professionally and personally." As for joining the

... continued on page 7

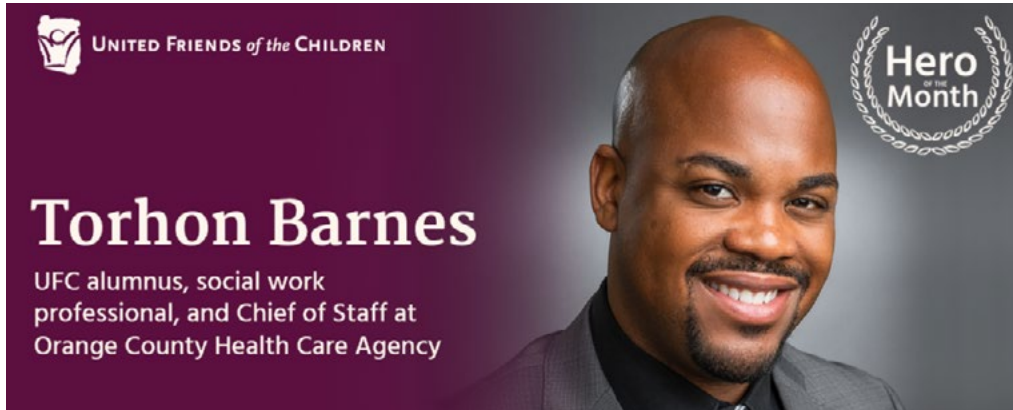
FEATURED ARTICLES

- Foster Care Hero of the Month . . . 2
- SOAR Award Recipients 4
- Strategic Plan Updates 4
- Breastfeeding Month 2021 6

Foster Care Hero of the MONTH

“Torhon is nothing short of an inspiration. He has faced challenges like few people would... with grace and courage. I have been truly honored to work with Torhon and to have known him for nearly 20 years. His kindness, intelligence, and commitment is a benefit to those he works with and will make a significant difference in our community.”

- Jason Lesner, Community Services Manager, Los Angeles City College



Our June Hero of the Month is UFC alumnus Torhon Barnes! Torhon spent 15 years as a social work professional and is currently the Chief of Staff at Orange County Health Care Agency. Torhon is also an advocate of the LGBTQIA+ community and through his position at L.A. Care Health Plan, he was able to lead initiatives to better serve and support the LGBTQIA+ community. This included managing the TransHealth Program serving transgender members, overseeing annual PRIDE parade participation, and community and employee engagement activities. Torhon's purpose in life is to assist individuals in their efforts to turn tragedies into triumphs. We're so proud of all that he's accomplished and the social work he's done to improve the outcomes for underserved communities. There is not a more deserving honoree, particularly during Pride Month. Thank you for all that you do, Torhon!

OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Chief of Staff **Torhon Barnes**, aka Mr. T., was selected as Foster Care “Hero of the Month” in June by the United Friends of the Children (UFC) organization. UFC empowers current and former foster youth on their journey to self-sufficiency. To the right is the announcement UFC placed on their webpage.

Mr. T.'s selection brought praise from colleagues in the Agency including HCA Director and County Health Officer **Dr. Clayton Chau**. “I couldn't agree more with the UFC's accolades for Mr. T. It's also a pleasure to see another example of an HCA colleague who commits personal time to serving the community.”

Those who worked with Mr. T at UFC offer their thoughts about him.

“I've had the pleasure of knowing Torhon for nearly 18 years. When he was just a youth in our program, I could see, immediately, how driven and determined he was to succeed in our program, and I knew he would thrive in the world once he left. He is a born leader who is committed to excellence in his profession and in and for his community. He made his mark at LA Care and continues to work for equality and justice for the LGBTQ community. I'm looking forward to watching him grow in his position with the OC HCA. His success story is one of the many reasons we stay motivated to do the work that we do at UFC.”

- Carla Palmer, Assistant Director of Development, UFC

For more on UFC click [here](#).

Director's Message

continued from page 1

Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). The campaign has two goals:

- Educate about common risk factors for falls and motor vehicle crashes, as well as traumatic brain injuries that happen from falls and motor vehicle crashes; and
- Empower older adults and their caregivers to take simple steps that will help them maintain their independence and age without injury.

In addition to materials for older adults and caregivers, the campaign features information for health providers and even for those of us who expect to become elderly someday. Taking time to understand the materials is necessary since on the one hand one of the biggest risks facing the elderly is suffering an injury from falling, but at the same time one of the best things to do for the elderly is to encourage them to be as active as possible. So, for example before you plan activities for an elderly loved one or friend, follow the CDC's recommendations to make their home safer by removing any tripping hazards from the floor and by ensuring there is plenty of light inside the home.

Another major issue, especially here in Orange County (OC), is driving. Talking to an elderly parent about handing over their car keys can be painful or even bitter. The CDC points out driving helps keep older adults mobile and independent but their risk of injury or death in a motor vehicle crash increases as they get older. Over 8,000 older adults died in traffic crashes and nearly 252,000 were treated in emergency departments for crash injuries in 2019. This means that 22 older adults die and

almost 700 sustain an injury every day in motor vehicle crashes.

The CDC campaign uses the principles of STEADI to intervene and prevent risk. STEADI is Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths & Injuries. STEADI resources include an evacuation plan for the elderly, information on staying independent, and even success stories to encourage and motivate you and your elderly loved one.

The Still Going Strong campaign offers strategies for talking with an elderly person about driving. Those include screening and assessing for potential driving concerns, reviewing medications, and encouraging transportation options. There's also a Mobility Planning Tool and Clinicians Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers.

You can find all the Still Going Strong materials by clicking [here](#). As the CDC's campaign emphasizes, "Getting older doesn't have to mean giving up the activities you enjoy!"

I also encourage you to register for a webinar on **August 6, 2021 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.** which highlights the [Still Going Strong](#) campaign. You can register [here](#). (After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.)

Stay well and stay safe.,



Dr. Clayton Chau, MD, PHD

HCA Director and County Health Officer

OCEMS to the Rescue!

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the OC Emergency Medical Services (OCEMS) Logistics team has been tasked with many different missions. Recently the team took on a mission of a different sort: members of the team rescued a baby opossum found in an alley outside our Agency warehouse. The opossum, affectionately named Taco, was lured out of a truck wheel-well and then transported to the Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center ([WWCC](#)) in Huntington Beach. In addition, over the next two days, three opossums believed to be Taco's siblings, named



Chips, Salsa and Queso, were also transported to the rescue center. The WWCC's mission is to raise orphaned or to rehabilitate injured animals and only

takes in opossums if personnel believe they cannot survive on their own. Depending on their weight upon arrival, the opossums will be tube fed or bottle fed and once they are nurtured to a healthy stage, they will be released to their natural habitat.

Article by **Denamarie Baker**
Sr. Emergency Management Program Coordinator

SOAR Award Recipients

Service and Outstanding Achievement Recognition
April -June 2021



Sharon Ishikawa
Behavioral Health
Services



Cason Le
Correctional Health
Services



Jingle Doan
Finance & Admin
Services



Rlazon Patterson
Medical Health
Services

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATES - August 2021

Building Equity in OC

With the implementation of the OC Health Care Agency's new Strategic Plan underway, the Agency is now focused on building both a coalition of community partners and an internal infrastructure to support population health and equity initiatives, in line with three objectives that are key to achieving our new mission and goals:

- Goal: **Promote Quality, Equity, and Value**
 - Objective: Enhance cross-HCA coordination and strengthen partnerships with external partners and in the community
- Goal: **Ensure HCA's Sustainability**
 - Objective: Enhance private and public partnerships; Increase community support and investment through the promotion of data that demonstrates value
- Goal: **Offer Relevant Services to the Community**
 - Objective: Expand and strengthen public and

private partnerships and collaborate to advance common goals

With the support of a \$22.8 million federal grant, the Agency's Office of Population Health and Equity is currently supporting these objectives by working on strategies to address disparities in the current pandemic as well as set the foundation to address future pandemic responses, including:

- **Expanding** existing and/or developing new prevention resources among higher risk and underserved populations
- Increasing or improving **data** collection, reporting, and infrastructure
- Building, leveraging, and expanding **capacity and infrastructure** of local health departments to support equity
- **Mobilizing** partners and collaborators to advance health equity and address social determinants of health

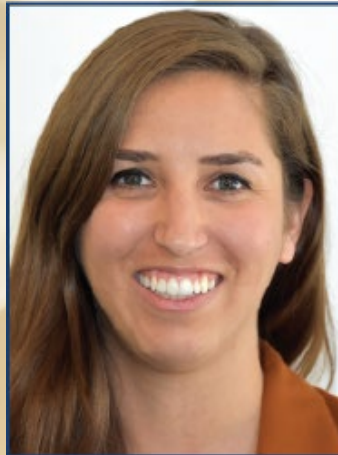
The OC Health Care Agency (HCA) supports and encourages employee recognition as an important part of its culture, in alignment with the HCA's mission, vision and goals. The Service and Outstanding Achievement Recognition (SOAR) Award is aimed at honoring one employee from each of the HCA's service areas for their leadership, excellence in service and commitment to promoting the health and well-being of our Orange County (OC) community.



Cindy Jessome
Public Health
Services



Richard Chhuon
Strategy & Special
Projects

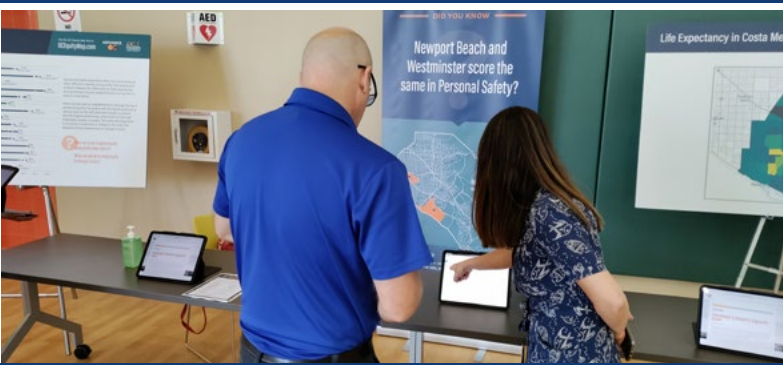


Natalie Dempster
Offices & Specialty
Programs

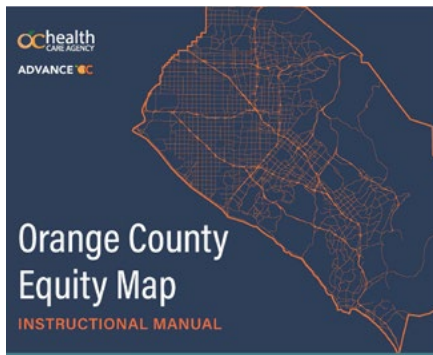
This year's second quarter cohort of SOAR recipients for April-June 2021 were recently recognized at the HCA's All Staff Town Hall on June 24, 2021 and are featured on the SOAR Employee Recognition Wall on the second floor at the HCA Headquarters through the end of September. You can learn more about our SOAR Awardees by clicking [here](#).



Presenters at the OCEM Launch Event address questions from the audience



An attendee receives a demonstration of the OCEM mapping tool



OC Equity Map

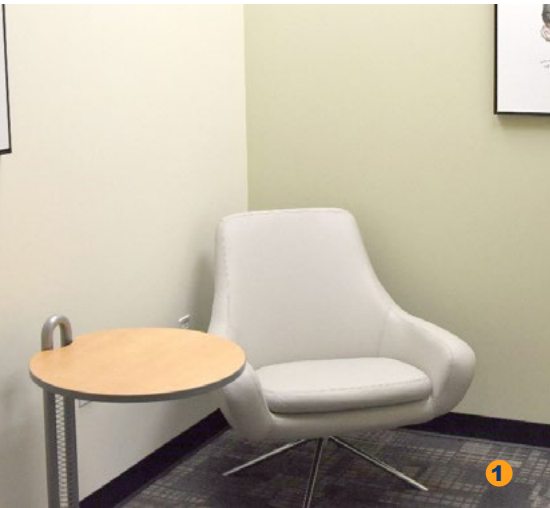
On July 14, the Agency unveiled a new data platform in partnership with non-profit organization Advance OC and the Board of Supervisors called the OC Equity

Map (OCEM). Attendees at this launch event at Mile Square Park's Freedom Hall in Fountain Valley included elected officials, community leaders and media representatives (including [NBC4](#) and [Telemundo](#)), who had the opportunity to try out the new tool following presentations from Office of Population Health and Equity Director, **Hieu Nguyen**; Office of Project Management and Quality Improvement Director **Karin Kalk**; and Advance OC Director **Katie Kalvoda**. At the HCA All Staff Town Hall on June 24th, participants had the opportunity to preview this platform and begin to learn how the map and tools can help us address disparities

... continued on page 7

National Breastfeeding

MONTH 2021



inquires about or requests parental leave. But did you know that employees are offered access to lactation rooms at various County work locations? You can refer to this list of [lactation rooms](#). The rooms are safe, clean and private.

Jessica Martinez, a Sheriff's Special Officer with the County for more than 10 years and currently assigned to the 17th Street OC Health Care Agency (HCA) building, is a grateful recipient of the County's lactation accommodation efforts and its support for breastfeeding employees. As mother to a 12-month-old daughter, Jaylin, Jessica shares the challenges and rewards that she has encountered during her breastfeeding journey and also gives employees some practical advice. "When returning to work, I was concerned that I would not be allowed to pump or continue with my pumping schedule. Because of my line of work, no two days are alike, so having a pumping schedule was a bit challenging. However, I was very fortunate to have had an accessible and designated lactation room that was clean, relaxing and where I could store my milk safely. The lactation room here [at 17th Street] has made my pumping experience at work stress-free and enjoyable."



On January 1, 2020, the County of Orange (County) implemented an Employee Lactation Accommodation Policy to support working mothers. It ensures that County employees who need to express milk at work will be accommodated in accordance with California law and the County's non-discrimination policy. All new employees are provided with the County's Lactation Accommodation Policy upon hire and when an employee

When asked what was rewarding during her experience, Jessica shared, "I continue to have that special bond with my daughter. The transition from being at home

and returning to work full-time was difficult but pumping has allowed me to feel connected to her even when apart. It has also allowed me to keep a good milk supply."

Jessica's advice for breastfeeding employees planning to return to work full-time is, "Continue pumping/breastfeeding. If you have any concerns, reach out to your supervisor or human resources. They are very understanding and accommodating to your needs. There are so many positive benefits that our children receive from breastmilk." She also suggests setting up a pumping routine before returning to work, preparing everything the night before and having multiple pump sets to save some time.

August 1 – 7 is World Breastfeeding Week and this year's theme is "Protect Breastfeeding – A Shared Responsibility." Jessica is just one example of an employee who was able to reach her breastfeeding goals with support from her employer, the County of Orange, which has taken on the responsibility of protecting its employees' breastfeeding rights. For more information about, and how you can support breastfeeding, please contact **Liza Scammahorn**, Supervising Public Health Nutritionist at LScammahorn@ochca.com. For information about the employee lactation accommodation policy, please contact your Agency's Human Resource Team.

1. Lactation Room at HCA-Human Resources. **2.** Jessica with daughter, Jaylin, enjoying the sunflowers.

Article by **Liza Scammahorn**, Nutrition Services

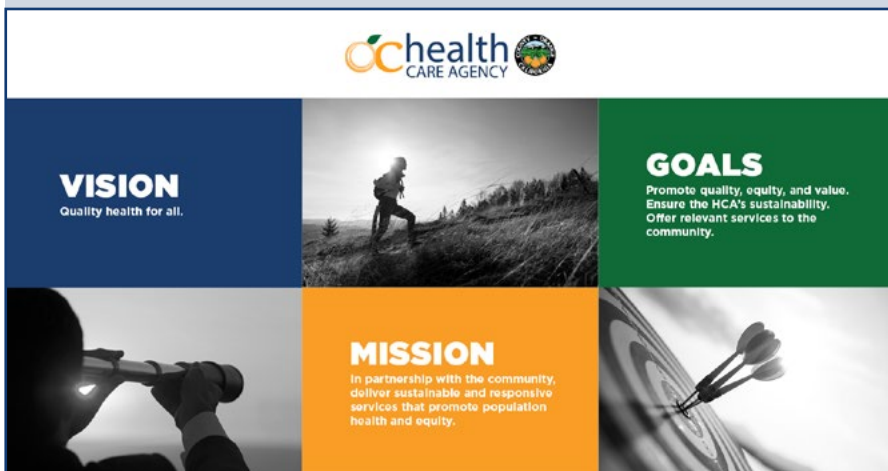
among those we serve.

As highlighted in the July 2021 issue of the What's Up newsletter, the OCEM spotlights social and health disparities in Orange County neighborhoods across multiple dimensions. The interactive map visualizes Orange County into 580 census tracts and displays the scores from the Social Progress Index (SPI), CDC Health Indicators, and population demographic data as well as overlays additional information that can be customized for a variety of different use cases.

The OCEM is available for free for anyone to use. Start exploring this new tool today and learning more about your neighborhood by visiting www.OCEquityMap.com. (For an instruction manual on how to use this new tool, click [here](#). Workshops will also be available in the near future.)

Mission and Vision Artwork

Be on the lookout for the Agency's new Mission and Vision artwork, coming soon to your HCA building! From seniors to minority groups, to the mentally ill, to the homeless and the incarcerated, our efforts are truly directed toward helping our community achieve maximum population health and equity. If you missed it, you can learn more about our Agency's new Mission and Vision by watching this [video](#).



Connect with Us



The **What's Up** newsletter is created and distributed monthly by HCA Communications. We welcome your ideas, input and/or insight into HCA people and programs. To contribute, comment or connect please email us at hcacomm@ochca.com or call (714) 834-2178. Thank you!

Peer-to-Peer

continued from page 1

HCA, Mary said she enjoys everything she does here. "I love my job! I'm happy to have found the right opportunity and the right time to join the HCA. I've felt at home from day one and I'm honored to be a part of a team that makes a difference. I consider myself extremely blessed to perform the duties in my role, work with wonderful people whom I admire and respect, and finish each day with a sense of contribution, pride and satisfaction. My most favorite aspect is hearing the personal success stories and challenges people have overcome with the help of our services. That's the best feeling in the world. To have been, even in a small way, part of changing someone's life for the better is priceless."

Mary's work at the HCA was recognized last year with a SOAR Award (Service and Outstanding Achievement Recognition) for Outstanding Achievement in large part for her work on the Provider Outreach Event in 2019. "That was a huge undertaking and I loved it. The success and positive feedback from that event was very rewarding. I don't shy away from hard work, it actually inspires and fuels me, so I'd have to say I'm proud of my work ethic and positive energy to keep moving, learning, and growing."

And Mary had to be reminded about the SOAR Award when she provided information for this article. "My girls were like, "Are you kidding me, you talked about that event for six months non-stop. You loved doing that event to the point of being annoying and were so excited about the SOAR, how could you forget?" I guess I'm getting old."

Mary said she is passionate about her daughters and helping them create their own unique and successful paths in the world. She is also ready for any new adventures. "I love spending time with my huge extended family, being by the water, glamping, hiking, painting, and making sure I live each day to the fullest."