

Director's Message

Dear OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Team,

Public Health Week (PHW) took place April 4-10 with the theme, "Public Health is Where You Are." Throughout April, there are opportunities to learn about how our Agency supports public health in our community, including a special newsletter, Lunch and Learn sessions, social media posts, and conversations about public health on our bi-weekly talk show, Your Health Matters OC. Visit our HCA Intranet for complete events and resources related to Public Health Week: intranet.ochca.com/phs/public-health-week-2022/

Health Matters: The month of

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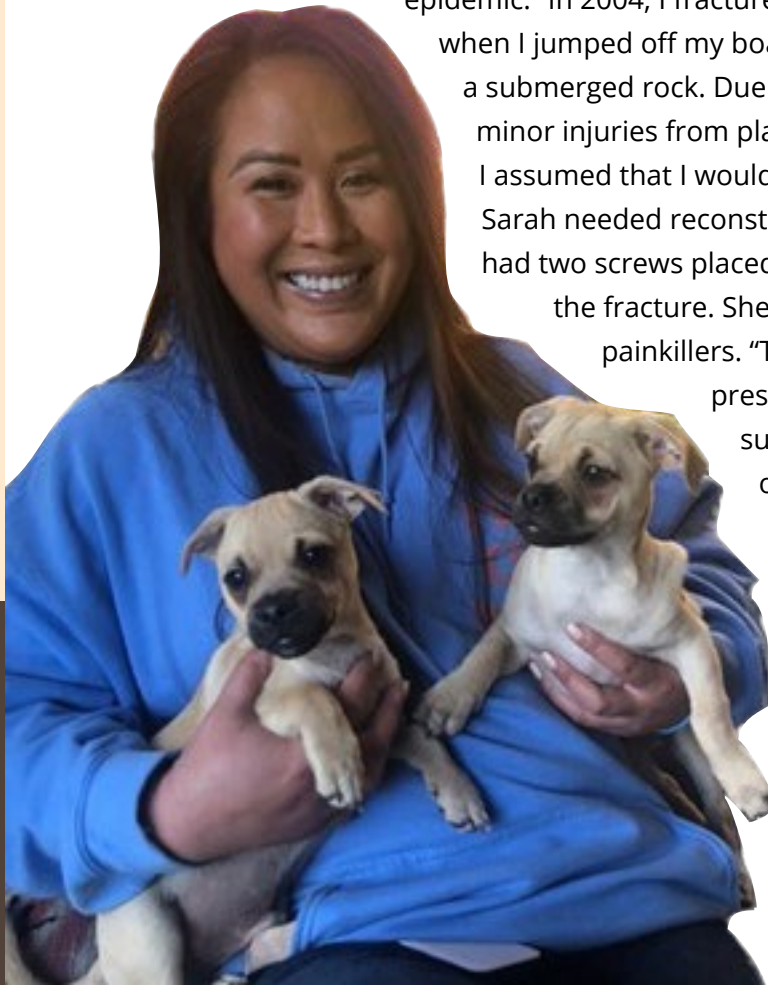
Peer-to-Peer

Sarah Kim Phan

Contributor: **Julia Mayuga**, Communications Intern

"If someone asks what I do for work, I respond by saying that I work at an amazing Health Care Agency and at a clinic 'Close to my home and heart.'" Peer-to-Peer recipient **Sarah Kim Phan**, Mental Health Worker II and Peer Support Specialist in Mental Health and Recovery Services said she is proud to be in a career that resonates with her professionally and personally. "I tell people that I'm part of a team that supports others who may be struggling through the same things that I have, and I encourage clients to believe that recovery is possible."

Sarah knows recovery is possible because she is a survivor of the opiate epidemic. "In 2004, I fractured my ankle surfing when I jumped off my board and did not see a submerged rock. Due to having previous minor injuries from playing elite volleyball, I assumed that I would be fine." However Sarah needed reconstructive surgery and had two screws placed in her ankle to fuse the fracture. She was prescribed painkillers. "The doctor only prescribed me the post-surgery painkillers one or two times. I was naïve to the addictive qualities of the medication. Back then opiate use was not as common and widely discussed.



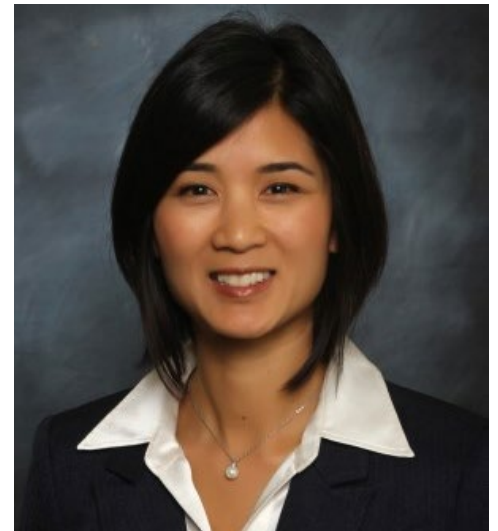
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FEATURED ARTICLES

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NEW COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER

DR. REGINA CHINSIO-KWONG



After serving as Deputy County Health Officer since November 2020, **Dr. Regina Chinsio-Kwong** aka Dr. CK has been sworn-in as Chief Medical Officer and County Health Officer. The Orange County Board of Supervisors appointed Dr. CK in early March. OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Director **Dr. Clayton Chau** praised the appointment. "I was pleased when the exceptionally talented and qualified Dr. CK joined the HCA and I'm pleased she is taking on the responsibilities of County Health Officer. Dr. CK has been a force for good during the COVID-19 pandemic while also addressing health disparity, communicable disease control and population health management. I have no doubt Dr. CK will continue serving all of Orange County (OC) with excellence."

"I am humbled to take on this role," said Dr. CK. "I have worked closely with Dr. Chau and the entire HCA team, in meeting the challenges of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. I am honored to work with such a talented and dedicated team here at the HCA and

will work to continue to strengthen the HCA in making more positive impacts on health outcomes for all those we serve in Orange County."

Dr. CK said she is appreciative of all the words of support and encouragement. She also said her main goals are clear: **1)** Focus on equity and addressing

the health needs of the most vulnerable in the community; **2)** Building and strengthening collaborative partnerships between the HCA and the community to address health needs as well as social determinants of health for all; **3)** Helping our community heal and recover together; **4)** Readiness/prepared-

ness for response to emergencies; **5)** Rebuild Public Health to support previously mentioned priorities; and **6)** Support modernization of technology/data gathering/utilization/dashboards/research to support previously mentioned priorities to assist with quality improvement with all initiatives.



Dr. Regina Chinsio-Kwong being sworn in as County Health Officer by Clerk of the Board Robin Stieler.

Director's Message

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April is also an opportunity to recognize several additional health observances, including:

- **Alcohol Awareness Month:** Excessive alcohol use is a leading preventable cause of death in the U.S., shortening the lives of those who die by an average of 29 years. Take time to understand the health effects of excessive alcohol use [here](#). Support loved ones by encouraging moderation or abstinence when it comes to alcohol use.
- **National Minority Health Month:** A time to raise awareness about health disparities that affect people from racial and ethnic minority groups. Our Office of Population Health and Equity continues to lead efforts to address health inequities and disparities in Orange County through the Equity in OC Initiative and Taskforce. Learn more at equityinoc.com.
- **Autism Acceptance Month:** Autism spectrum disorder is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges. Take time to recognize the needs of people on the autism spectrum and their families. Webinar events are available throughout the month to explore matters related to autism [here](#).
- **National Occupational Therapy Month:** Occupational therapists play an important role in helping people participate in daily living or live better with injury, illness, or disability. A special thank you to our occupational therapists in the California Children's Services program!
- **National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day:** Recognized on April 10 to raise awareness of the impact of HIV and AIDS on young people. Learn more about the Week of Action leading up to National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day by clicking [here](#).

Culture Matters: April is also Diversity Month. Our workforce is a great representation of the rich cultures, backgrounds and traditions that fill our world. This month, we recognize the following cultural observances:

- **Ramadan:** To my Muslim colleagues at the HCA, Ramadan Mubarak! Ramadan is observed by

Muslims as a holy month of fasting, introspection and prayer. More information about how Ramadan is observed throughout this month can be found [here](#).

- **Southeast Asian New Year:** Many countries in Southeast Asia celebrate their new year this month, including Thailand (April 13-15), Sri Lanka (April 13-14), Cambodia (April 14-16), Laos (April 14-16), and many others. Wishing a wonderful celebration to all who celebrate their new year this month!
- **Arab American Heritage Month:** An estimated 3.7 million Americans have Arab roots with ancestries traced to 22 countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Arab American Heritage Month allows us to celebrate the culture, heritage and contributions of our Arab American colleagues and neighbors to our community. Learn more [here](#).

Here are some additional health and cultural observances to note for the month of April, click on each link to learn more:

- **April 7:** [World Health Day](#)
- **April 10-16:** [STD Awareness Week](#)
- **April 15:** [County Health Day](#)
- **April 22:** [Earth Day](#)
- **April 24-30:** [Medical Lab Professionals Week](#)
- **April 24-30:** [World Immunization Week](#)

Health and culture matters here at HCA. Thank you team for your support!

Stay Well,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clayton Chau MD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Dr. Clayton Chau, MD, PhD, MASL
HCA Director

DEPUTY COUNTY HEALTH

OFFICERS

The OC Health Care Agency (HCA) has five Deputy County Health Officers (DCHO): **Dr. Chun Chiang**, Correctional Health Services; **Dr. Patty DeMarco**, Mental Health and Recovery Services; **Dr. Michelle Laba**, California Children's Services; **Dr. Carl Schultz**, Emergency Medical Services; and **Dr. Matthew Zahn**, Public Health Services. **Dr. Clayton Chau**, HCA Director, praised their experience and professionalism. "Each DCHO is uniquely talented and dedicated and I am pleased each is with the HCA. The role of the DCHO is to provide leadership to our divisions and each is a leader and a public health servant." He also said, "Working closely with our County Health Officer, **Dr. Regina Chinsio-Kwong (Dr. CK)**, this dynamic team will ensure each HCA service views our patients' and clients' needs from a whole person, whole community, and whole population perspective." Dr. CK said she looks forward to continuing the collaboration of the team which has been created under the leadership of Dr. Chau. "We are fortunate to have each DCHO as a part of the HCA. The DCHOs are committed to serving HCA's divisions and our community."



Dr. Patricia De Marco Centeno

Joined the HCA in 2021.

Expertise: Psychosomatic Medicine/
Consultation-Liaison

Dr. De Marco is a double-board certified Psychiatrist with fellowship training

in Consultation-Liaison; the branch of psychiatry that takes care of medically complicated patients. She has additional training and experience in the areas of Reproductive Psychiatry, Women's Mental Health, and Mental Health Program implementation.

On working at the HCA: "During my career, I have been fortunate to practice medicine in both public and private health care systems. By working in a variety of settings, I recognize health disparities exist across all sectors, especially after the pandemic. The HCA is uniquely equipped to lead cross-sector collaboration to meet the mental health needs of our most vulnerable patients."

As a Deputy County Health Officer: "I am eager to be part of this momentum and contribute in meaningful ways to this collective vision of improving access to care."



Dr. Michelle Laba

Joined the HCA in 2021.

Expertise: General pediatrics with an interest in pediatric chronic disease management

"As a pediatrician, I have overseen the clinical, business, and administrative sides of medicine, but the most important aspect of

medicine I have enjoyed is the human side. There is no greater joy than being given the opportunity to play a part in making a positive impact on a child's life."

On working at the HCA: "I have been fortunate to have worked in county health care agencies since completing pediatric residency training almost 25 years ago. I am drawn to health care systems that focus on community health as well as individual health. The HCA is a place where I can make a difference in the lives of some of the most medically vulnerable children in our community."

As a Deputy County Health Officer: "Being a Deputy County Health Officer provides me the unique opportunity to harness the resources from within our Agency and to grow relationships with community partners to advance health care access and quality for children with acute and chronic complex medical needs. It also affords me the ability to learn from and collaborate with regional and statewide entities whose work is focused on advocacy and policy related to this unique patient population."

Dr. Chun Chiang

Joined the HCA in 2006.



Expertise: Board certification in both Family and Addiction Medicine.

"Board certification in family medicine allows a physician to manage a wide variety of health conditions, which fits well into the correctional health setting. Addiction medicine is a needed specialty in corrections, as many of our patients deal with substance use disorders."

On working at the HCA: "The population in corrections is the only population in this country which has a legal right to health care. What we do is very deliberate in making sure we provide that care according to state and federal laws."

As a Deputy County Health Officer: "It takes time for doctors new to the field of corrections to understand the complexities in caring for this population. I'm thankful to see this field develop and believe this title will help elevate, and with that, impact health care standards in corrections."

Dr. Carl Schultz

Joined the HCA in 2017.



Expertise: Disaster medicine.

"This includes all forms of weapons of mass destruction. My research interests include preparation and response to natural disasters, such as earthquakes, as well as threats from radiation and emerging infectious diseases."

On working at the HCA: "After training for 30 years in the medical aspects of disasters, it's been an emotional experience to be directly involved in a disaster. I often alternated between the incredible responsibility of making decisions that directed our disaster response and the tragic consequences of the pandemic on our citizens."

As a Deputy County Health Officer: "I think this gives a great opportunity to provide expertise in disaster medicine and emergency medical services to our public health operations. It will enhance credibility to outside organizations and their representatives when I am asked to provide information related to evolving health events in Orange County."

Dr. Matthew Zahn

Joined the HCA in 2012.



Expertise: Pediatric Infectious Disease.

"There is nothing that is as emotionally satisfying as the connection you have with a family when you help a child get better."

On working at the HCA: "What I love about public health is how special Orange County (OC) is and the diversity in OC. We have many different communities with different needs. I'm inspired each day by learning what makes each community tick and how we can make public health work in each community."

As a Deputy County Health Officer: "We follow the science when it comes to disease and outbreaks. That involves many things including discipline and having an academic thought-process. This status elevates and reaffirms the importance the HCA places on all we do in public health."

Excels Through COVID-19

Contributors:

Stephanie Plowman, EHS Director
Karen Lawson, Public Health Nurse
Karen Simerlink, Public Health Nurse

Employee Health Services (EHS) is a dedicated team, that has provided occupational health services and support to our County of Orange (County) family throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. "EHS has worked tirelessly to meet the challenges presented by the pandemic," said **Steve Thronson**, Medical Health Services Chief.

EHS is led by Director **Stephanie Plowman**, along with a core team of seven hardworking and forward-thinking staff. "With the spike in COVID-19 cases during the first months of the year, EHS has now processed more than 7,100 cases since the beginning of the pandemic," said Stephanie. "During this most recent surge, the call to action was answered by an inspiring group of OC Health Care Agency (HCA) volunteer professionals assembled from the HCA's very own programs including California Children's Services, Whole Person Care, and Mental Health Recovery Services." Stephanie said the HCA volunteers along with the County Executive Office's Human Resource Services, "served as a motivated and dedicated group which was needed



to supplement the team of registry and contact tracing staff that were already helping with this surge." She said EHS provided virtual training sessions and utilized instant messaging through Microsoft Teams to coordinate all 40+ team members during and after normal business hours, seven days a week, unifying an effective COVID-19 response for County employees.

EHS continues to innovate. A new electronic health record system called Cority was launched at EHS during the height of the pandemic. Working closely with the Cority software consultant, EHS has added functionality, automation, analytics, dashboards, and creative tools to manage incoming data. Cority has been a useful tool for County Agencies and Human Resources partners as EHS developed innovative and dynamic approaches to improve case processing, workflow and response times.

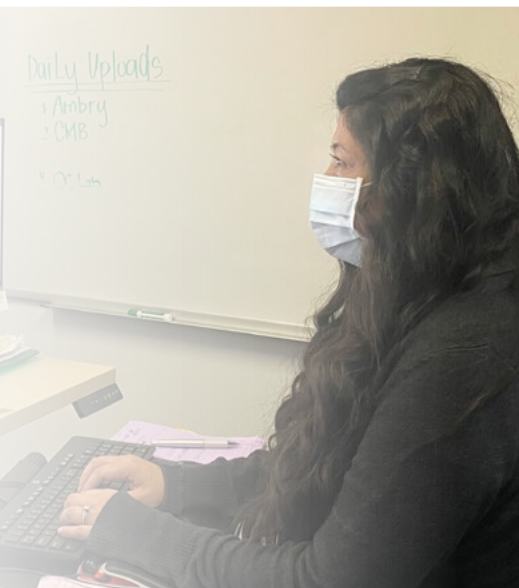
EHS has compiled impressive numbers while serving the County family. Public Health Nurse (PHN), **Ria Patterson**, led the way on reporting and analytics as EHS facilitated more than 48,000 employee COVID-19

!! During the Omicron surge EHS continued to shine with professionalism, dedication and hard work when another wave brought illness to our community and was mirrored in the workforce. !!

Steve Thronson, Chief of Medical Health Services

tests through County sponsored testing. PHN **Karen Lawson** supported the contact tracing team that was working 7 days a week when COVID-19 cases were escalating. PHN **Karen Simerlink** spearheaded the flu vaccine campaign to provide 2,400 employees with needed protection, while long time PHN **Terri Williams** coordinated daily operations. The EHS office support staff led by **Jennifer Sitterding** developed a real time call log, which enabled **Rosie Fonseca** and **Shawna Poland** to organize the hundreds of phone calls and emails EHS was receiving during this time. The diligence and commitment of each member of Employee Health Services, support from volunteers and extra help staff, was the only way for this small team to meet the unique and unparalleled challenge of our time!

- ← Rosie Fonseca checking in County of Orange employee during a drive through clinic.
- ↓ Ria Patterson coordinating intake and data entry.



Join Us For

Your Health Matters **OC**

Did you miss the latest episode of the OC Health Care Agency's talk show, "Your Health Matters OC"? Your Health Matters OC is a bi-weekly talk show featuring Agency Director **Dr. Clayton Chau**, County Health Officer **Dr. Regina Chinsio-Kwong** and other health care professionals discussing various health topics that impact our community. Check out the recent episodes below:



Episode 1 - A Conversation About COVID-19

(featuring **Dr. Matthew Zahn**, Deputy County Health Officer)
Click [here](#) to watch.



Episode 2 - COVID-19 & Its Impact on Mental Health

(featuring **Rachael Ferraiolo**, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Service Chief)
Click [here](#) to watch.



Episode 3 - Colorectal Cancer

(featuring **Dr. Patrick Koo**, Gastroenterologist, Providence/ St. Jude)
Click [here](#) to watch.

Your Health Matters OC airs every other Tuesday at 6 p.m. on the HCA's [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) pages. Be sure to join us for the next episode – check the schedule by visiting <https://www.ochealthinfo.com/about-hca/directors-office/your-health-matters-oc>.



Got questions for the next episode? Email your questions in advance or during the show to yourhealthmatters@ochca.com.

SOCIAL WORK Month



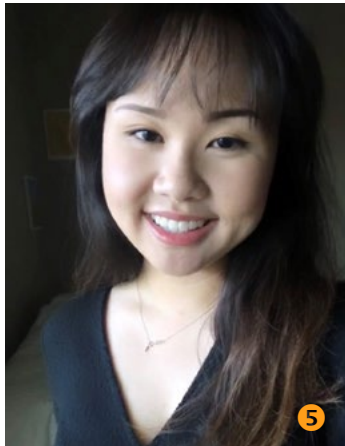
OC Health Care Agency (HCA) social workers, “are an important part of what we do at the HCA,” said Agency Director **Dr. Clayton Chau** as the Orange County Board of Supervisors (Board) recognized March 2022 as Social Work Month. Dr. Chau invoked the theme of Social Work Month, “The Time Is Now,” while expressing his gratitude for social workers. “The Time Is Now for social workers because we have so much need for the work social workers do in our community. It’s important work in providing stability and recovery for the people we serve in Orange County (OC).”

HCA social workers from Mental Health and Recovery Services (MHRS) and Correctional Health Services (CHS) were invited to attend the Board resolution presentation. **Jessica Barron**, Behavioral Health Clinician II (BHC) with MHRS attended. “I feel honored and privileged to be a social worker and to be able to step into people’s lives during some of their most challenging times. It is incredible to witness people’s resilience and be part of their healing journey. During the past four years I’ve been part of the HCA Prevention and Early Intervention’s Orange County Parent Wellness Program and I am grateful to work alongside amazing individuals dedicated to supporting our community.”

Also attending the Board presentation was **Mimi Lai**, BHC with CHS who shared what being a social worker means. “I love how the people we meet are unique and individual, requiring a creative

response and out-of-the-box problem-solving to address their struggles and hardships. It is meaningful to be in a profession where we see, hear, and nurture those who may be otherwise ignored. Not all days are good ones, and on the days where we feel defeated, frustrated, challenged, baffled, and even exasperated, we are so fortunate to have colleagues who support and cheer us on. It is sometimes difficult to see progress or the fruits of our labor, but we continue to contribute to making our community better. It makes me happy and proud to be a Social Worker. “

“The social work profession is amazing,” said **Karmen Wiseman**, a BHC with CHS. Karmen said the recognition for Social Work Month is great! “Social workers are change agents and I love working with the incarcerated population. For most patients, being incarcerated is their lowest low, so I am very big on self-esteem building, affirmations, and positive self-talk. To work with this population, you have to have a passion for it and you have to be authentic because they know when you are not. I show up as my authentic self and allow my patients to be their authentic self in our sessions. I’m not here to judge, I am here to assist in the facilitation of change. Understanding the stages of change, and that some patients are re-incarcerated multiple times before they are ready to accept program linkage is important. I think I get more excited than my patients when they accept services and



1. Left to Right: Supervisor **Andrew Do**, First District; **Charles Barfield**, OC Employees Association; **Jessica Barron**, MHRS; Chairman **Doug Chaffee**, Fourth District; **Dr. Clayton Chau**, HCA Director; **Mimi Lai**, CHS; Supervisor **Donald Wagner**, Third District; and Supervisor **Lisa Bartlett**, Fifth District. **2.** **Leslie Rankin**, MHRS **3.** **Alyssa Vergara**, MHRS **4.** **Karmen Wiseman**, CHS **5.** **Era Ko**, CHS

we have a successful program linkage for release. I literally do a happy dance! The social work profession is far from easy, but it is very fulfilling when we are able to positively impact our patient's lives."

Leslie Rankin, a BHC II, has worked with the Crisis Assessment Team (CAT) for more than 10 years. "Having assessed more than 2,000 clients, many of whom were in a severe life-threatening crisis, I've spent more work hours in the field and with police than an office chair. Part of my job is to help families navigate a mental health system that can seem complicated. I've also focused much of my time helping hundreds of police officers learn more about mental health issues so they can better serve their communities. That no two days are the same has been one of my favorite things in my time with CAT. The past two years have been challenging to say the least, but the work always remains rewarding. As social workers, we adapted and continue to adapt for the benefit of our clients and community."

BHC II **Alyssa Vergara** with MHRS said, "It is a pleasure and privilege to serve. There are a lot of systemic challenges when it comes to providing mental health services to underserved populations. Oftentimes a client can take one step forward and then, it seems, two steps back. However, being a social worker affords me the ultimate framework with which to help my clients, as it's all about person in environment and internal versus external locus of control. I thank my stars every day that I went this path and got my master's in social work, as my degree and career have given me the tools that I need to help my clients realize that they can empower themselves and advocate for others, just as I have."

And **Era Ko**, BHC I with CHS said she sees the impact social workers have. "Though the work can be incredibly challenging at times, I am on this path because I believe that freedom can be found within concrete walls and metal bars, light can be seen in sunless spaces, and hope can be birthed amidst pain and brokenness. I am thankful to be here first as a recipient of and then as a witness to the profound effects of another's kindness and grace."

To all HCA social workers: Thank you for your dedication, commitment and professionalism serving Orange County.

Celebrating PUBLIC Health WEEK

PUBLIC HEALTH IS

April 4-10, 2022

Every year, Public Health Week (PHW) is observed during the first full week of April. In celebrating PHW, we as an Agency embrace this year's theme "**PUBLIC HEALTH IS WHERE YOU ARE.**"

During each day of PHW, OC Health Care Agency (HCA) staff had the opportunity to attend the following Brown Bag Lunch and Learn sessions highlighting the important work of various Public Health Services teams to support public health in the community:



April 4: Family Health Clinic and You, What You Should Know

Dr. Jeffrey Vu, Division Manager of Clinical Services, discussed the services, programs and staff at the Family Health Clinic and the vision forward to continue meeting the needs and bridging gaps to serve our diverse community.

April 5: Bridging Nutrition Insecurity Gaps

Maridet Ibanez, Program Manager of Nutrition Services, talked about the Health Promotion and Community Planning team and how Nutrition Services currently helps to bridge the gap and combat nutrition insecurity in our community.



April 6: Front and Center Protecting Orange County

Josh Jacobs, Communicable Disease Control Division (CDCD) Division Manager; **Dr. Megan Crumpler**, Public Health Laboratory (PHL) Division Manager; **Dr. Matthew Zahn**, Medical Director; and **Eric Shearer**, CD Surveillance Manager, talked about the scope and depth of what the CDCD and PHL teams do to keep our community healthy and safe.

S WHERE YOU ARE



April 7: Leading with Compassion

April Orozco, Interim Division Manager of Community and Nursing Services (CNS), and **Cathy Martinez**, Administrative Manager II of the CNS Social Services Nursing Program, talked about the Comprehensive Health Assessment Team-Homeless (CHAT-H) and their efforts to assist those experiencing homelessness.



April 8: Public Health Hidden Warriors

Christine Lane, Director of Environmental Health (EH), and **Darwin Cheng**, EH Assistant Director, discussed how the EH team supports public health and protection of the environment one inspection at a time.

Did you miss a Lunch and Learn session during PHW? You can still celebrate PHW by watching a recording of each session on the HCA Intranet at: <https://intranet.ochca.com/phs/public-health-week-2022/>.

SERVICE AWARDS

2022 First Quarter Employee Service Awards (January 1 – March 31 Hire Dates)

Congratulations to the following staff for their years of service to the OC Health Care Agency and the County of Orange!

30 Years

Patrick Clark
Mai Tang

25 Years

Janene Bankson
Guadalupe Becerra
Luz Conde
Jinnie Kwak
Christine Lane
Michael Parra
Sandra Scott
Caroline Statzula

20 Years

Leeann Bailey
Zorina Catuna
Tanie Chiem
Lynette Ewing
Aileen Franzi
Marilyn Garcia
Andrew Hadden
Gloria Herrera
Elisa Kemmer
Maricela Lujan
Rosa Macias
Hung Pham
Eugenio Rodriguez
Fran Shapiro
Raquel Urday
Nhan Vo
Lesia Weinert

15 Years

Linda Aceves
Ken Alma
Kenneth An
Katherine Boelts
Jessica Bueno
Mark Delgado
Krutigna Desai
Hisham Elmishad
Leni Corazon Espiritu
Nancy Garcia
Ronnie Gassaway
Roberto Godinez
Norma Guillen
Olga Gutierrez
Cynthia Hernandez
Marisela Ibarra
Shirin Ihani
Alfred Marquez
Lynn Miles
Maria Victoria Mozo
Danny Nguyen
Tuan Nguyen
Maria Nicholas
Anabell Ochoa
Maryagatha Okpala
Diana Padilla
Sarah Pham
Kimberly Rangel
Natalia Surgent
Daniela Tabara
Christopher Terucha
Lana Urteaga
Brenda Villa
Guadalupe Villasenor
Darline Vo
Orlando Watson
Vicki Wheeler

10 Years

Christopher Goffredo
Susan Hoang
Romylin Laborete
Yihuan Lai
Kimberly Pickering
Catherine Shreenan
Maria-Teresa Thomas

5 Years

Katrina Barbosa
Huda Bayaa
Marybel Buchler
Jaime Bueno
Denisse Carrillo
Michele Cash
Vey Chen
Kristin Davis
Mario Fuentes
Marina Haroon
Linda Lenn
Marie Manarang
Maurice Ngo
Stephanie Nguyen
Jessica Reekstin
Arlene Rosa
Caitlin Van Wormer
Francisco Vasquez
Ryan Yowell

Peer-to-Peer... *continued from page 1*

As typical for opiate use progression, I built a tolerance to painkillers and sought to obtain more powerful opiates."

Sarah credits her recovery in part to the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Medicated Assistance Treatment (MAT) program. "I am proud to see that HCA offers MAT, as I am a firm believer it can help others overcome opiate misuse."

Sarah said her experience with substance use led to her involvement in mental health work and she uses her lived experience to become an ally when working with her clients. Sarah said her personal experience allows her to, "assist clients with exploring and meeting their recovery, dispel myths about what it means to have a mental health condition or substance use issue, and offer a level of acceptance, understanding, and validation."

Sarah serves in the Adult and Older Adult Behavioral Health South program in Aliso Viejo where she works with clients dealing with mental health and substance use. As a Peer Support Specialist, Sarah collaborates with the Care Team on plans for wellness and acts as an ally and inspiration for clients. She helps facilitate groups that focus on topics such as: "Letting Go," "Self Love," and "Self

Acceptance.” She also works with clients on personal budgeting and organizational skills. “The activities facilitate personal growth that improves client’s lives and mental well-being,” said Sarah.

Before joining the HCA, Sarah had already been serving in the mental health field. She worked as an Outreach Specialist for Goodwill Employment Works; as a ‘Promotora’ or outreach worker for Latino Health Access; she later joined Pathways with their Independent Living Skills program; then Telecare AOT as a Peer Recovery Coach. Along the way Sarah said she’s learned not to take things personally when working with clients. “Sometimes it can be tough when you wonder if something could have been done differently. But as a peer and survivor, I am fortunate to have surpassed a dark period in my life. I use that experience to have meaningful conversations to instill hope and empower clients to make change in their life.”

When she’s not at work Sarah enjoys skateboarding, longboarding, going to the beach, and rescuing puppies. After losing her 15-year-old dog, she adopted two brothers Bixby and Bugzy which are “Chugs” (Chihuahua/Pug mix), and gives her unconditional love. She also enjoys painting, crafts, and is looking to travel to Vietnam to visit family. (Sarah was born in Ohio after her parents emigrated to the United States from Vietnam while they were college students in the 1960s.) Sarah speaks English, Spanish and Vietnamese and wants to become fluent and provide more client support through language. In other words, Sarah wants to keep growing in her work and she’s thankful to be in a place where she can. “I just want to say from the bottom of my heart, thank you to my team which recognized me for this honor. I enjoy coming to work every day because of them. They support me, believe in me, recognize me, and inspire me.”



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 or call (714) 834-2178. Thank you!