




# What's



FEBRUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!



## Director's Message

Dear OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Team,

It has been just a little over two years since we confirmed our first COVID-19 case in Orange County. Sadly, to date, we have reached two grim milestones, with over 500,000 Orange County (OC) residents having tested positive and the virus having claimed over 6,000 precious lives. I am thankful for all of you who have been proactive to protect one another throughout this pandemic, by getting vaccinated and boosted, getting tested to support early detection and containment of the disease, and exercising all the non-medical precautions such as masking, safe distancing, and proper hand-hygiene, to keep one another

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## Peer-to-Peer

Contributor: **Julia Mayuga**,  
Communications Intern

# Ha Thuy Nguyen

"I have the best job in the world! Being a nurse is something I'm very proud of and working with Correctional Health Services (CHS) is a humbling yet rewarding experience." For more than 30 years, in public and private health care settings, Peer-to-Peer recipient **Ha Thuy Nguyen**, Supervising Comprehensive Care Nurse, Juvenile Health Services (JHS), has dedicated herself to serving others. "There are many aspects of my job that I enjoy. I enjoy working with kids, dedicated nurses, and doctors and of course having the support from CHS, JHS and County of Orange partner agencies is much appreciated."

Ha currently serves as a nurse supervisor at the Orangewood Children and Family Center (OCFC). The unit she's assigned to specializes in assisting youth groups in medical and mental health needs. Ha is a mentor for fellow nurses and leads the nursing staff, helping to establish protocols and procedures, and has often worked on the front line during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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# EVERYONE COUNTS OC

Volunteers can still sign up for the 2022 Point In Time (PIT) Count. The biennial event takes place in Orange County (OC) from Monday, February 21 through Thursday, February 24. There are shifts in the mornings and evenings each day where teams of volunteers deploy into each city to canvass the area and survey individuals experiencing homelessness. Volunteers are also needed in deployment centers.

The PIT Count provides vital information that helps the County of Orange and the Orange County Continuum of Care better understand homelessness in the community and guides the response to homelessness in OC. The 2022 PIT Count will provide us with information regarding:

- Number of people experiencing homelessness in OC
- Locations of where people stay within the county
- Demographics of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, including number of Veterans, Transitional Age Youth (ages 18 to 24) and Seniors (age 62 and older)
- Number of people affected by physical or mental health concerns or disabilities

This information, which volunteers, nonprofits, government agencies, businesses, faith groups, and elected officials come together as a community to gather, helps the organizations working to address homelessness in OC identify which services are needed, identify trends and changes in demographics over time and decide how best to work together to collaboratively solve this complex social issue.

For more information and to volunteer please visit:  
[www.everyonecountsoc.org](http://www.everyonecountsoc.org).

EVERYONE COUNTS IN ORANGE COUNTY.

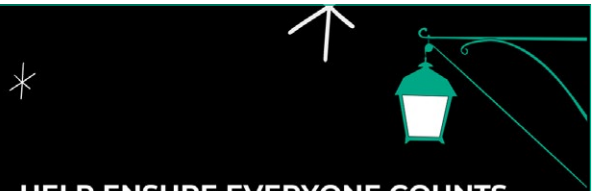


**EVERYONE  
COUNTS**  
2022 Point In Time

Orange County Point In Time Count

**New Event Dates:  
February 21-24, 2022**

[www.everyonecountsoc.org](http://www.everyonecountsoc.org)



**HELP ENSURE EVERYONE COUNTS  
IN ORANGE COUNTY.**

Sign up to volunteer at the Orange County  
Point In Time Count.

Morning & Evening Shifts Available.

**New Event Dates:  
February 21-24, 2022**

[www.everyonecountsoc.org](http://www.everyonecountsoc.org)



[WWW.EVERYONECOUNTSOC.ORG](http://WWW.EVERYONECOUNTSOC.ORG)



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## Director's Message

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safe. These ways of fighting COVID-19 may no longer be new to us but remain essential to our hope for breaking out of the pandemic.

Wearing a mask indoors while you are at work and in public, regardless of your vaccination status, continues to be a requirement by the State of California until at least February 15, 2022. The science shows that masking truly adds an extra layer of protection by stopping the virus from getting into the air if you are infected and from potentially breathing in the virus from the air. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommends that you wear an N95 mask or the most protective mask that fits well and can be worn consistently. You can find additional information on effective types of masks and respirators on the CDC's website by clicking [here](#).

This month, we look forward to conducting the County of Orange Point In Time (PIT) Count. The PIT Count, as you

may know, provides vital information that helps us better understand and inform our response to homelessness in the community. Originally scheduled for last month, this effort is now planned to take place February 21-24. Your help is still needed to support with canvassing of communities and surveying individuals experiencing homelessness as well as assisting in the deployment centers. I encourage all of you to consider volunteering your time in this effort; you can learn more about the PIT Count and how to volunteer by visiting [everyonecountsoc.org](http://everyonecountsoc.org).



Stay Well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clayton Chau MD, PHD". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned over a white background.

Dr. Clayton Chau, MD, PHD  
HCA Director and County  
Health Officer

# HCA TOWNHALL

THURSDAY  
02/24/2022  
3:00 P.M.



Did you miss last month's OC Health Care Agency (HCA) All Staff Town Hall? You can view recordings of past events by visiting the [HCA Town Hall webpage](#) on the HCA Intranet. You can also download a copy of the "Town Hall Wrap" which offers key information and resources based on the Town Hall discussion as well as questions and comments submitted by staff.

Join us for the next event! The Town Hall takes place on the 4th Thursday of each month at 3 p.m. Be on the lookout for a calendar invite and Zoom link from **Dr. Clayton Chau**, HCA Director and County Health Officer.

*Do you have a question or topic of interest for the next Town Hall? Send an email to the HCA Town Hall inbox at [HCATownHall@ochca.com](mailto:HCATownHall@ochca.com) before the next virtual meeting on February 24, 2022.*

*Questions should be specific to topics being presented at the Town Hall and appropriate for a global audience. Any personal questions should be directed to your assigned Human Resources Employee Relations Analyst.*



# OC Links <sup>24/7</sup>

**855-OC LINKS**  
**(855-625-4657)**

**Behavioral Health Services Line**

## **“Shout Out”** to OC Links Staff for Serving 24/7

The OC Health Care Agency (HCA) is proud to recognize and thank the teams and staff who have been involved in the integration and corresponding increased level of service carried out this past year by the OC Links Behavioral Health Services Line. Since January 2021, OC Links has been serving Orange County (OC) for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by providing information, crisis identification and mobile field response!

The 24/7 commitment through OC Links is the result of a collaboration among several teams and staff in Mental Health and Recovery Services (MHRS) starting with the integration of the Adult and Older Adult Behavioral Health (AOABH) and Children and Youth Behavioral Health (CYBH) Crisis Assessment Teams (CAT). Also integrated are the Psychiatric Emergency Response Teams (PERT), Outreach and Engagement (O&E), and the Crisis Stabilization Units (CSU). “The goal of integrating the OC Links call number for these teams was to create an improved experience for the community when calling for

behavioral health crisis support or outreach and engagement services during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said **Dr. Clayton Chau, HCA Director and County Health Officer**. “Thanks to the great collaboration and hard work of all the MHRS teams and staff involved, we’ve created an efficient, clear and accessible process for our community members and partners.”

OC Links originally started in October 2013 and provided information and referrals to MHRS services that are available for all OC residents; the phone line and chat feature were available during normal business hours. OC Links utilizes Navigators, who are behavioral health professionals, to provide information and linkage to any of the MHRS programs, via telephone and chat. Callers can be potential participants, family members, friends, law enforcement, other first responders, providers, or anyone seeking behavioral health resources and support. OC Links stepped up to 24/7 service because of the COVID-19 pandemic as HCA leadership recognized

the increased need to respond and make MHRS services available, no matter the time or day. This 24/7 service became a reality with short notice and while recruitment for OC Links has been ongoing, we want to acknowledge the CAT teams as well as the existing OC Links staff who have really stepped up to make sure this line is answered around the clock. It's the collaboration and professionalism of all the teams and staff to provide 24/7 service for OC Links that the HCA recognizes and honors!

"I am so appreciative of how these teams have pulled together to make the OC Links 24/7 line a reality for our community," said **Dawn Smith**, Division Manager, CYBH. "This has taken an intentional effort and many hours of staff time, with CAT and OC Links staff working additional shifts when needed. This would not have been possible without the dedication of all staff involved."

"One great thing about our integration is knowing that there is one number the community can call for any behavioral health needs," said **Crystal Swart**, CYBH CAT Clinician. "It has also helped us become more aware of all the behavioral health programs the County of Orange offers, including adult resources."

"This has been a unique, complicated and challenging time," said **Ashley Hutton**, AOABH Service Chief I. "The teams have worked cooperatively and tirelessly in developing and implementing an efficient and effective system."

OC Links looks forward to continue meeting the overwhelming and growing community demand for behavioral health services in an evolving landscape. Training, consultation, and collaboration with all levels of programming from direct service staff to program administrators, have contributed to the successful integration of OC Links, CAT, and O&E. If you or someone you know ever has a need, you can call OC Links 24/7 at (855) 625-4657. Your call or chat just might be answered by **Maite Sbabo**, OC Links Navigator, who wants you to know the MHRS team is ready to help. "OC Links is a collaboration among agency programs to provide an efficient delivery system of care for better client outcomes."

## Peer-to-Peer

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"My job is to ensure that we are staffed adequately to coordinate many services for the youth housed at OCFC and most importantly to provide the best care for the youth we serve." Her colleagues describe Ha as, "enthusiastic, passionate, and energetic in her work." Her commitment to mentoring her staff brings them a sense of pride which has been recognized by medical doctors and administrators. In her Peer-to-Peer nomination submission, Ha's colleagues said, "It's a pleasure to recognize the quality of work, dedication, and values Ha brings to the OC Health Care Agency and those around her. Ha has shown her commitment to her job as a mentor and appreciates the efforts of her nursing staff at the OCFC." Ha is quick to return the praise, "I'm proud to say that at the OCFC, we have a great team of nurses. They show up every day to work and they support one another. They find creative ways to make things work and they truly care about the youth."

Ha grew up in Saigon, Vietnam, and emigrated to the United States in 1975 as a war refugee. After arriving in Minnesota, her family moved to Orange, California in 1977. Ha obtained her license as a Registered Nurse from Saddleback College and earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from Cal State Fullerton. She spent about a decade working at OC Global Hospital before joining the HCA in 1998. "I joined the HCA because I was looking to expand my nursing experiences and I was fortunate to begin working in JHS."

During her free time, Ha enjoys traveling and hiking the National Parks. "My other interests include gardening, cooking, Zumba, and most of all, hanging out with family and friends. Finally, my motto in life is: 'Say what you mean and mean what you say.'"



# Supporting the Mental Health of Orange County (OC) Youth through the Connect-OC Coalition



The Connect-OC Coalition (Coalition) is a Community Networking project aimed at supporting the mental health of youth ages 16-24 years. “Connect-OC’s goals are to foster community collaboration, empower teens and young adults, break the stigma surrounding mental illness and substance use disorders and increase access to care,” said **Dr. Veronica Kelley**, Chief of Mental Health and Recovery Services (MHRs). “The Connect OC Coalition provides a unique opportunity for OC youth to be involved in some great projects and feel empowered in taking charge of creating a new narrative for mental health and wellness which includes recovery from substance use and misuse.” Information on those opportunities is available on the Connect-OC website: <https://www.connect-oc.org/coalition>.

Connect-OC partners with local college campuses and community providers who work in the area of mental health. The Coalition builds success said **Dr. Bhuvana Rao**, Director, Office of Suicide Prevention (OSP). “Through fruitful discussion and aligning existing efforts, the Coalition connects the mental

health community in Orange County, fosters collaboration, expands referral pathways and bridges the gaps in mental health services for teens, young adults and their families.” The Coalition hosts community events on relevant mental health topics, sends a bi-monthly newsletter that spotlights young adult voices in OC, and has an active social media presence. “The Connect-OC website includes a comprehensive Resource Directory for mental health and support services as well as an updated calendar that captures mental health related events and programming happening countywide,” said **Rebeka Sanchez**, Health Program Specialist, OSP.

Connect-OC also hosts a monthly coalition meeting that brings together more than 100 mental health providers and agencies, colleges and universities, and mental health peer leaders and advocates dedicated to improving the system of mental health care for the Transitional Age Youth and Young Adult (TAY/YA) population in OC. Each month the Coalition hosts a panel discussion on different topics related to TAY mental health. Most recently, a panel discussed the



topic of Faith Communities and TAY Mental Health Support. Among the panelists was **Deana Helmy**, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, MHRS. "This was a great opportunity to reach a diverse group of young people and share the message that it is ok to ask for help," said Deana. "By presenting in this setting, we were able to highlight that our shared humanity transcends faith lines – that no matter which faith we identify with, we can all play a role in destigmatizing mental health, promoting self-care and supporting one another."

In addition to the Connect-OC website and events, you can find more ways to get involved by following the Coalition on Instagram and Twitter (@connect\_oc), on Facebook (@ConnectOCCoalition), and on YouTube (search "Connect-OC"). You'll also find many wonderful success stories on the website. The project is implemented by Partners4Wellness and funded by the OC Health Care Agency, Mental Health and Recovery Services, Office of Suicide Prevention through the Mental Health Services Act/Prop. 63 funding.

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# 10 Tips for Healthy Relationships

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This month we celebrate Valentine's Day, and in the spirit of the focus on relationships we offer some tips from Amherst College on creating and maintaining healthy relationships, whether they be friendships, work and family relationships, or romantic partnerships. Healthy relationships have been shown to increase our happiness, improve health and reduce stress. Studies show that people with healthy relationships have more happiness and less stress.

1. Keep expectations realistic.
2. Talk with each other.
3. Be flexible.
4. Take care of yourself, too.
5. Be dependable & trustworthy.
6. Fight fair.
  - Cool down before talking
  - Use "I" statements
  - Use clear and specific language
  - Focus on the issue at hand
  - Take accountability for mistakes
  - Recognize that some problems are not easily solved
7. Be affirming: follow a 5:1 ratio of positive to negative interactions or feelings to express warmth and affection.
8. Keep your life balanced.
9. Understand that it's a process.
10. Be yourself!



Contributor: Behavioral Health Training Services  
Newsletter

For more please visit: [Amherst College](https://www.amherst.edu)



# SOAR Award Recipients

*Service and Outstanding Achievement Recognition*

October - December 2021



Lawrence Gan  
Correctional Health  
Services



Roland Tabangin  
Finance & Admin  
Services



Tammi McConnell  
Medical Health  
Services

## **NEW DIRECTOR** of Office of Care Coordination

Contributor: **Julia Mayuga**, Communications Intern



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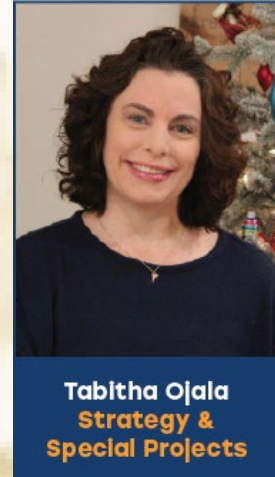
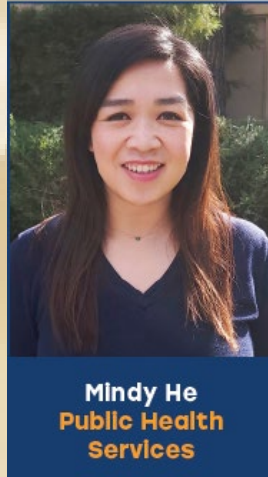
“Housing is a right and it is nearly impossible to meaningfully address any other presenting problem in life (i.e. significant trauma, mental illness, substance use, health, etc.) without a safe home.” **Douglas “Doug” Becht** has followed this philosophy, while creating recourses to improve the response to homelessness. “Homelessness is a systemic issue that can be solved,” said Doug. “Through my career I have seen how housing can transform people’s lives and be the springboard to addressing other areas, such as mental and physical health, substance use, mending of family ties, etc.”

Doug recently accepted the position of Director of the Office of Care Coordination (OCC) after serving as Acting Director. He joined the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) in 2020 as Director of Operations for OCC. He and his



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.

The fourth quarter cohort of SOAR recipients for October-December 2021 were recently recognized at the HCA's All Staff Town Hall on January 27, 2022 and are featured on the SOAR Employee Recognition Wall on the second floor at the HCA Headquarters through the end of March. You can learn more about our SOAR Awardees by clicking [here](#).



family made the move to Orange County (OC) from New York where he oversaw homeless outreach teams in the Bronx and served as an Assistant Vice President at a nonprofit organization where he oversaw shelters and street homelessness in Brooklyn, Queens, and Midtown Manhattan. What prompted his move west? "The potential to be a part of significant change in Orange County through addressing homelessness," said Doug. "That change not only includes the potential to end homelessness for anyone experiencing it but to be part of the positive outcomes that addressing homelessness has for a community as a whole."

Serving the homeless is similar on both coasts said Doug. "People experiencing homelessness, regardless of where they are, generally have similar trauma, disabilities and barriers that they are experiencing; it is the community around them and how that community works with them that makes the experience of homelessness different in any two areas. Through my work in both Orange County and New York City, I can say both communities are dealing with significant homeless issues and both communities are

passionate and dedicated to addressing it."

Since joining the HCA, Doug has developed policies and executed the County of Orange's (County) approach to addressing homelessness in OC communities. Doug has also led the County's data integration project called the Care Plus Program which he procured and administered over 40 contracts with nonprofit agencies to address homelessness in OC.

Doug currently resides in OC with his wife and two boys (ages 3 and 4). The year-round sunshine and shorter commutes have allowed Doug's family to spend more time together. "We both couldn't be any happier with our move and feel more fortunate to raise our kids in Orange County. The ability for our kids to enjoy the outdoors 365 days a year and for their parents to be home more, due to a significantly shorter commute, is priceless for us."

Please join us in welcoming and supporting Doug in his new role!

# Farewell & Best Wishes

from and to

## Dr. Jeffrey Nagel

*(After more than three decades with the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Dr. Nagel announced his retirement. HCA Communications asked him to share his thoughts about his time with the County of Orange.)*

When I started with the Health Care Agency over 31 years ago as a psychologist working at Juvenile Hall and Orangewood Children's Home, I could not have anticipated or fathomed the different positions I would eventually hold, the great people I would get to work with nor the difference that we individually and collectively had on our community and individuals we serve. It is with gratitude that I retire: for the partnerships I have had inside and outside of the HCA that have positively defined public service.

As I get ready to leave, I can recall many things that we have accomplished together. Thank you for your



passion and creativity in solving difficult problems. These past two years have been particularly challenging, and it is remarkable how we responded as a system. We outfitted staff with laptops and offered telehealth and telephonic services, learned how to conduct business on video platforms, extended additional supports into the community using CARES Act funding (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act), equipped our offices and staff with tools (masks, hand sanitizer, shields etc.), provided mental health support at

the vaccination super pods (point of dispensing sites), and continued to provide essential mental health and substance use services to the community. It has seemed like a whirlwind at times, but together we have done amazing things.

We also have many challenges in front of us. The

State Department of Health Care Services is fundamentally shifting how public mental health and substance use services are financed. You will be hearing more about [CalAIM](#) (California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal) in the coming months and years. The global pandemic has increased the demand for mental health and substance use services, but we also need to deliver services through the lens of population and health equity. We successfully stood up the first Be Well Campus in Orange, and a second larger campus in Irvine is in the planning stages. I am confident that we will solve these challenges with the same passion and success as those in our past.

People have asked me what I will do in retirement. While I will certainly do more bike riding, gardening, cooking, fishing, hiking, and singing, I am a public servant in my heart of hearts. I have several projects that I will be involved in working to build housing units, working with refugee families, and teaching in the community. I also have some opportunities to do some mental health related work, so I may continue to cross paths with some of you. I hope that is true.

When I used to drop my son off at school, I would tell him three things each day: be good; learn lots; have fun. This applies to us as well. Be good: character matters; do your job with integrity. Learn lots: have intellectual humility and curiosity; continue to learn daily how to improve what you do and how you can serve better. Have fun: knowledge without passion is a recipe for difficult work. If you are passionate and have fun in your work, you will be more creative, energetic, and effective. Thank you again for all you do – day in and day out – we have much to be proud of.

Farewell, and best wishes for the New Year.



**VISION**  
Quality health for all.

**MISSION**  
In partnership with the community, deliver sustainable and responsive services that promote population health and equity.

**GOALS**  
Promote quality, equity, and value.  
Ensure the HCA's sustainability.  
Offer relevant services to the community.

## 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 [hcaomm@ochca.com](mailto:hcaomm@ochca.com) or call (714) 834-2178.  
Thank you!