



Director's Message

The Quarterly Budget Report provides the Orange County Board of Supervisors (BOS), members of the public, County of Orange (County) departments and other interested parties with an overview of the current status of our revenues, expenditures, Net County Cost, total budgeted positions and various agency issues that require recommended changes to the County's budget.

On November 19th and as a [part of that process](#), the BOS approved a Countywide organizational change that will mean big things for the OC Health Care Agency (HCA).

The Care Coordination team within the County Executive Office and the Homeless Services Office within OC Community Resources have been merged into one new division: the Office of Care Coordination (OCC) within the HCA.

The combination of these groups into the OCC here will allow for increased program coordination, more efficient delivery of services to clients and the community, and streamline the County's overall response to homelessness. Some of the initiatives led by this group include shelter operations, the

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Peer-to-Peer Socorro Castro "Stability & Flexibility"

"I joined the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) 22 years ago because I wanted a job with stability," said November's Peer-to-Peer recipient **Socorro Castro**, Office Specialist with Correctional Health Services (CHS). "What I found is I'm in a career where I have to be really flexible and I love it."

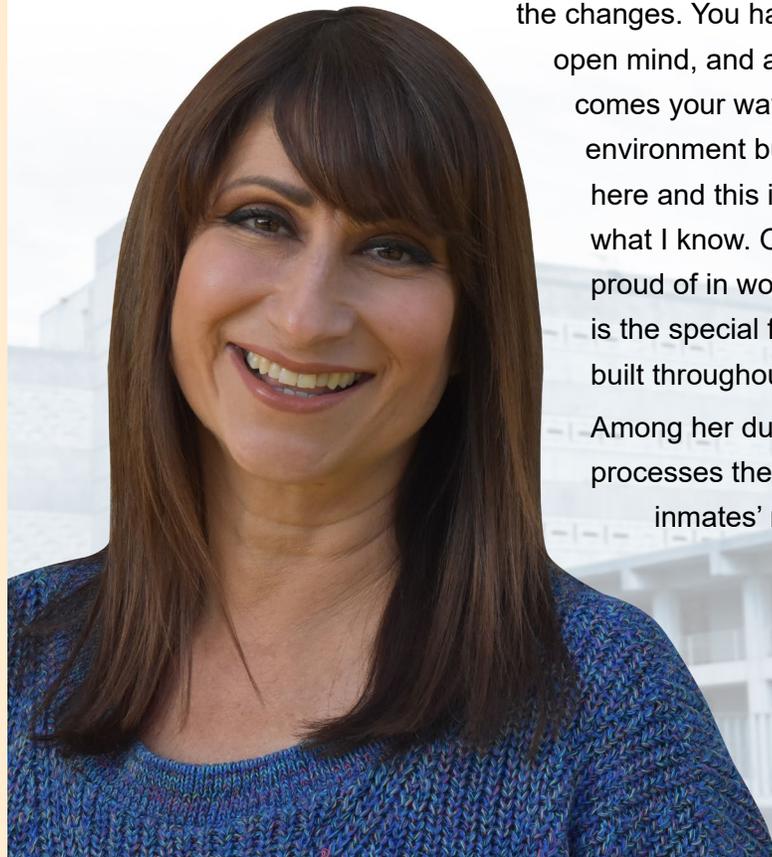
From her first day until now, Socorro said working for CHS in the County of Orange (County) jail system was meant to be, "I had no hesitation applying here when I saw this job. Since it was in CHS, I thought, 'Oh corrections, cool, that's interesting,' and it was interesting and it has been interesting ever since."

To Socorro, "interesting" means many things including the work she does, the people she meets and the different agencies she interacts with every day. It's all become a part of her. "This job is challenging with the constant

change. But I've learned so much through the changes. You have to have an

open mind, and accept all that comes your way. It's a fast-paced environment but I am comfortable here and this is my routine and what I know. One thing I'm most proud of in working in corrections is the special friendships I've built throughout the years."

Among her duties, Socorro processes the paperwork for inmates' medical and



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OC Health Care Agency Staff Describe Deployment to

Kincade Fire in Sonoma County

As more than 180,000 people were forced to evacuate by the Kincade Fire in Sonoma County, California (read about the incident at [CalFire](#)), two OC Health Care Agency (HCA) staff members were among the 1,404 volunteers rushing to the scene to help out.

It was the latest deployment to a disaster for **Mark Chew**, Chief Pharmacist with OC Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and **Joe Vargas**, Program Supervisor, Public Health Services, Health Promotion and Community Planning Division. “We spent four days serving wherever we were needed,” said Mark. “My primary duties are as a pharmacist while Joe’s are in planning, administration, safety and logistics. In every deployment, we do whatever has to be done, which has included anything from setting up shelters, to moving patients and everything else that pops up.”

The two are members of the Federal Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT CA-1) based in Orange County. As part of the federal team they deployed to Hurricanes Maria, Harvey, Michael and Florence. Their response to the Kincade Fire was the second deployment they’ve made under California’s State Disaster Medical Assistance Team ([CAL-MAT](#)), which is modeled after the federal team. “CAL-MATs are a group of highly-trained medical professionals and other specialists organized and coordinated by the State Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA),” said **Tammi McConnell**, Division Manager/EMS Administrator. “The teams can respond within 12 hours or less from the initial activation and deploy on a 24/7 basis. Depending on the mission, teams might include physicians, nurses, Emergency Medical Technicians and support personnel from logistics, communications or safety programs.”

When Mark and Joe arrived at the Red Cross Shelter which was set up at the Marin County Fairgrounds, there were already 700 evacuees housed inside the

buildings there. “We would get a briefing every morning on the fire situation, containment and whether power was being restored,” said Joe. “Every briefing started with the message of ‘wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands.’ That paid off as we had no problems with the spread of any disease.”

After the briefings, the volunteers would work 12-hour shifts caring for evacuees. “We had people with special needs and CAL-MAT set up a treatment area just for them,” said Mark. “Those needs included wheelchair patients with their pets. Others needed what we call an ‘ambulatory care’ area which provided medical services for those who needed power, because the power had



Deployments at disasters are often described as ‘controlled chaos.’ This is due to the multiple issues we are constantly trying to address in an expeditious manner. Shelter, medicine, safety, weather, food, electricity, sleep and water are things we take for granted daily, but they are critical in disaster situations.”

- Mark Chew & Joe Vargas

Director's Message

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County's Coordinated Entry System, Commission to End Homelessness, and the Point in Time Count.

Our new OCC team will be stationed on the 6th floor of the HCA's headquarters at 405 W. 5th Street in Santa Ana. Please join me in welcoming them to the HCA!

Best,



Richard Sanchez, Director



Some of the members of the Care Coordination team (L-to-R): **Karen Betances**, Continuum of Care (CoC) Administrator; **Jocelyn Gaspar**, CoC Specialist; **Paul Duncan**, CoC Manager; **Rebecca Ricketts**, Coordinated Entry System (CES) Coordinator; **James Nguyen**, Data Analysis; **Shannon Legere**, Homeless Services Director; **Ada Clark**, Shelter Coordination; **Emily Burgos**, Grant & Program Management; and **Zulima Lundy**, Care Coordination Manager.

been turned off at their homes.” He said there was another problem, which was due in part to evacuations taking place at the end of a month. “Some people were not able to get refills for their medications or they didn’t pack them or simply forgot them. It’s risky not to have a supply at all times and that becomes dangerous in a disaster.”

Meeting unexpected needs like those happens every time said Joe. “Every deployment has experiences which are similar and different,” he said. “In this case, even though we were dealing with people who were from established communities, they were forced from their homes with very little time to pack and to get out. It really brings home the message to plan and prepare in advance for any emergency you might face.”



1. (L-to-R): Mark Chew, Chief Pharmacist, OC Emergency Medical Services and Joe Vargas, Program Supervisor, Public Health Services, with Meals Ready To Eat (MREs) while deployed at Hurricane Harvey. 2. Special needs evacuee in wheelchair with pet. 3. Some of the hundreds of evacuees/volunteers at Marin County Fairgrounds. 4. Red Cross supplies for evacuees. 5. Morning briefing at Kincadee Fire.



County of Orange
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

New

Leaders

Take the Helm at Environmental Health



Two long-time veterans of the OC Health Care Agency's (HCA) Environmental Health (EH) team are now in charge of the division. **Christine Lane** is the new Director of EH Services after serving as Assistant Director for the past two and a half years. Replacing her as Assistant Director is **Darwin Cheng**, who had been Program Manager for the Hazardous Materials Surveillance Section since 2017.

Christine has risen through the ranks at EH. "I've been with EH for more than 22 years, since graduating from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. I've had different roles in different programs including inspector, administration, program planning and implementation while working in Food and Pool Safety, Wholesale Food and Hazardous Materials/CUPA (Certified Unified Program Agency). I'm very excited about this new role and I'm looking forward to working with my colleagues to see where we can make improvements with technology,

workflows and other processes."

Christine said the EH department has evolved but there's always more to do. Improving technology and ensuring her team has the right equipment and processes that work are two areas of focus. Christine also said her transition into her new role seemed natural because she was, "involved in all things Environmental," by her predecessor and she plans to take that approach with Darwin. "That was the best learning curve and I plan to do the same with our new Assistant Director."

Darwin initially joined EH in 1998, shortly after graduating from California State University, Long Beach. He started as an Assistant EH Specialist before promoting to EH Specialist and Hazardous Waste Specialist. He left the County of Orange to work for the City of Anaheim Fire and Rescue and also earned his Juris Doctor before returning to EH in 2007 where he helped build

the Health HazMat team. “I am very grateful and excited about this new opportunity to help lead a fine group of hard working staff at Environmental Health. I look forward to helping all EH staff to grow their careers at EH, and respond to the needs of all our staff and executive management so we can continue to protect the communities of Orange County.”

Christine and Darwin are excited in creating a new EH with fresh ideas and providing all EH staff with more career opportunities. “Challenge yourself. Give 100% in all you do and always stay positive,” said Christine. She also added it’s worthwhile to consider other opportunities, “Don’t be afraid to work in another program or take on a special project.” While Darwin said, “We are here to build a culture that is inspiring and motivating for all of us who have dedicated our lives and energy in protecting public health and safety.”

Deputy Agency Director, **Steve Thronson**, Regulatory/Medical Health Services and Chief of Operations, **Cheryl Meronk**, are excited to have new management in place at EH. “We have great confidence in both Christine and Darwin and we are happy to have them as part of the Regulatory/Medical Health Services leadership team,” said Steve. Cheryl agreed, saying she is, “Eager to see what fresh ideas and inspiration they bring to the EH division.”



Behavioral Health Services

Selects **New** Medical Director

After serving as Associate Medical Director for Behavioral Health Services (BHS) for the past five years, **Dr. Andrew Inglis** has been named Medical Director. “It’s been a great privilege to work with the team at the OC Health Care Agency (HCA). I started with the HCA in 2003 and it has been a good fit for my values, passion and professional expertise. From the beginning, I have been interested in the whole system of care for individuals. This next chapter will allow me to work with the many committed and passionate co-workers I’ve met, who are making a real difference in the lives of some of the most vulnerable in our society.”

During his career at the HCA, Dr. Inglis said he’s worked in each and every clinic before taking on a role with the Collaborative Courts. “Our Collaborative Courts program offers a way out for individuals with serious and persistent mental illness. Through a long process of staying clean, taking medications, and accessing benefits including therapy and case management, great things can happen, and it’s been a passion of mine to work with this population and help improve outcomes for individuals.”

In his new role, Dr. Inglis said he’ll have an opportunity to improve outcomes for many more. “As Medical Director, I have a role in each part of our system of care including Inpatient, Outpatient, Child and Youth Services, Adult and Older Adult Services, Substance Abuse Treatment Services, AQIS (Authority & Quality Improvement Services). I am responsible to give input to all programs to make sure that our programs provide excellent psychiatric care. I also liaison with CalOptima as the County of Orange tries to coordinate care with medical services. I am thrilled with the opportunity and I really appreciate working with a coordinated team that can help our population much more than the sum of each person providing care alone.”

And the 2019 STEVE AMBRIZ Award Winner is...



Back row (L-to-R): Ian Kemmer, Dr. Terrance Taylor, Katherine Boelts, Wayne Chan and Dr. Nabi Latif. Front row (L-to-R): Joan Cantor, Adee Cohen, Sarah McClaran, Dr. Usha Sannidhi, Rebekah Radomski, Bernadette David, Jessica Spargur and Liz Lopez. Not pictured: Lindy Barber, Michelle Menke, Dr. Sophia Penev and Andia Turner.

They said in their submission for the Steve Ambriz Award that they are 'small but mighty.' Now they can add 'award winner' to their work, as the Adult and Older Adult Behavioral Health (AOABH) Aliso Viejo clinic received the 2019 Steve Ambriz Team Excellence Award.

"Our team is really resilient and we go 'above and beyond' in serving our clients on a daily basis," said **Rebekah Radomski**, Service Chief I AOABH Aliso Viejo.

"To receive this recognition and honor from the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) tells us that our hard work and dedication is definitely noticed and that's a great feeling."

There are 16 team members in the AOABH Aliso Viejo clinic. Their work provides outpatient behavioral health services to approximately 300 adults ages 18-60, with severe and persistent mental illness. "We are case

managers, doctors and therapists who meet our clients where they are,” said **Katherine Boelts**, Behavioral Health Clinician (BHC) II. “Our clients come in on a daily basis with a variety of problems such as homelessness, losing a job, out of medication, the list is endless. Each day there are a number of problems that require staff to make quick and sometimes creative solutions.”

The staff has proven their resiliency. You might recall in May 2018, a bomb detonated at a business about 40 feet from the clinic. “Our lives were forever impacted,” said **Joan Cantor**, BHC II. “But not a single team member has quit or transferred programs since. That truly speaks to the strength of our team and what it means to be a public servant.”

The AOABH Aliso Viejo team supports each other in many ways. **Adee Cohen**, BHC II and Rebekah beautify the clinic with art and festive holiday decor. “They make all of us feel good by the way they decorate our office with colorful and creative displays,” said **Liz Lopez**, BHC II. While Rebekah and **Dr. Nabi Latif** are known for their humor. “Each of them could be a standup comic, but their abilities to provide an encouraging and supportive word using humor is extremely valuable to us and their timing always seems to be perfect,” said **Bernadette David**, Behavioral Health Nurse. The team also touts the baking skills of Adee and Rebekah. “You have to get Adee to make her infamous Bundt cake. Every time she brings it in, we devour it.”

“We really do have a team that cares for each other,” said **Jessica Spargur**, Mental Health Specialist. “That creates an environment where everyone is welcome to express their talents, which are work appropriate, and it makes everyone feel valued and important.”

As for winning the Steve Ambriz Award, the team expressed surprise and gratitude. “We were up against some wonderful candidates,” said **Sarah McClaran**, BHC II, “And we’re grateful to receive the award recognition.” **Dr. Usha Sannidhi** said, “It’s such an honor to receive this award. Our team is excellent, we work well together and that’s been evident through the challenges we’ve faced.”

The Aliso Viejo team also includes **Lindy Barber**, Mental Health Worker I; **Wayne Chan**, BHC II; **Michelle Menke**, BHC II; **Dr. Sophia Penev**; **Dr. Terrance Taylor** and **Dr. Andia Turner**.

Congrats to **New**

Deputy Purchasing Agents

There are five, newly sworn-in, Deputy Purchasing Agents (DPA) in the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Administrative Services division. Each completed training and passed an examination on County procurement policies, in order to be certified as a DPA. They are deputized under the direction and authority of the County Procurement Officer. “They have the authority, to act on behalf of the County Procurement Officer,” said **Maria Pirona**, Administrative Manager III, Contract Services. “DPA’s can prepare solicitations; execute contracts; and approve emergency purchases. With our new DPAs, HCA is well positioned to continue providing essential commodity and service contracts to HCA’s various programs in a professional and timely manner.”

These new DPAs have worked with the County of Orange anywhere from 1 year to more than 15 years. While becoming a Deputy Purchasing Agent is not a promotion, it does open the door to many career opportunities with the County.



(L-to-R): **Erika Marquez**, Office Specialist; **Dean Lindstrom**, Office Specialist; **Rob Richardson**, County Procurement Officer; **Silvia Bonilla**, Office Supervisor; **Monica Gutierrez**, Office Specialist; and **Jessica Castaneda**, Staff Specialist.

5 Things You Need to Know About:

1 The OC Health Care Agency (HCA) released a report last month entitled, “[2014 – 2018 Suicide Deaths in Orange County, California](#),” which was intended to increase public awareness, to reduce the stigma that often prevents people from asking for help and to guide future prevention and early intervention efforts for those most at-risk of suicide or self-harm.

2 The report on suicide deaths and the recently published “[Conditions of Children in Orange County](#)” report are useful in further understanding unmet community needs while informing resources for suicide prevention planning activities.

3 The report on suicide deaths garnered attention from the media. You can read this story from the [OC Register](#) and view a piece from [KNBC Channel 4](#).

4 Suicide is a public health issue that occurs across ethnic, social and age boundaries. It is important for people to know the warning signs, the words to use to voice concern to those who may be thinking of suicide and how to get help. The website ochealth.info.com/suicideprevention is a great resource.

The Jail to COMMUNITY RE-ENTRY PROGRAM



Jail to Community Re-entry Program staff (L-to-R): [Geoffrey Glowalla](#), [Brittany Shaw](#), [Jason Gerry](#), [Cathy Brinegar](#), [Donald Byrd](#), [Isabel Quiroz](#), [Coletta Franciscus](#), [Zarah Mora](#), [Christina Madory](#) and [Liz Amaral](#).

In response to the increased number of incarcerated individuals diagnosed with mental illness, the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Correctional Health Services (CHS) team has implemented the Jail to Community Re-entry Program (JCRP).

“An average of 1,886 individuals requiring mental health services are housed in Orange County (OC) jails on a daily basis,” said **Erin Winger**, Deputy Agency Director CHS. “By offering intensive, mental-health-case-management, we hope to improve the outcomes for a successful re-entry for these individuals.”

Suicide Report

5 A multipronged approach is needed to address suicide prevention as a community. There are four general strategies: Upstream Strategies, such as [Directing Change](#); Intervention Strategies, such as [Crisis Prevention Hotline](#); Postvention Strategies, such as [Survivor's Support Services](#); and Strategies for Reducing Access to Lethal Means, such as [Prescription Drug Take Back](#) programs. These and resources available in Orange County (OC), are the focus of many including the Community Suicide Prevention Forum which meets once a month in various locations around OC.



2014 - 2018

Suicide Deaths in Orange County, California

The newly implemented program consists of 28 Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) positions to provide discharge planning services and linkage to community programs for individuals diagnosed with a mental illness during incarceration. “We are building a system in which every person who leaves our facility will be provided with resources and services that will help to promote a stable future,” said **Coletta Franciscus**, Service Chief II for CHS. “To date, we have implemented providing a 7 day supply of medications for all inmates receiving psychotropic medications, increased the number of groups to target criminogenic factors and risk to recidivate. Last month, we launched our CHS release process in conjunction with Behavioral Health Services, Project Kinship, Telecare and Opportunity Knocks which provides a face-to-face contact with inmates leaving the Central Jail Complex.”

Re-entry services are critical to preventing recidivism

and ensuring that people leaving Orange County Jails have opportunities to establish a productive and stable path. CHS management and JCRP staff are in collaboration with our stakeholders, including the HCA's Behavioral Health Services division, Orange County Sheriff's Department, Orange County Probation, Orange County Public Defender, Social Services Agency, Regional Center of Orange County, Orange County Housing Authority and other ancillary agencies, to identify gaps in service delivery and solidify linkages with external stakeholders for a smooth transition from jail to community.

JCRP is embarking on a new era of discharge planning and re-entry linkage services for all inmates requiring mental health services at all County jail facilities that will assess risk and needs of the inmates and to identify possible barriers to successful re-entry. An initiative that was birthed from the National Stepping up Initiative and aligned with the County's Integrated Services Plan.

New Women, Infants and Children Cards Makes Shopping Easier

Thanks to a lot of preparation by staff in the Public Health Services (PHS), [Women, Infants and Children Program](#) (WIC), it's now a little easier to go grocery shopping for the Orange County (OC) families who are served by WIC. The OC Health Care Agency (HCA) is allocated to serve up to 17,460 participants with nutrition education, referrals to programs, breastfeeding support and promotion and supplemental foods.

The exciting change in the program is that the supplemental foods can now be redeemed in the form of a debit card. "Moving away from paper checks to a debit card makes the WIC shopping experience much easier and more convenient for the clients in the clinic and ca-

shiers in the stores," said **Maridet Ibanez**, Administrative Manager, Nutrition Services, WIC Program. "In addition, the availability of a WIC app helps participants see when their next appointment is, their benefits balance on their card and locations of WIC sites throughout the county."

This new system also allows WIC benefits to be automatically and remotely uploaded.

The HCA has staff at seven locations who issue WIC cards. Before the cards are distributed, clients are given instruction on how to use them. They are also told about the WIC app. If clients choose

to use the app, training is offered on how to navigate it. "The WIC app is a great tool," said **Martha Aleme-Se-**



Compliance and Integrity are in Your

"Compliance is everyone's business." That's one of the mottos in the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Office of Compliance (OOC) and the phrase served as an inspiration behind the winning entry in the Compliance Week poster contest.

You can see the poster on the right. The winning design was created by **Lotus Snook**, Staff Specialist with Administrative Services. "I'm a huge fan of the Office of Compliance and the amazing work they do to protect the HCA. When people see the poster I hope they real-

ize that we hold compliance in our hands and how we handle it affects everyone, so we need to handle with care. We are the Health CARE Agency after all."

In the winning poster, the symbols of gears represent many of HCA's various divisions. And even though those divisions are unique, they have a common purpose of serving the people of Orange County.

"We received many very good entries related to privacy and compliance," said **Dr. Chi Rajalingam**, Chief Compliance Officer. "I hope that Compliance Week, and

lassie, Supervising Public Health Nutritionist. “Users can keep track of and easily see the balance on their account. They can use the app to scan the bar codes on food products, to see if the product qualifies for purchase under WIC.” The WIC balance can also be printed by a cashier.

“Response to the WIC cards and app has been overwhelmingly positive,” said Maridet. “Clients told us they appreciate the ease of using a debit-like card instead of the paper checks. Having their information at their fingertips,

takes away any uncertainty they used to have with their account.”



(L-to-R): Martha Aleme-Selassie, Supervising PHS Nutritionist and Paige Worley, California Department of Public Health while testing app for Women, Infant and Children program.



Women, Infants & Children (WIC) representatives (L-to-R): Irene Salazar; Maridet Ibanez, OC Health Care Agency; Supervisor Andrew Do, First District; Kiran Saluja; and Samar McGregor. Supervisor Do holding proclamation for kickoff of WIC cards in Orange County. (Photo courtesy Belen Rediet/Public Health Foundation Enterprises/WIC.)

Hands

this activity, provided the Agency an opportunity to think about how compliance and privacy affects our day-to-day work.”

You can see three of the poster entries [here](#).



Compliance Week 2019

Learnings From the

OC Women's Health Summit

by: *Sheila Gill,*
Research Analyst IV,
Public Health Services

County Health Officer **Dr. Nichole Quick** was an invited speaker at the 7th OC Women's Health Summit: Advancing Health Equity for Women in Orange County (OC). The event was held last month at the Beckman Center of the National Academies of Science & Engineering, at the University of California, Irvine.

She presented 2009-2017 data on chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, breast and cervical cancers, and shared data on the alarming increase in substance/opioid overdose admissions, intimate partner violence and sexually transmitted diseases. Dr. Quick expressed concern about syphilis in perinatal population that can lead to increased risk for congenital birth defects and death in newborns.

Dr. Quick discussed the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic structural factors that cause unjust health disparities in chronic and infectious diseases, hospitalization and death rates as well as life expectancy in different geographical areas and among different racial/ethnic populations of OC, even though OC as a whole fares better than California and the US for a majority of the health indicators.

Diving deeper, she shared that life expectancy at birth for OC residents in the central and west/north regions of the county is significantly lower compared to the residents in the south and coastal OC cities. Furthermore, life expectancy among African Americans in OC is significantly lower, compared to other race/ethnicity and OC overall. Coastal and

south OC areas are more likely to enjoy better health outcomes in terms of death and prevalence rates for almost all health indicators than central and west OC.

Compared to the south and coastal areas of the county, death rates due to coronary heart disease are higher in north/west and central OC, and are significantly higher for African Americans and Pacific Islanders. Similarly, rates were significantly higher for diabetes in the central and northern OC cities of Garden Grove, Westminster, Anaheim and Santa Ana; and were significantly higher among African Americans, Pacific Islanders and Hispanics compared to Whites and OC overall.

Hospitalization and death rates due to substance/alcohol/opioid use and overdose were higher in the south and coastal areas of OC compared to the rest of the county and are higher than 75% of California counties. Also, the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs was significantly higher for 11th grade students in the coastal and south county school districts.

The age-adjusted death rate due to cervical cancer is significantly higher among Pacific Islander and African American women despite comprehensive screening and preventive treatment measures and is of concern.

Age-adjusted female breast cancer incidence rate was



Dr. Nichole Quick presenting data on the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic structural geographic and racial/ethnic factors on achieving health equity among Orange County women at the 7th Orange County Women's Health Summit held on November 8, 2019 at the Beckman Center of the National Academies of Sciences & Engineering, UC Irvine.

higher among Whites in OC but is trending downwards. However, African American women are more likely to suffer significantly higher death rate due to breast cancer compared to other race/ethnicity.

The sexually transmitted disease rate is trending upwards: the gonorrhea incidence rates in 2018 was 5 times higher than in 2009, and the primary and secondary syphilis rates in 2018 quadrupled from the rate of

2009 and is of concern among the perinatal population. HIV/AIDS prevalence rates among African American women are significantly higher compared to other race/ethnicity.

Intimate partner violence incidence rate is higher in Orange County compared to other California counties and is showing an upward trend.

What OC Residents Should Know:

About half of OC's population of 3.1 million people is women. Compared to men, women in OC suffer significant wage disparity for similar levels of education and occupation, with the greatest disparity in wages between Hispanics and Whites. Teen girls living in lower-income cities are more likely to experience higher rates of birth compared to teen birth rates for OC as a whole and California and the US. Women of color are more likely to live in poverty and are at a higher risk for experiencing obesity and chronic health conditions (diabetes, heart disease etc.), sexually transmitted diseases/HIV, intimate partner violence. In OC, significantly higher rates of health disparity persists between White women and African American, Pacific Islander, and Asian women for heart disease and diabetes. However, White women in OC suffer disproportionately higher rates of deaths due to Alzheimer's disease compared to men. White women are more likely to experience higher incidence rates for breast cancer compared to minority women. Death rates for breast cancer are higher for OC compared to California. African American and Pacific Islander women in OC are more likely to experience higher rates of breast cancer deaths, but the good news is that the OC trend is declining.



(L-to-R): Ana Hernandez, Behavioral Health; Dr. Nichole Quick, County Health Officer and Sheila Gill, Public Health Services, at the 7th Orange County Women's Health Summit; Advancing Health Equity for Women in Orange County. (Photos courtesy Ana Hernandez.)

Celebrating 7 Years of Healthier Together

The Orange County Health Improvement Partnership (HIP) held a meeting last month to celebrate its accomplishments over the past seven years in support of Orange County's Healthier Together initiative.

The HIP first convened in late 2012 when the OC Health Care Agency's Public Health Services team formed an ad-hoc planning group to assess the county's health and create a community-driven plan for a healthier Orange County. Today, the HIP is composed of 56 members representing more than 40 organizations including hospitals, universities, local non-profits agencies, community health centers, and others.

In 2014, the HIP completed its first community health assessment and published the first Orange County Health Improvement Plan with four priority areas for improving health: 1) Infant and Child Health; 2) Older Adult Health; 3) Obesity and Diabetes; and 4) Behavioral Health. When the HIP updated its plan in 2017, three new areas of interest were added: 1) Access to Health Care; 2) Oral Health; and 4) Social Determinants of Health.

The HIP and its various work groups have worked tirelessly to implement strategies identified in the plan and ultimately, to improve health for all in Orange County. Accomplishments have included bringing \$4 million in federal funding to Orange County through the OC Partnership to Improve Community Health grant, increasing the proportion of Medicare recipients receiving annual wellness visits, and helping to increase the number of schools at highest-risk for obesity in implementing policies to reduce obesity. "We are so proud of the accomplishments of the HIP and look forward to many more years of good work with our community partners," said **David Souleles**, Deputy Agency Director Public Health Services and co-chair of the HIP.

The HIP is currently working on the 2020-22 Orange County Health Improvement Plan, which will be posted for public comment in December and published in January 2020.

Watch the 5-minute [OCHT Highlights Video](#) to learn about the HIP's accomplishments these past seven years.



1. Vattana Peong (right, speaking), Co-Chair of the HIP and Executive Director of The Cambodian Family Community Center welcomes members and guests.
2. Members watch Orange County's Healthier Together Highlights video in celebration of 7 years of accomplishments.
3. David Souleles, Deputy Agency Director Public Health Services (right) recognizes Dr. David Nunez (left), Medical Director of Community and Nursing Services, as chair of the Orange County Perinatal Council, which led efforts in the Infant and Child Health priority area.

Orange County is the Leader in Healthy Champions

A celebration of Champions brought more than 70 Orange County (OC) residents to the Champion Workshop sponsored by the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Public Health Services (PHS) Nutrition Services CalFresh Healthy Living program.

“The annual event recognizes Champions in OC who are committed to improve the health of their families and communities,” said **Maridet Ibanez**, Administrative Manager II. “The Champions are out and about in their communities where they provide education, encouragement and inspiration while serving as role models to community organizations.” Maridet said OC currently has the largest number of Champions in California with more than 100, “And this year, we are pleased to announce the selection of 17 more individuals.”

“The theme of this year’s workshop was, ‘Healthy Communities Start with Me,’” said **Elsa Amezcua**, Communi-

ty Health Assistant III. “Attendees were given information on how they could become Champions.”

One step is to become more physically active said **Marisela Barcenas**, Public Health Nutritionist II. “Attendees were also told about the importance of nutrition and they learned how to prepare healthy foods which they can apply to themselves and share with their communities.”

The workshop also included networking opportunities with more than 30 HCA-funded staff and subcontractors representing healthy eating and physical activity programs. Among those taking part were staff from the HCA’s My Health OC website, the Lead Poisoning prevention program and the Oral Health program.

To learn more about Healthy Champions, please click [here](#).



2019 Healthy Champions



Claire Braeburn, Maridet Ibanez, Elsa Amezcua, Marisela Barcenas, Maria Elena Rodriguez, Diana Bejarano, Marisabel Perez and Blanca Torres.



Learning exercise at Champions Workshop.

Peer-to-Peer
continued from page 1

mental health services, from the time they enter a facility, throughout their stay, and until discharge. “Basically the goal at CHS is for inmates to receive exceptional services.” She, like her colleagues in Support Services, works at all of the County jails. “Every place is different when it comes to the facilities and how the work is done. It challenges me and I enjoy the different personalities I meet.” Socorro also trains new staff on how to do the job. “When training people I like to be thorough. My best advice when I train someone is never be afraid to ask questions because there’s always something to learn. We are always learning and there’s always something new.”

Socorro described herself as self-motivated, patient and outgoing. “I’m really able to focus on whatever I’m doing and that motivates me to go the extra mile for helping others. If I can help someone I will because if I ever need help, I want someone to help me. I believe if you do good things, you’ll receive good things in return.”

When she’s not at work, Socorro is often on the go or with family. “I enjoy spending time with friends and family, traveling and most of all hanging out with my amazing daughter.” As for being recognized as a Peer-to-Peer recipient, Socorro expressed appreciation for her colleagues.

Operation Santa Claus

You have until Friday, December 20 to take part in the annual Operation Santa Claus Holiday Gift Drive. Donations of new unwrapped toys, necessities, gift cards and checks are appreciated. You can also look for Angel Tags to fill specific wishes. Donations can be made in several OC Health Care Agency offices, or online. For Operation Santa Claus click [here](#) and for Senior Santa & Friends click [here](#). Thank you!



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



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