

Director's Message

Now that COVID-19 vaccines are being deployed and more are on the way, I wanted to address just how important it is that OC Health Care Agency (HCA) staff, and other health care workers, be ready to get a vaccine when they are available. There are a lot of questions about the vaccines and I'd like to answer a few for you.

How do you assure or what do you say to staff who have questions about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines?

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are both being administered under a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). The

... continued on page 3

“Most Influential” in Orange County



Dr. Clayton Chau
HCA Director and County Health Officer



Jason Austin
Director of the Office of Care Coordination

OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Director and County Health Officer **Dr. Clayton Chau** and Director of the Office of Care Coordination (OCC), **Jason Austin** are recognized as two of the 100 Most Influential Orange County (OC) residents for 2020 by the OC Register. The newspaper solicits nominations from its readers for the list which is made up of people who, “truly made a difference this year.”

Dr. Chau shared his story of coming to the United States as a 15-year old Vietnam War refugee and rising to the top of the HCA. He told the

paper why he came to work at the HCA, “I looked at it as an opportunity to pay back this country,” Dr. Chau said. “I’m grateful for the life that this country has given my family, all my siblings. We got an education; we’re professionals.” You can read the entire article on Dr. Chau [here](#).

Jason was recognized for becoming Director of the OCC during the pandemic and overseeing Project Roomkey and Project Homekey which put at-risk homeless individuals in hotels and motels. You can read more [here](#).

FEATURED ARTICLES

- Mobile Field Hospitals. 2
- 5 Things You Need to Know 4
- Be Well Orange Campus to Open 5
- Office of Population Health and Equity 6
- Zest for Health 8

MOBILE FIELD HOSPITALS



1

The OC Health Care Agency (HCA) deployed mobile field hospitals (MFHs) to local hospitals to support the Orange County (OC) health care system as it responded to a surge in COVID-19 patients. “The HCA has 8 MFHs which can support 200 patient beds,” said **Dr. Carl Schultz**, Medical Director, OC Emergency Medical Services (EMS). “Planning for their deployment includes distributing them countywide on an equitable basis,” Dr. Schultz said.

MFHs are capable of expanding current hospital capacity by adding additional beds to existing facility grounds. They are housed in large, semi-type trailers and contain

heavy duty canvas tents with hard flooring and temperature-controlled units equipped with running water, toilets and showers, generators and lighting, as well as air purifiers. MFHs can be configured in a myriad of footprints and sizes.

“The MFHs can be used for numerous COVID-19 mitigation activities such as expanding emergency department capacity and med-surge or specialty care unit beds, mass vaccination facilities, and more,” said Dr. Schultz. “Each identified hospital is charged with using the MFH in a manner that best suits their facility.”



2



3

The following OC hospitals have requested this resource from the HCA and have already activated their surge plans:

- Fountain Valley Regional Hospital — 25 beds
- Los Alamitos Medical Center — 25 beds
- University of California, Irvine — 50 beds
- St. Jude Medical Center – 50 beds

1. University of California, Irvine (UCI) leadership, OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Emergency Medical Services (EMS) staff and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) officials conducted a walk-thru/site visit of the recently deployed Mobile Field Hospital (MFH) on UCI property on Monday, December 28, 2020. **2.** Exterior view of the MFH. **3.** Patient rooms within the MFH showing Personal Protective Equipment and pharmaceutical carts.

Director's Message

continued from page 1

safety criteria for issuing an EUA are identical to those for approval of a Full Biologic License for a vaccine, except the follow-up period after vaccination was shortened to two months, rather than the usual six months. However, the vast majority of adverse reactions to a vaccine occur within the first days and weeks after vaccination. Subjects in the vaccine trials continue to be followed in order to monitor any adverse events that happen after two months. In addition, every person vaccinated is followed by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) using its V-Safe system to monitor any potential adverse effects. Serious negative reactions to the vaccines that have happened so far have occurred in people with previous allergies to vaccine ingredients, and procedures for administering the vaccines require that the recipient be observed for 15 minutes following administration and for 30 minutes if they have any history of severe reactions to injections or anaphylactic reactions to other allergens.

Do the COVID-19 vaccines change someone's DNA or inject the virus into people?

There are a lot of myths about messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines, of the type used by the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines. Contrary to these myths, you are not putting a virus in your body. Neither vaccine contains either live or killed COVID-19 virus. You cannot get COVID-19 by being vaccinated. Neither does the mRNA vaccine have the ability to insert itself into the human cell nucleus. It cannot alter your DNA. In fact, the vaccine simply instructs your body to make a specific protein (the spike protein) found on the surface of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. After making the protein, your body destroys the mRNA, which does not mix with your genetic code or stay in the body.

There are side effects of getting vaccinated, but reactions severe enough to cause someone to miss work or visit a doctor, occur in only a small percentage of recipients and consist of headaches, muscle pain and fatigue. The most common side effect is soreness at

the vaccination site lasting several hours.

How does getting a COVID-19 vaccine help others and why is that important?

Many vaccines reduce the risk of transmitting a disease as well as protecting the person who is vaccinated. While scientists are hopeful that the mRNA vaccines reduce transmission, it is not yet known if that is the case. That is one reason why people who are vaccinated are asked to continue to wear a mask and practice social distancing—to protect others.

What else do staff need to know or what do you want to say to staff about getting vaccinated?

The HCA recognizes that many of our staff are being asked to provide vital services in situations that increase their risk of exposure to COVID-19. While wearing a mask, handwashing, and social distancing continue to be the primary means of avoiding exposure, the clinical studies show that getting vaccinated will reduce your risk of becoming ill from COVID-19 by 95% and becoming severely ill by more than 99%.

There are also a couple of websites I'd like you to check often. The first provides COVID-19 Facts and Resources COVIDVaccineFacts.com. The second provides information on the timeline for distributing COVID-19 vaccines in Orange County <https://occovid19.ochealthinfo.com/phased-approach-vaccine-distribution>. These websites are updated by our staff as information becomes available.

Best to you and yours this New Year!



Dr. Clayton Chau
HCA Director
County Health Officer

5 Things You Need to Know About:

1 Othena, powered by CuraPatient, is the only digitally encrypted and [HIPAA](#) (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) compliant app that provides guided navigation before, during and after the COVID-19 vaccination--available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean or Simplified Chinese.

2 Created in conjunction with leading health care experts and public health agencies, Othena connects people with COVID-19 testing and vaccine providers and equips individuals with decision tools and scientific information on COVID-19 vaccines. The app will include a chat box, as does the Othena website. Users will be able to find the nearest COVID-19 test center and there will be a library of resources as Othena is built out.

3 Othena matches people to vaccines and notifies users when it is their time to get a vaccine using a data-driven decision process developed in accordance with the criteria established by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine [here](#).

VACCINE HESITANCY

Survey

A majority of Orange County (OC) residents, 58%, said they would get the COVID-19 vaccine if offered to them. That's one of the findings of a COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy survey conducted by the OC Health Care Agency (HCA). Among those most willing to be vaccinated for COVID-19 in OC are retirees, students and people who are disabled or unemployed.

The survey tallied results from more than 26,000 OC residents and includes responses broken down according to ethnicity, age group, occupation, city of residence and education level. The common theme among all groups is the safety of a vaccine. Among those who said they would be vaccinated, a common response was willingness to get the vaccine in order to help protect others.

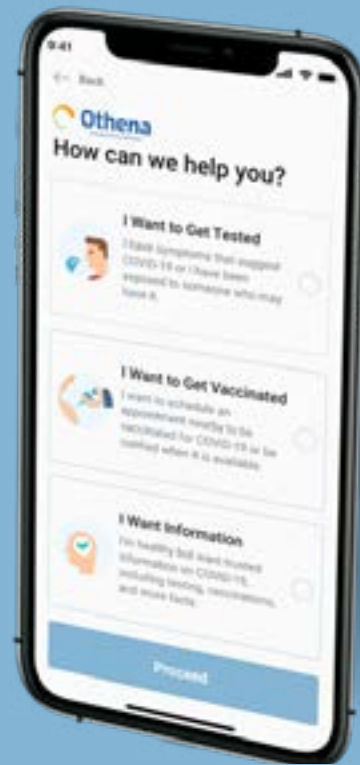


Those least willing to be vaccinated include first responders, construction workers and residents of Anaheim, Costa Mesa and Santa Ana. You can read the survey results [here](#).

Othena App

4 Othena allows users to register their demographics and health assessment and enables individuals and families to virtually plan and track their vaccination process. Additional features of Othena include appointment scheduling, reminders and a digital version of their vaccination record card.

5 The Othena app is expected to be available for download in January. You can learn more about Othena at www.othena.com. Othena has been deployed in the vaccination of personnel with the OC Fire Authority. You can find news articles that reference Othena [here](#).



BE WELL ORANGE CAMPUS TO OPEN

The New Year marks a new beginning in providing optimal mental health services in Orange County (OC) with the scheduled opening of the first Be Well OC campus in January. The campus, at 265 Anita Drive in the City of Orange, was developed in public-private partnership, and sets the cornerstone in building a world-class system of mental health care, and a new reality for the community with the vision that everyone in OC who needs care, gets care.

“The campus represents the OC community coming together, literally under one roof, to solve a problem together,” said **Dr. Jeffrey Nagel**, Deputy Agency Director, Behavioral Health Services. “The partnership involved in Be Well OC and this campus, has created an opportunity for cooperation and a new determination

to serve the people we are called to serve.”

The opening of the campus and its services are needed more than ever according to **Dr. Clayton Chau**, OC Health Care Agency Director and County Health Officer. “This movement began well before the COVID-19 pandemic,” Dr. Chau said. “Now with the pandemic, mental health and substance use services will be needed even more than before.”

The Be Well OC Coalition plans a Zoom meeting January 21, 2021 to provide information about the 60,000 square foot facility and its offerings. A virtual ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled on January 13, 2021. For the most recent Be Well OC Coalition meeting on the campus and agenda click [here](#).



OFFICE OF POPULATION HEALTH AND EQUITY

*In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and recent county- and nationwide social unrest, the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) formed the Office of Population Health and Equity (OPHE) to develop policy measures that combat structural and social injustices in health care that are experienced by Orange County (OC) residents. The HCA announced **Hieu Nguyen** as Director of the OPHE in early December. Hieu provided some of the vision for the OPHE, and shared a bit more about himself, in this interview.*



What is the OPHE tasked with doing?

In the immediate term, the OPHE will provide its support with COVID-19 responses and efforts to ensure equity through a data- and community-driven approach. Throughout the past several months, we have learned many lessons that will inform our direction as we develop a health equity lens. One long-term plan for the OPHE is to develop the equity infrastructure for the HCA and its functional areas by implementing practices to assist and ensure that equity is at the forefront of our planning, implementation, and decision-making processes.

How do you start going about fulfilling those tasks?

While we now have an Office of Population Health and Equity, it is by no means the task of the OPHE alone to achieve the goal of health equity. It will take everyone's leadership at the HCA to learn, investigate, and develop the skills and tools necessary for us to tackle challenges together. While the HCA recognizes that it plays a significant role in advancing health equity in OC, our spheres of influence and impact are not enough. For real progress towards health equity to happen, we need to continue leveraging existing partnerships and building new alliances with public-private sectors. Health equity will only be achieved when we come together as a collective with the common goal that everyone in OC deserves a just and fair chance of reaching their full health potential.

Why is this important and why now?

The COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating impacts

on society forced us all to recognize the deadly consequences of health and social inequities. People of color, especially the Latinx and Black communities, lower-income, elderly, and other vulnerable populations, die from COVID-19 at higher rates than their counterparts, and this trend will continue or worsen if we do nothing. This reality IS preventable when we have equity in health and health care, so we need to act now to prevent this from happening again when the next pandemic occurs. The HCA sees its role and recognizes that it will not fully actualize its vision of "Quality health for all" and mission of "Delivering sustainable and responsive services that promote population health and equity," until we address the root causes of health inequities. In talking about health equity, **Dr. Clayton Chau**, HCA Director and County Health Officer, reimagines that, "Sometimes the cure for diabetes isn't more doctor office visits, it's not more medication, but actually a park for them to exercise, healthy food for them to have access to."

What will it take for the OPHE to bring about change?

The humble ask becomes for everyone to approach this work with an open mind and heart with a commitment to learn and change. The challenging work ahead will test us individually and as an Agency, yet it is socially, ethically, and morally necessary. I ask that we all be patient with each other while navigating through sometimes familiar, sometimes uncharted territories. Sometimes, those moments of discomfort bring forward profound realizations that transform into positive movement.

I believe the focus on population health, health equity, and health disparities has been a long-standing part of health care conversations. I do think that there's a renewed focus and commitment to take action and to re-examine systemic contributors to inequities, intentional or not. Also, health care systems are now doing the actual work of advancing health equity via data and authentic community engagement. More broadly speaking, I believe health care now sees its role in supporting achieving equity—socially, structurally, institutionally.

I wish to thank everyone for their leadership and tireless work during this pandemic. I recognize that your efforts and work have paved the way for the OPHE and the work we will accomplish. I look forward to partnering up with everyone at the HCA to do this work together through collaboration and alignment across service and functional areas. We all have roles to play in bringing forth population health and equity as a conduit in achieving our Agency's mission and vision. Together, we can and will get through this pandemic stronger, unified and invigorated.

What prompted, inspired or led you to apply for this job and ultimately to come work at the HCA?

This is my second time working for the HCA. I was a social work intern in 2007 and became an employee in 2008 until 2014 when I left to go work for L.A. Care Health Plan. My experience at the HCA was formative in shaping my professional approach and commitment to the community. In all honesty, I didn't think I would come back to the HCA until the opportunity for the OPHE

opened and was encouraged by community members to apply. I applied for the position because of my experience in social justice, community organizing and health care management. Equity is on all our minds, and the time seems right to move beyond conversations and invest in resources to do the work. I appreciate the opportunity to be back with the HCA family and serve our community again. I am grateful for the leadership and tireless work everyone has put into and continues to for our community's health and well-being.

What is your philosophy or guidance when it comes to serving?

I am committed and connected to OC and our communities. My family and I immigrated to the United States in 1993 and found our second home away from home in Little Saigon, OC. I went to elementary, intermediate and high school in Garden Grove and attained my graduate degrees at California State University, Long Beach and Brandman University-Chapman System. All that to say that I'm invested in giving back and doing my part in OC. I'm also inspired by all the young people and young people of color demanding that we envision a more just and equitable OC.

What do you do when you're not at work?

When not at work, I spend most of my time with my husband and three animal babies. I grew up with a large family of 10, so quality time with my family is essential. We typically like to gather for food, board games, and just loud fun. I enjoy doing creative projects, photography and getting involved in different social justice causes in my personal time.

HEALTH EXPERTS TALK VACCINES

The Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines that have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) do not use the live virus that causes COVID-19 and they cannot give someone COVID-19. In addition, the vaccines, which are mRNA vaccines, do not affect or interact with a person's DNA. Those were two of the many comments presented by **Dr. Clayton Chau**, OC Health Care Agency (HCA) and County Health Officer, when he spoke during a forum hosted by the OC Business Council (OCBC) entitled "Health Experts Talk Vaccines."

"We have to ensure everyone has equal access to the

vaccines," said Dr. Chau. He said vaccines would be distributed in four phases. "I have a dream that we will celebrate Independence Day with a 'big bang' and we can go back to close to normal, IF we can get a majority of our Orange County citizens vaccinated." Towards that goal Dr. Chau announced, "We are embarking on Operation Independence - getting our folks to vaccination by July 4, 2021." He said the HCA would work with health experts in OC to get residents vaccinated but said it will take a community effort with decisions being made together.

You can see the OCBC presentation in its entirety [here](#).



For Health



One Pot Vegetarian Stew

Makes 8 servings - 1½ cups per serving.

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp** vegetable oil
- 1 medium** onion, chopped
- 1 medium** green bell pepper, chopped
- 3** cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 (14½-ounce) can** diced tomatoes
- 2 cups** fresh or frozen corn
- 1 (14½-ounce) can** low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 tsp** chili powder
- 2 tsp** dried oregano
- 1 (15-ounce) can** black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15-ounce) can** red beans, drained and rinsed
- 8 tbsp** fat free sour cream (optional)

Directions:

- 1.** In a large pot, heat oil over medium heat.
- 2.** Sauté onion, bell pepper, and garlic until tender, about 5 minutes.
- 3.** Add tomatoes, corn, vegetable broth, chili powder, oregano and beans. Stir well.
- 4.** Cover and simmer until thoroughly heated, about 15 minutes.
- 5.** Spoon into 8 bowls. If desired, top each bowl with one tablespoon of fat free sour cream and serve with whole grain rolls.

January brings on a winter chill and the want to take on the comfort of a warm blanket, pajamas and “feel good” foods. Tempting it may be to grab a bag of chips, a box of cookies or candies to comfort you – opt for healthier options that can still give you that comfort. Here are three tips to help you stay healthy this year.

- 1.** Eat a healthy balanced diet. Focus on variety, amount and nutrition. Eating a variety of foods will help you get immune boosting nutrients like Zinc and Vitamins C & D.
- 2.** Practice mindful eating. Are you eating when you aren’t even hungry? Ask yourself if you are eating to satisfy your hunger or to reduce your stress.
- 3.** Eating together, healthier together. Taking the time to sit down with household members, can be comforting in itself. Talking and listening to each other while sharing a healthy meal like this month’s recipe, can mean a lot.

Try this delicious [one pot vegetarian stew recipe](#) to warm up your winter evening.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



In anticipation of future needs, our Virtual Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC) is currently pre-registering volunteers interested in assisting government staff with COVID-19 vaccinations at Points of Distribution (POD) sites this year. The County of Orange is looking to establish two teams of volunteers willing to serve in these crucial volunteer roles:

Medical Trained Volunteers

- Medical licensed volunteers able to assist with vaccine preparation and distribution.
- Currently licensed: Physicians (MD, DO and MD/DO students), Nurses (RN, LVN and Nursing Students), Physician/Nursing Assistants, Dentists, Medical Assistants, Paramedics and EMTs.

General Support Volunteers

Volunteers able to assist in logistical support roles such as:

- computer data entry
- registration
- traffic
- other duties as assigned.

Volunteers, we need your help. In anticipation of future needs, please register at:
<https://volunteers.oneoc.org/special-event/a1821000007VTf2>

Google Chrome is the best platform for access



Leveraging Your Benefits



There's a Library of Benefits

County of Orange employees have access to a free digital resource called myStrength to help take care of mental health and well-being. myStrength offers 24/7 support from the privacy of your computer or mobile device and includes:

- Learn techniques to reduce stress
- Track your mood online
- Manage depressive or anxious thoughts
- Access and share inspirations
- Get help on the go with the mobile app
- Explore hundreds of articles and activities

You can learn more about myStrength through these videos:

Overview: <http://view.vzaar.com/13670463/player>

Anxiety: <http://view.vzaar.com/12558016/player>

Depression: <http://view.vzaar.com/13641222/player>

Stress: <http://view.vzaar.com/12415921/player>

Chronic Pain: <http://view.vzaar.com/8170027/player>

Sleep: <http://view.vzaar.com/11030069/player>

To check myStrength:

1. Log in to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) website www.resourcesforliving.com, username: Orange County ca, password: eap.
2. Click on the myStrength link on the home page.
3. Click to go to the myStrength sign-up page. Access code: Orange County ca.
4. Complete your personal profile and a brief wellness assessment.

Information in "Leveraging Your Benefits" is to make you aware of benefits available to you as a County of Orange employee. This is not an endorsement of any program.



MISSION

In partnership with the community, protect and promote the health and safety of individuals and families in Orange County through:

- Assessment and planning
- Prevention and education
- Treatment and care



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 hacomm@ochca.com or call (714) 834-2178. Thank you!