




Director's Message

We welcome the month of May as Mental Health Awareness Month. This year's theme is Hope For Change. Change can mean something different for each one of us, and it takes time to fully understand and even appreciate how change impacts us and those around us. Being intentional in our hoping for change can mean reflecting on what we have learned from the recent past, connecting those insights to the present moment and being mindful as we prepare for the future.

How do we as a community move forward after a year underscored by uncertainties, challenges,

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Peer-to-Peer Patricia Perez

"When people ask me what I do, I proudly say "I am a Nurse!" and taking pride in what I do is how I can be of better service to others." April's Peer-to-Peer recipient **Patricia "Patti" Perez** said she joined the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) in 2016 to find her "niche" as a nurse. She worked as a nurse before joining the HCA and said she recognized the opportunities the County of Orange offered her to continue in her career calling. "The wonderful thing about nursing is there's an abundance of opportunities, and that has allowed me to be part of a variety of specialties. Before coming to the HCA I was a bedside nurse. I have worked in an Intensive Care Unit, Telemetry and Neuro/Stroke unit

to mention a few." But Patti said she found her niche with the 17th Street Testing, Treatment and Care Clinic where she is a Staff Nurse. "I believe I have been placed in a job where I feel I belong. I wear many hats as most nurses do. It is not easy to summarize, but duties can be as basic as taking vital signs, drawing blood, dispensing medication including injections to as complex as sending someone to the emergency department and providing education and comfort on what can seem to be at the time one of the worst days in a person's life. If I have to keep it short, I provide service with professional respect, dignified empathy and overall kindness."

Patti said she is proud of the collaboration involved with each patient

who is treated at the clinic. "I feel our clinic is very unique. We not only specialize in HIV/STD, but also serve as primary care for many of our CARE (HIV) patients.

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Addressing Health I

with Mobil



The OC Health Care Agency (HCA) has utilized mobile point of dispensing (POD) clinics since COVID-19 vaccines became available. The mobile pod clinics allow the HCA to reach vulnerable or specific populations with vaccines said **Dr. Clayton Chau**, HCA Director and County Health Officer. “Just like we did with testing, we use the mobile clinics to make vaccines more accessible,” said Dr. Chau. “Mobile pod clinics are one of the creative ways we partner with the community to meet the needs of those who for whatever reason, have difficulty obtaining a vaccine.”

The mobile clinics have been used for a variety of groups. For example: In March, mobile pod clinics were set up in partnership with five major Black churches. More than 500 people received vaccinations. Addressing hesitancy and equity among African Americans was recognized as a need early on in

the pandemic and leaders from the churches signed a letter in support of the vaccination effort.

In early April, the HCA held a mobile pod clinic for the transgender community at the 17th Street Public Health Services Clinic. About 250 people made appointments for vaccines at the clinic. One participant expressed thanks to the clinic outreach for providing a location where she and others would not face discrimination. The event garnered media coverage including this report from [KTLA](#).

Elderly residents from hard hit communities were also recently served via a mobile clinic organized in partnership with the Asian American Senior Citizens Service Center. One organizer said the group’s strategy to reach vaccine-hesitant people had been to offer shots to some of their volunteers, who then told their friends and neighbors. When the seniors saw

their friends getting vaccinated they felt more comfortable getting the vaccine themselves. Vaccines were administered in safe and familiar environments such as community-based agencies or onsite where these seniors live.

The HCA has also reached out to Muslim organizations, with the idea being to offer walk-up vaccinations near mosques during Ramadan. Offering vaccinations near a worship site would be convenient according to one Muslim group and would also help those who are older or less tech savvy who haven’t yet figured out how to register online.

“The mobile vaccination clinics are indispensable towards health equity and show the commitment by the County of Orange to ensure the overall health of our community,” said **Hieu Nguyen**, Director of Population Health and Equity. “In



Equity e Clinics

addition by tailoring mobile pods to specific communities, they also help overcome any barriers or concerns Orange County's diverse populations might have when it comes to getting a vaccine."

Going forward, Dr. Chau said the mobile POD clinics will continue to serve specific groups with the help of community organizations. "Although we have vaccination sites on church campuses and supermarkets, we still need to put more effort into our Latinx community," he said, "and obviously folks who are poor of any ethnic group – we want to make sure they have access to the vaccine."

1. Dr. Clayton Chau, (seated blue shirt), administering vaccines at Second Baptist Church, March 20, 2021. This clinic was in collaboration with five major Black Churches in Orange County. **2.** COVID-19 vaccination clinic with Alianza Translatinx at 17th Street Public Health Services Clinic, Santa Ana.



Director's Message

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illness, suffering, trauma and pain? Although we continue to struggle with the realities of the pandemic, we are also uncovering wisdom and strength in the midst of it all. We have seen extraordinary examples of inner strength, collaboration, innovation, and resilience from our health care workers, first responders, and community at large. Although we constantly faced unpredictable challenges, we kept moving forward by adapting to new circumstances, becoming stronger and more resilient along the way.

The month of May presents us yet another opportunity to support our mental health and that of our loved ones, coworkers and community as we begin to see light at the end of the tunnel. I encourage each one of you to take care of yourself. Eat healthy, exercise regularly, and engage in activities you enjoy. Make connections. Build supportive relationships with family, friends and loved ones. Find ways to support your community including volunteering your time.

Join me in embracing Mental Health Awareness Month by supporting the "Each Mind Matters" movement. Visit EachMindMatters.org to share your [story](#) or [pledge](#) one specific thing you can do to increase mental health awareness in your community. I also invite you to participate in the many [activities](#) planned this year to raise awareness about the importance of mental health, and to join millions of Californians in the Each Mind Matters movement by wearing the color lime green, the national color of mental health awareness. Wearing lime green is a great way to open an honest dialogue with family, friends, neighbors and coworkers about mental health.

These are all easy ways to show your support and empower those experiencing mental health challenges to get better. Each one of us can make all the difference in another person's life. Do it today!

Sincerely,

Dr. Clayton Chau
HCA Director
County Health Officer

Coming together as

One Team, One County

On December 31, 2020, the Incident Management Team (IMT) was activated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to coordinate a countywide operation to vaccinate all Orange County (OC) residents by July 4, 2021. This massive effort, known as Operation Independence, involves the collaboration of the OC Fire Authority (OCFA), the OC Health Care Agency (HCA), other County of Orange (County) and city departments, local agencies, and community partners to reduce and eliminate barriers to vaccine access, especially for the most vulnerable members of OC.

The IMT comprises various sections and units that contribute to the team's overall mission following the Incident Command System (ICS) model. ICS is a standard infrastructure set up to respond to major "incidents" such as natural disasters or terrorism events. ICS is uniquely applied in this situation to facilitate the widespread distribution of COVID-19 vaccines throughout OC through Point of Dispensing (POD) sites.

The IMT's Incident Commanders, **Margaret Bredehoff**, DrPH, Deputy Agency Director, HCA Public Health Services, and **Chief Mike Petro** of OCFA guide the overall operation by overseeing the development of strategies and tactics, assessment and use of resources, and delegation of authority and assignments to the various section leads. In the spirit of teamwork and solidarity, the major IMT sections collectively serve to accomplish the IMT's mission. These sections include:

- **Safety:** ensures all safety measures are in place for IMT staff, personnel and members of the public at the POD sites. Each POD site has a dedicated Safety Officer on duty during hours of operation to identify and address safety concerns and document POD site activities and unusual events.
- **Plans:** provides daily staffing support to the POD sites, organizes daily briefings which communicate the Incident Commanders' objectives. They also maintain accountability of all personnel operating at the IMT and POD sites and provide situational updates such as significant upcoming weather events, IMT structure changes, and pertinent COVID-19 information.
- **Logistics:** supports the IMT and POD sites with all logistical needs including food, supply, communications, ground support and facilities. They help equip team members with the tools and supplies they need



ty, One Mission

to accomplish their roles and support the operation.

- **Personnel:** gathers information on personnel requirements and builds and maintains staffing capacity at all POD sites. They coordinate closely with Operations, Logistics and Resource units to support the onboarding and scheduling of staff and volunteers as well as work closely with County employees, partner clinics, cities and contractors to address staffing needs.
- **Public Information Office:** works closely with the Operations Section on vaccine communication strategies, providing updated messaging resources for stakeholders and communicators countywide to assist with the public's questions and provide support for the Othena user platform. They also keep the public informed on relevant topics such as vaccine availability, eligibility, and POD operations through website and social media platforms.
- **Liaison:** serves as the point of contact for representatives of government agencies such as local, state, and federal jurisdictions, nongovernmental organizations, private sector and other cooperating agencies. One Law Enforcement Liaison Officer and one Fire Service Liaison Officer represent the IMT to speak on behalf of the Incident Commanders.
- **Finance/Administration:** oversees all financial and cost requirements of the operation and is currently

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1. Incident Management Team operations are too large to fit in one room or picture! **2.** (L-to-R): Jennifer Sarin, Director of Public Health Nursing; Blanca Franco, Public Health Nurse; and Lorena Hermogeno, Senior Public Health Nurse supporting County COVID-19 vaccination efforts with the Incident Management Team through training, education, quality assurance and staffing of point of dispensing clinical personnel. **3.** Dr. Margaret Bredehoft, Director of Public Health Services, and Chief Mike Petro, OC Fire Authority, lead the Incident Management Team as Co-Incident Commanders. **4.** (L-to-R): Nicole Garcia and Rachael Ferraiolo, Behavioral Health Services, Disaster Response; and Dr. Regina Chinsio-Kwong, Deputy Health Officer discussing the importance of behavioral support at the Super Point of Dispensing (POD) sites along with enhancements to the patient experience in the Observation Station of a Super POD.

Health Inspection

RIDE-ALONG

As a Registered Environmental Health Specialist over the past 13 years, **Lorena Nieves** has served a critical role towards protecting the health and safety of Orange County (OC) residents and visitors. Each day, she goes through her daily list of restaurants in her assigned district that are due for health inspections, shows up unannounced to each restaurant and carries out a thorough inspection of their kitchen and food operations.

“The restaurants pay for their health permits every year, and this is part of our program activities, to conduct a health inspection up to three times a year,” says Lorena. “As a health inspector, I want to make sure they are meeting our health standards in how they prepare food for their customers and keeping our public safe overall.”

Upon showing up to each restaurant for her inspection, Lorena waits in line like any other customer and then discreetly introduces herself to start the inspection. Among the many things she checks are the proper temperatures of the water as well as vegetables, meat and other perishable food ingredients;

adequate supplies at the hand washing stations and restrooms; cleanliness of the food contact surfaces; and how workers prepare food and wash their hands. She can also be seen checking every inch of the perimeter, below kitchen counters and behind shelving units, to make sure there isn't any evidence of insect or rodent activity, as well as educating the workers on proper food handling.

Inspections typically last 45 minutes to an hour, but could be much longer depending on the size of the restaurant and violations being documented. “Once the inspection is over, I have to decide whether to pass them, schedule a reinspection within one week or close their restaurant until they resolve their violations,” says Lorena. She goes on to say that closing restaurants are a difficult but necessary part of the work.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Lorena shares that one of the biggest challenges for her has been keeping socially distanced from others while conducting her inspections. “That can be a big challenge, especially when there



are many food operators working in a small space,” says Lorena. Other challenges have been educating workers on wearing their masks properly and operating at acceptable capacities under the State's COVID-19 guidelines. When restaurants are in violation of those guidelines, Lorena explains that she can only make observations and report major violations to the State, but does take the opportunity to educate them however she can.



“The pandemic has been tough for the restaurant owners and workers; I definitely feel for them,” says Lorena. “Some of them are just trying to stay afloat, but they still have a responsibility to keep the public safe when they are open. I want to be there to help them do that.”

1. Lorena checks the temperature of the vegetables. 2. Lorena inspects the kitchen perimeter for vermin. 3. Lorena prepares to sign off on a Pass certificate for a restaurant.

IT Security Do's and Don'ts

Working from home full or part-time has many logistical challenges. The OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Information Technology (IT) team offers some important rules to help guide you in safe IT security practices. The guidelines listed below apply to all employees, whether you are telecommuting or reporting to the office.



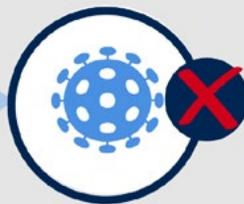
Don't Send Work Emails to Your Personal Email Address

The HCA's email guidelines prohibit employees from sending Protective Health Information/Personally Identifiable Information (PHI/PII) to their personal email accounts. This means, without limitation, you should not send County documents to your private email address to work on from home.



Do Delete Personal Email Addresses from Outlook

Delete any personal email address you may have in Outlook to prevent accidentally sending emails to employees or friends and family's private addresses.



Don't Look Up Your COVID-19 Results in the Electronic Health Record

Employees who have received a COVID-19 test through the Employee Health department should wait to receive results from Employee Health or the appropriate app. You should not use the electronic health record (EHR) to access your results.



Do Report Security Incidents

All HCA policies not in direct conflict with these guidelines are still in effect, including any PHI/PII breaches that occur at work or your telecommuting site. Please report incidents so that we can help you mitigate them by emailing: Securityincidents@ochca.com.

SOAR Award Recipients

Service and Outstanding Achievement Recognition

January -March 2021



Tim Sigafoos
Service Chief I



Michelle West
Comprehensive Care
Nurse II



Brittany Davis
Administrative
Manager I



Andrew Roberts
Emergency Medical
Services Specialist

Come Together as One Team, One County, One Mission

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working with the supporting agencies of the IMT and County Auditor-Controller's office to establish the process for claiming reimbursement funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

- Real Estate: secures leases, licenses and permits for the Super POD sites as well as mobile POD sites, also coordinates with the owners of the sites on additional support needed, such as tables, chairs or services. Real estate staff attend daily IMT briefings as well as site visits and other related meetings regarding real property necessary for IMT operations.
- Operations: ensures that all operational aspects of the incident are working correctly to meet the objectives identified by the Incident Commanders. This includes POD sites being staffed with the appropriate personnel including nurses, pharmacists, parking attendants, line monitors and leadership personnel to vaccinate to their maximum capacities and having the necessary support.

With Operation Independence now entering its fourth

month, the IMT has already outlasted the general response time to a crisis and constantly adapted to fluctuations in vaccine supply as well as eligibility guidelines from the State.

"Most IMT responses to crisis are to stabilize the situation which usually lasts six to eight weeks; the COVID-19 response has been measured in years!" said Dr. Bredehoff. "In addition, this is an entirely new pandemic which makes solutions and implementation also new. We don't have all the answers and are literally building the plane as we fly it. But the most pride in this county-wide effort is that we came together as ONE county with ONE mission. As a result, our communities have benefited with improved health outcomes, lower infection rates and, most importantly, a great experience for all involved in the vaccination process."

You can get a more in-depth look at the IMT in the March/April 2021 issue of the County Connection by clicking [here](#).

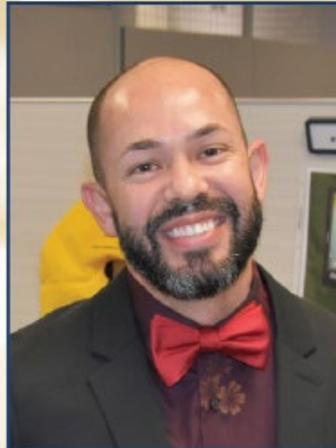
The OC Health Care Agency (HCA) supports and encourages employee recognition as an important part of its culture, in alignment with the HCA's mission, vision and goals. The Service and Outstanding Achievement Recognition (SOAR) Award has previously served as an annual celebration of HCA employees who have distinguished themselves in their work. Beginning this year, the HCA will be recognizing employees every quarter for the SOAR Award while also carrying on last year's theme, "Service and Compassion go a long way!"

One employee from each of the HCA's service areas will be honored for their leadership, excellence in service and commitment to promoting the health and well-being of our Orange County (OC) community. This year's first cohort of SOAR recipients for

January-March 2021 were recently recognized at the HCA's All Staff Town Hall on March 25, 2021 and will be featured on the SOAR Employee Recognition Wall on the second floor at the HCA Headquarters through the end of June. You can learn more about our SOAR Awardees by clicking [here](#).



Jenna Sarin
Director of Public
Health Nursing



David Sanchez
Senior Deputy Public
Guardian



Julie MacDonald
Health
Communications
Manager



Peer-to-Peer

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The challenge lies in being able to adapt to our unique environment and the special needs of our patients. I enjoy being part of a very supportive environment, working alongside a whole team of people that helps provide care to those who are not feeling well. It is a privilege to work here with my teammates and the people we serve. I am blessed to have so many wonderful people cross my path."

Patti and her family came to the U.S. from Mexico. She attended Santa Ana College across the street from the clinic and jokes she "likes to keep things very local!" When she's not at work, "I love spending time with my family. We can make any day fun so long as we're together. We like anything from bingeing on movies to being in the outdoors camping."

Patti also said she is very thankful for being recognized as a Peer-to-Peer recipient and "feels everyone should get a turn." She also said the recognition is very welcome after the past year dealing with the pandemic. "It goes without saying – this has made my year!! I don't want to sound like I am giving a speech at the Oscars, but wow...I have a feeling of joy and happiness knowing I am a valued member of this organization! I am humbled and it is truly an honor to be regarded as someone worthy of this acknowledgment."



Building Bridges to **Be**

During the week of April 5-11, the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) celebrated Public Health Week (PHW) with the theme, “Building Bridges to Better Health.” The theme recognizes that although the COVID-19 pandemic has caused us to be physically distant from one another, we have all continued to come together to keep our communities safe and healthy.

On Day 1, the PHW campaign kicked off with an email thanking staff and community partners for all of their hard work and contributions in combating the pandemic and delivering services to the community. The message was accompanied by a thank you video that can be viewed [here](#).

Days 2 and 3 brought spotlights to health equity and community partnerships, both major components of the HCA’s refocused mission to “deliver sustainable and responsive services that promote population health and equity in partnership with the community.” Achieving health equity entails removing obstacles that are systematic, avoidable and fundamentally unfair, that prevent population groups from reaching their full health potential. Community partnerships play a significant role

in helping our Agency in that effort. **Dr. Clayton Chau**, HCA Director and County Health Officer, speaks to the importance of these partnerships in a video message which you can view [here](#).

Day 4 focused on environment health, notably the Environment Health Division’s response to the COVID-19 outbreak through their food protection services, which includes conducting restaurant inspections, delivering education and guidance to food service workers and raising awareness of the SafeDineOC grant program for restaurants. You can do your part to prevent foodborne illness as well; learn some food safety tips [here](#).

Day 5 concluded the PHW campaign with a video message from **Margaret Bredehoff, DrPH**, Deputy Agency Director of Public Health Services. “We celebrate PHW to commemorate how together we responded to the pandemic as ‘one county, one mission,’” said Dr. Bredehoff. “Amid difficult constraints, you found opportunities to spark innovation that will define tomorrow and you stayed focused on the horizon to get us there.” You can view Dr. Bredehoff’s full video message [here](#).

Prior to PHW, HCA staff and community partners also



Better Health

shared stories and photos to showcase various public health efforts in Orange County (OC) over the past year. Among the many public health accomplishments across the HCA:

- Emergency Medical Services Division distributing over 20 million pieces of medical supplies and equipment, standing up mobile field hospitals and administering COVID-19 vaccines in equity populations
- Business Follow Up Team implementing the Shared Portal Outbreak Tracking system to support OC businesses with tracking COVID-19 exposures and outbreaks
- Clinical Services/Pulmonary Disease Services staff providing support at the OC fire vaccination pods in January
- Public Health Laboratory performing over 85,400 COVID-19 tests and assembling over 86,000 collection kits
- COVID-19 Social Worker Team referring over 2,500 people to Age Well and Meals-on-Wheels food delivery programs as well as over 900 people to sup-

port services at Latino Health Access and OC Asian American and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA)

- Community and Nursing Services Division staff administering COVID-19 vaccines at the County point of dispensing (POD) sites as well as case investigations and contact tracing support at 58 shelters and 117 facilities including group homes, mental health/sober living, board and care
- Tobacco Use Prevention Program partnering with the City of Santa Ana to promote healthier store environments by encouraging customers to buy healthier items and directing youth away from tobacco and alcohol products
- Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF) team conducting COVID-19 case investigations, contact tracing and targeted interventions to isolate positive/quarantine exposed LTCF residents and mitigate outbreaks in this vulnerable population

These highlights provide only a glimpse of the overwhelming work done across the HCA's service areas with community partners to support the public health needs of OC residents throughout the pandemic, both on the front line and behind the scenes. Thank you for all of your incredible contributions toward fighting the pandemic as one community, one county, one mission!



For Health

Rethink Your Drink: Choose Water First

Choosing water instead of sugary beverages or soda is a great first step to an overall healthy diet.

Calories from sugary drinks add up fast. Almost half of all sugar consumed in the U.S. comes from sugary drinks. Visit [What's Your Beverage Breakdown](#) and find out how much added sugar you and your family drink every day.

Living healthy doesn't have to be hard. Making small changes to what you drink can lead to big wins! Try drinking water with every meal and snack or keep water at your desk or work area. These are a few ways you can start drinking more water. For more tips to help you choose water first, visit the [CalFresh Healthy Living website](#).

Flavor your water with fruits or vegetables for tasty drinks with no added sugar. To get started, try this [Cucumber Mint Breeze recipe](#).

You can find quick and easy drink and smoothie recipes on the [CalFresh Healthy Living Recipes page](#).



Cucumber Mint Breeze

Serves 6

Ingredients:

1/2 cup sliced cucumbers

1-2 sprigs of fresh mint

Ice

Directions:

1. Fill pitcher halfway with ice.
2. Add sliced cucumbers and mint.
3. Fill with water. Chill for at least 20 minutes before serving.
4. Store in refrigerator and drink within 24 hours.

Christine Baun, Public Health Nutritionist II - Contributor

Reducing Food Waste: Patty Stable, Public Health Nutritionist II - Contributor Leftover Makeover



One-third of food waste happens because we purchase, cook or serve more food than we eat and throw out the rest. Getting into the habit of using up our leftovers is one way to have an impact on reducing food waste.

How to Use Leftovers:

- Have a plan to use leftovers: Tuesday's leftover chicken can become a stir-fry or quesadilla on Wednesday.
- Make leftovers tomorrow's lunch: Put leftovers into containers and you are ready to go.
- Make one day each week "Leftover Day" to use up leftover meals and produce.
- Freeze leftovers: Place food in single portion sizes or family dinner sizes and freeze to eat later.



MISSION

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

VISION

Quality health for all.



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!