



Director's Message

You may have heard the news that U.S. District Judge David O. Carter signed off on a settlement between the County of Orange and attorneys representing homeless clients, calling it a model for how county governments should care for people in need of shelter. "You're far in front of any other county in this state," he said.

This settlement and all the tremendous progress we've made in recent years to better serve and care for individuals experiencing homelessness here could not have been possible without the intense and ongoing

... continued on page 3

Tell Us What's Up!

We invite your input to make our employee newsletter a true 'employee newsletter.' If you have an OC Health Care Agency event, program, person or a colleague you know has a talent to share, let us know. You can pass along your story ideas or creative contributions to hcacomm@ochca.com, put "What's Up" in the subject line and we'll respond. Thank you!

Peer-to-Peer Maria Pirona A Transformational Theme

Although she has only been with the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) for one year, **Maria Pirona**, Division Manager for Contract Services, has said that being at the HCA has been transformational for her on a professional level.

Those who work for her say Maria has been transformational to their division, but more on that later. To understand Maria's outlook on her work, it helps to understand a little about her. Born and raised in Fullerton, Maria graduated from California State University, Fullerton with a double major, earning her Bachelor's Degree in Human Resources and Business. She went on to earn her Master's Degree in Business Administration from Pepperdine University.

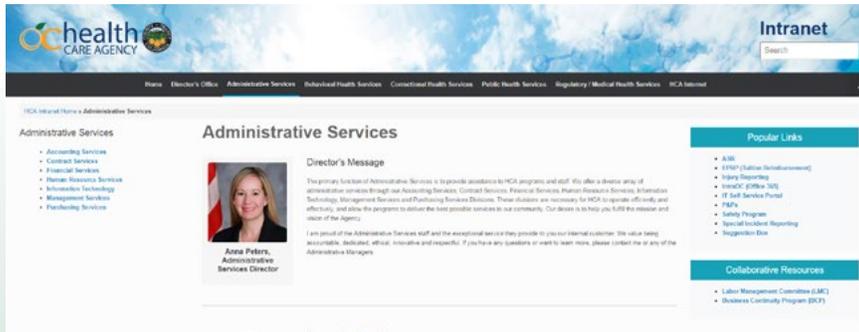
After completing her educational goals, Maria worked at Raytheon for seven years, handling both U.S. military and international military radar and missile contracts. Although working at Raytheon allowed her to travel around the country and world, finding a job closer to home became more appealing once she decided to start a family. As such, Maria left Raytheon and joined the County of Orange Procurement Office, reporting to the County Executive Office (CEO). That was over a decade ago; since then she has worked at three different County agencies while raising four children (now 8, 9, 10 and 11 years old). Maria said her children

... continued on page 17



New OC Health Care Agency

Intranet Site is LIVE!



and applications through links.

Employee surveys indicated that the Intranet needed improvement in its search functionality, overall navigation and look and feel. As an outcome of these surveys, the agency identified this project as an important goal for HCA's Administrative Services (AS).

OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Information Technology (IT) is excited to unveil the newly redesigned HCA Intranet.

The HCA Intranet is a platform that is available for all HCA employees to learn about the various programs, find necessary forms, policies and procedures, and general documents. You will have the ability to view organization charts and contact information, agency news and publications, and connect to other necessary systems

An Intranet work group was created which included subject matter experts from each of the services areas, and chaired by AS in partnership with Health Policy, Research and Communications (HPRC), with technical support provided by the HCA IT web design



New County Health Officer

team. The subject matter experts played a very important role in establishing their own priorities and needs, improving and documenting the content, and providing valuable feedback and direction on all key aspects of the design and flow. As a result of this collaborative effort, the new site offers a fresh and more organized look, greatly improved navigation, a more effective search function, and a consistent standards-based design and layout.

When using the new Intranet, staff is encouraged to provide any feedback through the available suggestion box. We expect this site to be continually improved upon to make it more usable and helpful.

We would like to thank all Service Areas for their contribution, time, effort and expertise. The group included the following members:

HCA Executive Sponsors

Anna Peters, Adil Siddiqui

Service Area Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

Joan Villanueva, Karen Lawson, Christine Lane, Shauna Merryman, Selma Silva, Kathleen Murray, Anthony Padilla, Laurent Repass, Jane Chai, Kristin Alix, Nikoo Tabesh, Cheryl Rowe, DeeDee Franks, Cindy Wong, Maria Pirona, Juan Corral, John Lewis

HCA Web Design Team and HPRC Team

Jessica Good, Julie MacDonald, Jimmy Castellanos, Kai Lin, Ron Margheim, Recel Gascon Ken An, Phuong Vo

Project was led and managed by **Rebecca Siddiqui**, BA, CPSCP
Senior Project Manager, Business Continuity Program & Strategic Projects

Congratulations to **Dr. Nichole Quick** on her appointment as County Health Officer. Prior to her appointment, Dr. Quick served as Deputy Health Officer at OC Health Care Agency (HCA) since August 2018.

Dr. Quick is board certified in Public Health and General Preventive Medicine in addition to Addiction Medicine, and has a Master's Degree in Public Health. Dr. Quick was the Health Officer of Yuba County for 3 years prior to joining the HCA as Deputy Health Officer. Dr. Quick is looking forward to advancing priorities identified by the Orange County Health Improvement Partnership which is in the process of selecting key focus areas for the next Orange County Health Improvement Plan. (See story on page 6.)

"I would like to extend my thanks to the Orange County Board of Supervisors for this opportunity. I've greatly enjoyed collaborating and working with my colleagues at the HCA and look forward to continuing that partnership as we work towards improving the health and well-being for all in Orange County."

Director's Message

continued from page 1

ing teamwork that has taken place, in some cases for the first time, between County departments and through the leadership of our Orange County Board of Supervisors.

Jason Austin, Homeless Coordinator and Division Manager with Behavioral Health Services (BHS), was honored by the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) last month for going above and beyond to facilitate this kind of collaboration. OCSD calls its Gold Star Award a "coveted honor...given in recognition of exceptional work and dedication to the OCSD and to the citizens of Orange County," and it's not every day that the Sheriff gives this recognition to someone outside of his agency.

I would like to personally thank **Marcy Kovacevich**, **Veronica Tallant**, **Lisa Row** and **Jenny Hudson**, also with BHS, who are an integral part of the team that is helping transform a once-blighted motel site in Santa Ana into the new Aqua housing development, which will provide 57 newly constructed units of Permanent Supportive Housing upon completion. This project is part of the Board's commitment to provide care to the homeless and those at-risk of homelessness.

Please join me in reading about the Gold Star ceremony on page [8](#) as well as Aqua on page [12](#) and celebrating all of our successes, as individuals and as an organization, as we continue working together to address the very complex issue of homelessness.

Sincerely,



Richard Sanchez, Director

More Food Sites to Inspect at the OC Fair



The number of food facilities to inspect at the Orange County Fair (OC Fair) increased from 150 last year to 225 this year, according to the Environmental Health (EH) Special Events team which was mobilized for the OC Fair. The first inspections took place on opening day and they continue throughout the event. But preparation for the work is done almost year round said **Christine Lane**, Interim Director, EH, “We begin work on the next OC Fair about a month after the current one ends and every year we’ve made improvements in our process. The preparation includes pre-meetings and trainings so our specialists all know what they need to do, based on the type of booth or facility they’re inspecting.”

The preparation is also for the food vendors. “Educating vendors on food safety, health and regulations are our main goals,” said **Britney Nguyen**, EH Specialist III and a co-lead for Special Events at the OC Fair. “Handwashing is one of the most important messages to get across and it’s the easiest way to prevent the spread of germs.”

To help the food vendors, they were



given a checklist from EH before opening day. **Wida Rahimi**, is Supervising EH Specialist in the Food and Pool Safety Program for Costa Mesa, “The coordination and preparation for the OC Fair starts months in advance. The collaboration involves working with the Fairgrounds organizers, vendors and our inspectors. It takes an entire team to provide food safety

for more than a million people. We always look for ways to streamline our guidelines and processes for both, the vendors and inspectors.”

This year, 24 EH specialists carried out inspections on opening day at the OC Fair as part of the Special Events team. “It really is a collaborative effort with the OC Fairgrounds,” said **Janene Bankson**, Supervisor over Mobile



1. OC Health Care Agency staff at OC Fair: Cheryl Meronk; Christine Lane; Jennifer Mendoza; Sarah Wang; Emily Pang; Jonathan Wolent; Emily Costlow; Neha Patel; Dr. Nichole Quick; Brian Wong; Joshua Luces; Wida Rahimi; Alan Marr; Noah Le; Jose Valdez; Stephanie Wilkins-Singleton; Bao-Ah Huynh; Sean Beachler; Adrian Godoy; Britney Nguyen; Linh Vo; Marcus Raymond; Glenn Dimaano; Janene Bankson; Hugo Lopez; Daniel Tenorio; Kaiser Milo; Derek Pham; and Timothy Evans. **2.** Emily Pang; Sean Beachler; and Christine Lane. **3.** Health Care Agency managers at OC Fair: Janene Bankson; Christine Lane; Dr. Nichole Quick; Brian Wong; Cheryl Meronk; Stephanie Wilkins-Singleton; and Bao-Ah Huynh.



Foods and Special Events. “We have a great partner in the OC Fairgrounds and they stepped it up by hiring a food safety person who serves as a liaison with us. That way we make sure any work which has to get done, is done.”

The food safety inspectors are a mix of veterans and ‘newbies.’ **Brian Wong**, EH Specialist III has worked the OC Fair for eight years and

said it’s unique, “It’s a fun event to inspect as it is a nice change of pace from the restaurant inspections that we normally do. We’ve invested a lot of time to prepare for this event where over a million people attend over the course of just over three weeks. It is my personal goal that for each of the OC Fair attendees who eat the fun and crazy foods out here, not to get sick and only go home with good

memories from their visit here.”

While this was the first time **Emily Costlow**, Assistant EH Specialist, did inspections at the OC Fair, “I think vendors generally know what they’re doing and they know we’re not here to try and get them in trouble. We just want them to operate properly.”

The Plan to be HEALTHIER TOGETHER

The Health Improvement Partnership (HIP), a planning body consisting of public and private entities to improve and maintain health outcomes in Orange County (OC), has agreed upon preliminary priority areas to be included in the 2020-2022 Orange County Health Improvement Plan. The plan is the foundation of [Orange County's Healthier Together](#) initiative, which is led by the HIP with the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Public Health Services (PHS) as a key partner.

The priority areas were determined

after a day-long meeting, attended by approximately 70 people representing more than 40 agencies including hospitals, universities, local non-profit agencies, community health centers and others. Participants heard from subject-matter experts, including several HCA staff, regarding key health topics such as maternal and infant health, older adult health, chronic diseases, mental health, and others (find a list of all the speakers and see their slide show presentations [here](#)). A key

takeaway was that while OC fares well compared to other areas, there are still considerable disparities and concerning trends for certain populations or conditions. The preliminary priorities the group agreed upon to be included in the 2020-2022 Orange County Health Improvement Plan include:

1. Social Determinants of Health
2. Access and System Navigation
3. Mental Health and Substance Use
4. Older Adults
5. Sexual Health
6. Health Promotion, Chronic Disease and Cancer Prevention

“Putting together this list of priorities gives our Healthier Together collaborative clarity on what we need to focus on in order to meet the health needs of OC residents,” said **David Souleles**, Deputy Agency Director of PHS. “Since

► Jane Chai, Public Health Services Project Manager addresses Orange County Health Improvement Partnership.



our first Orange County Health Improvement Plan was published in 2014, the partners have really come to consider the root causes that impact health outcomes and health disparities, recognizing that where we live, work, and play have as much, if not more, to do with our health as our health behaviors or medical care.”

“Orange County’s Healthier Together is all about using data-driven approaches to come up with strategies to improve health for all in OC,” said **Jane Chai**, PHS Projects Manager who hosted the special meeting to determine the health priorities. “It was great to see so many of our community partners come together to listen to data and identify key priorities that we’d like to work on together over the next few years.” She also said the information provided by the speakers is timely and

important, “We strongly encourage people to take time and look through information on the website including the presentation slides from the day.”

▼ Part of the process to list the health priorities by the Health Improvement Partnership.





“Gold Star” Awarded to J

The Orange County Sheriff’s Department (OCSD) “Gold Star Award” is rarely given to those outside the OCSD but it was awarded to **Jason Austin**, Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Division Manager of Navigation, Innovations & Training and BHS Homeless Coordinator. The OCSD presented its award to Jason during a ceremony in July, citing his ongoing work with the OCSD.*

Jason and the other Gold Star recipients were invited to bring their families to watch as they received their awards from Sheriff Don Barnes who told the crowd they were going to hear some ‘great stories.’ What follows next is Jason’s story, printed in its entirety and delivered by OCSD Captain Mike Peters, who is in charge of the Sheriff’s [North Operations](#).

“It is my pleasure to present Orange County Health Care Agency, Behavioral Health Services Division Manager Jason Austin with the

Orange County Sheriff’s 2019 Gold Star Award.

Jason is the OC Health Care Agency’s (HCA) Behavioral Health Homeless Coordinator and Division Manager with HCA’s Behavioral Health Services (BHS). He also oversees programs that support the community’s ability to navigate and link individuals to mental health and substance use disorder programs

and services in the HCA behavioral health system of care, such as: the BHS information and referral line (OCLinks), BHS Veteran’s Services, the Office of Consumer and Family Affairs, BHS Outreach and Engagement Services for the homeless community, MHSA (Mental Health Service Act) Innovation Programs, and the Behavioral Health Training System.

Jason Austin is a licensed



1. Gold Star Award ceremony. **2.** OC Sheriff Don Barnes presenting Gold Star Award to Jason Austin.



1

Jason Austin

therapist in the behavioral health field and has worked with children, youth and adults in a wide variety of clinical settings in Orange County. He has a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology and is a Licensed Marriage Family Therapist.

Jason coordinates homeless services and engagement responses with law enforcement, cities, and community providers, and was an integral part of the County of Orange's related efforts in the Orange County Flood Control Channels/Riverbeds/County Parks over the past few years. He works closely with us to support connecting homeless individuals to behavioral health services and shelter.

Those of us that have been around Field Operations know our marching orders when it comes to dealing with any homeless situation. The outreach component is critical to the success of the mission. I would go so far as to say it is the most important aspect. Jason is the tip of the spear for outreach. The famed 'Blue Shirts' fall under his command.

As society shifts and litigation is prevalent, the key to success is balance. Jason and his team have balanced our response to some of the largest clearings of encampments this county has seen. In fact, the OC Flood Control Channel clearing received national acclaim and has generated numerous calls from around

California areas who are experiencing similar issues. In many of those counties, the available assets are siloed and very rarely work together. The Riverbed required cooperation from numerous Departments within the County family. Jason and his Blue Shirts have the rare capability to generate trust from all parties involved. From Law Enforcement to the homeless advocates, their work is unquestionably respected.

On a personal note, I came into the command in March of this year. The outgoing Captain Jeff Puckett gave me loads of advice. The one thing he stressed more than anything was to go meet Jason Austin. In fact, I think the exact quote was "your success

... continued on page 19

*The OCSD cited Jason's work with deputies during the Santa Ana River Flood Control Project. His work with OCSD also includes: working to develop OCSD's homeless data system to refer homeless individuals which deputies encounter on the streets, directly to HCA Outreach electronically; coordination of city-level engagements with OCSD; meeting regularly to ensure partnering on County issues requiring outreach and OCSD coordination; and support of behavioral health training needs for OCSD through connection with HCA BHS Crisis Intervention Training, mental health first aid and other programs.

“ It’s truly an honor and a humbling experience, but this isn’t about me. It really takes a team effort to do all the great things the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) does to serve the community. During the presentation, so many of our BHS programs were recognized including our ‘Blue Shirts,’ OC Links, Veteran’s Services and more. To be able to represent so many important programs and dedicated people in those programs, is what this is really all about.”

Jason Austin, BHS Manager of Navigation



5 Things You Need to Know

1 Drowning is the leading cause of accidental death for kids under age five in Orange County (OC). Drowning is preventable. Check out the 'ABCs of Water Safety,' by clicking [here](#).

2 The OC Drowning Prevention Task Force developed a drowning prevention media campaign. Campaign materials can be found [here](#). The Task Force has other tips and information on its website [here](#).

Award-winning Outreach Campaign for Recycling of Used Oil & Oil Filters



A campaign to remind and encourage Orange County (OC) residents to recycle used motor oil and oil filters has received an award from [CalRecycle](#) (the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery). The award was presented to the County of Orange Regional Used Oil Recycling Program for recognition of the program's 'unique and effective public education and outreach.' The Regional Used Oil Recycling Program is comprised of 24 cities and the unincorporated areas of the County.

"The award means a lot," said **Michael Palazzola**, Supervising Hazardous Materials Specialist who oversees the Used Oil Recycling Program. "It's a direct reflection of all the effort that's been put in by the new Used Oil Recycling Program. To be recognized as the best in the state is a major accomplishment for the program."

The program received the award in the category of: Best Used Oil and/or Household Hazardous Waste Education. The winning campaign was entitled: 'Proud to be OC, Proud to Recycle our Oil.' The campaign, on Facebook, Google and YouTube, featured a young millennial couple who make it 'normal' to recycle oil and 'Proud to be OC' by being environ-

Now About: DROWNING PREVENTION

3 Local news has supported the drowning prevention campaign. A report from KABC Channel 7 can be found [here](#) and a KCBS Channel 2 story [here](#). The Task Force and Third District Supervisor Donald P. Wagner joined forces to put on this well-received media event.

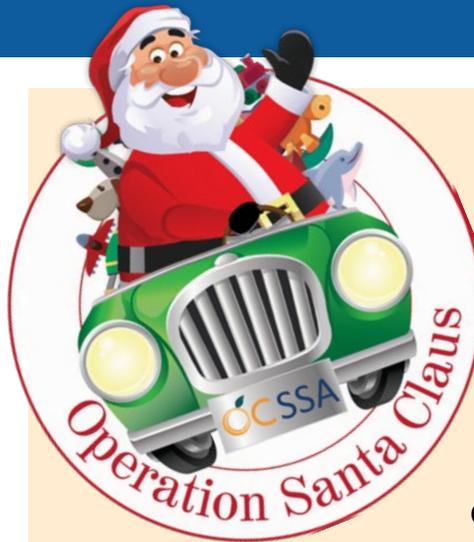
4 The OC Drowning Prevention Task Force was launched in 2016. This group works to increase awareness about the dangers of drowning and to spread information about ways to prevent it.

5 In addition to the summer media campaign, the OC Drowning Prevention Task Force hosted three Water Safety Challenge Days. Kids tested their water safety and swimming skills, all in a fun, supportive environment.

mentally conscious. “Using these social media tools was a shift from traditional sites such as TV, billboards and bus ads,” said Michael. “The shift, coupled with an overall rebranding of our program, helped us to engage our users and support our stakeholders in exciting new ways.”

“We continually strive to find new ways to reach out to the public and do-it-yourselfers who change the oil and oil filters on their vehicles,” said **Tim Grogan**, Hazardous Materials Specialist, Used Oil Program. “We were able to develop our own website [OCUsedOil.com](#) and be able to customize the page to easily find information on how to change your oil, where to find Certified Collection Centers to take the oil to, and how to obtain storage containers for the used oil and oil filters until it can be taken to a Certified Center. Our website can be found on all our outreach materials.”

◀ Tim Grogan and Howard Mayo with award.



Operation Santa Claus needs your help! Please consider joining the Orange County Board of Supervisors in brightening the lives of some of our county’s most vulnerable children by participating in a Summer Online Donation Drive.

Operation Santa Claus has grown tremendously since its inception in 1962, distributing almost 42,000 gifts last year to children in Orange County who have been abandoned, neglected, abused and placed in foster care. This important program also provides holiday gifts to children of our most vulnerable families in Orange County who receive services from any one of our many County departments. In addition to the holiday season, gifts are distributed throughout the year for birthdays of foster children.

This Countywide online donation campaign will raise funds to purchase much needed gifts for Orange County’s most vulnerable and needy children. The campaign will run through August 9, 2019.

You can donate online [here](#).

If you’d like to make a donation of a new, unwrapped toy directly or receive more information about Operation Santa Claus, please email or call us at operationsantaclaus@ssa.ocgov.com or (714) 679-2438. To the many loyal supporters who make Operation Santa Claus possible every year, we thank and commend you for your generosity and support!

A New Homeless Project and

“Hope for More”



A once-blighted motel site in Santa Ana is being transformed into the new [Aqua Housing](#) (Aqua) development. The Aqua, located at 317 E. 17th Street, will provide 57 newly constructed units of Permanent Supportive Housing. Twenty-eight of the units will be reserved for Special Needs Housing Program residents.

Supportive Services* to those residents will be provided by the OC Health Care Agency's (HCA) Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT). Aqua is part of the Orange County Board of Supervisors' vision and commitment to provide care to the homeless and those at-risk of homelessness. OC HCA Director **Richard Sanchez**, took part in the recent groundbreaking, "Developments such as the 'Aqua,' are an important step in the care, which covers everything from crisis services to supportive housing. Hopefully we'll have many more groundbreaking ceremonies for housing developments like this one."

The \$31-million project will include three buildings. Two will be 4-story residential buildings with 12 studio and 45 one-bedroom apartment homes. The third will host on-site management and offices for service providers along with a gym, lounge, computer room and community room. The Aqua is scheduled to be completed in early 2020.

HIV IT'S A HUMAN THING... CAMPAIGN



A multimedia campaign is underway in Orange County (OC) to reduce stigma around HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). The campaign is called: '[HIV, It's a Human Thing.](#)' The campaign message is targeting audiences in three ways: first, with digital ads; second, outdoor ads; and third, indoor postings.

"The campaign is targeted to all OC residents, to get people talking about HIV and to learn the facts," said **Matilde Gonzalez-Flores**, Program Manager, HIV Planning and Coordination. "When people talk to others about HIV testing, prevention and treatment, we can reduce the stigma associated with HIV. That leads to people being more comfortable and more willing to get tested."



Aqua Apartments, 317 E. 17th St., Santa Ana. For more visit [here](#).



*** Supportive Services include:**

Psychopharmacologic treatment, including new atypical antipsychotic and antidepressant medications; Individual supportive therapy; Mobile crisis intervention; Hospitalization; Substance use treatment, including group therapy (for clients with a dual diagnosis of substance use and mental illness); Behaviorally-oriented skill teaching (supportive and cognitive-behavioral therapy), including structuring time and handling activities of daily living; Supported employment, both paid and volunteer work; Support for resuming education Support services; Support, education and skill-teaching to family members; Collaboration with families and assistance to clients with children; Direct support to help clients obtain legal and advocacy services, financial support, supported housing, money-management services and transportation.

1. Groundbreaking for Aqua Housing with First District Supervisor Andrew Do (second from right) and HCA Director Richard Sanchez (fourth from right).

“The campaign also allows us to enhance the focus on cities with the highest number of HIV rates or new infections,” said **Sam Monroy**, Program Supervisor. “Even though the campaign only hit the streets in late June, there are already signs it’s having an impact. The click rate on our digital ads is much higher than on the standard kind of ads for similar things on social media. This indicates people are engaging our messages.” Sam said more concrete data will be forthcoming. (You can find more on HIV Planning and Coordination in OC [here](#).)

◀ HIV is Preventable. Even if you have HIV, you can live a long, healthy life if you take medication regularly and have an undetectable HIV Viral Load.

▶ “It’s a Human Thing” campaign ad in Spanish encouraging Orange County residents to learn the facts. An estimated 7,262 community members are living with HIV in OC. Get the facts. Talk about HIV. Take action to help end HIV stigma.



A First in Orange County for Gay Men's Health

Men had lined up before the doors even opened to the first-ever Gay Men's Health Summit in Orange County (OC). About 90 attendees turned out for the day-long event, which was sponsored by OC Health Care Agency (HCA) Public Health Services (PHS) through a grant from the State Office of AIDS to support community-based prevention activities.

The summit brought together health care providers with the community, in a safe space said **Mike Carson**, Division Manager of Clinical Services, PHS, "Our goals were to increase awareness of health issues faced by gay men in Orange County, discuss ways to increase individual ability to self-advocate

for health needs, identify sources of stigma and present tools to help address them."

"Self-advocacy is so important," said **Dr. Christopher Ried**, Medical Director for Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Sexually Transmitted Disease (HIV/STD) services at HCA. "If gay men want their health needs met they need to make it happen. They need knowledge of the health issues they face in order to have an informed discussion with their health care provider. Gay men don't neces-



sarily need to see gay doctors. What they need are open-minded providers who have a genuine interest in the health issues gay men face. When faced with discrimination they need to insist on having a respectful provider.”

Feedback from the summit has been overwhelmingly positive with comments such as, “We need more events like this,” also, “Make it an annual event,” and “Expand it to include Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer needs along with more

multi-cultural experiences.” Planning discussions are underway for future offerings and some of the ideas being tossed around include health screenings and marketing strategies to attract even more participants.

▼ Speakers at Gay Men’s Health Summit (L-to-R): Hieu Nguyen, Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team; Tim Vincent, California Prevention Training Center; Johnny Araujo, Mr. Gay Pride; Manny Muro, Rendering Access to Disease-prevention Advocacy & Retention; Jesse Cao, community member; and Dr. Christopher Ried, OC Health Care Agency.



The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) Birth and Death Registration program now has a new name, to go with its new home. It’s now the Office of Vital Records and it’s moved to a new location as of July 1st 2019. They are now located at:

Park Tower Building

200 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Suite 100-B
Santa Ana, CA 92701

“We updated the name of the program with the move,” said **David Souleles**, Deputy Agency Director, Public Health Services (PHS). “Changing the name to Office of Vital Records allows our office to be more consistent with what is used in other jurisdictions and with what is

used by the California Department of Public Health.”

The Office of Vital Records is responsible for registration of all births, fetal deaths and deaths in Orange County. This unit registers approximately 40,000 births and 20,000 deaths annually. They also issue nearly 170,000 certified copies of birth and death records and approximately 26,000 burial permits annually. The unit is charged with ensuring all registrations, issuance of burial permits, and release of records are in compliance with State laws and regulations.

◀ Office of Vital Records staff. Back (L-to-R): Megha Gupta; Viv Nethington; Casey Cross; Mai Xuan Chau; Kim Pickering; Karina Vazquez; Be Nguyen; Guadalupe Martinez; Rita Redding; Adriana Bermudez. Front (L-to-R): Sandra Lopez; Gloria Herrera. Not pictured: Eugene Corral.

It's National Breastfeeding Month

Lactation Accommodation

in the Workplace

By *Liza Matias-Scammahorn, MPH, RD, CLE*

Did you know that lactation accommodation in the workplace is required by both state and federal law? In 2018, women represented almost 47% of the total labor force in the United States. Over half of working women are moms, with many working during pregnancy and planning to return to work and breastfeed. Working moms who breastfeed experience challenges in the workplace and may not be aware of the laws that protect their decision to breastfeed. In addition, employers may not be totally familiar with the provisions they must have in place to accommodate working moms who breastfeed.

The California State Law [Lactation Accommodation 2001, Assembly Bill 1025, Frommer, Labor Code Chapter 3.8, Section 1030, 1031, 1032, and 1033] requires that employers:

- Shall provide a reasonable amount of break time to allow an employee to express breast milk for the employee's child. The break time shall, if possible, run concurrently with the work break time. Break time

for an employee that does not run concurrently with the rest time authorized for the employee by the applicable wage order of the Industrial Welfare Commission shall be unpaid. The employer is not required to allow time to pump if doing so would seriously disrupt business operations.

- Shall make reasonable efforts to provide an employee with the use of a room or other location, other than a bathroom, in close proximity to the employee's work area, for the employee to express milk in private. The room must be private and free of intrusion, used only for lactation purposes while an employee expresses milk.

Breastfeeding provides many important health benefits for mothers and infants. For infants, these benefits include decreased risk of ear infections, diarrhea, constipation, asthma and allergies. Mothers may enjoy the benefits of decreased risk of diabetes, osteoporosis, breast and ovarian cancer. The American Academy of Pediatrics

For more information on lactation accommodation, please visit these websites:

[US Department of Labor](#)

[California Breastfeeding Coalition](#)

[California WIC Association](#)

[California Department of Public Health](#)

recommends that “infants should be fed breastmilk exclusively for about 6 months, followed by continued breastfeeding as complementary foods are introduced, with continuation of breastfeeding for 1 year or longer as mutually desired by mother and infant.”

According to the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee, employer benefits for supporting breastfeeding include not only a positive public image but also lowered health care costs, reduced absenteeism because breastfed infants are healthier, as well as higher productivity and loyalty from breastfeeding employees.

Knowing your breastfeeding rights as an employee and ensuring a lactation accommodation-friendly workplace as an employer will help protect, promote and support breastfeeding in our community. If you have questions, please consult with your supervisor.



Peer-to-Peer

continued from page 1

are most definitely her life's greatest accomplishment but they truly have her “all over the map now” with their serious commitments to competitive basketball, soccer, gymnastics and the youngest just starting his acting career.

Despite her extensive work history in both private and public sectors, it was not until she came to the HCA that Maria said she found an ‘emotional’ attachment to her job. “I was establishing contracts (at Raytheon) for missiles and radar which was truly fascinating. At the County, I have been responsible for an array of procurements and contracts the County requires to maintain our landfills, roads and infrastructure which have all been tremendous learning experiences and a crucial part of supporting our County community needs. However, here at the HCA I feel that I am part of a team of people who are so passionate and committed to making a difference, helping people and truly changing lives which feels like a complete career shift for me, even though technically I’m doing the same thing I’ve always done; procurement and contracts.”

Maria’s leadership has brought accolades from her staff who say she has transformed their division. When asked how she went about bringing such change she said, “I came in and met individually with all 39 team members within the first 14 days and quarterly thereafter. I wanted to get to know each and every one of them, their skill sets and their perspective on our division, the work we do, their concerns, and what suggestions

they may have. At the end of the day, I just listened. No one knows the job and what does and does not work better than those who do the work. Furthermore, this level of staff insight assists me in ensuring everyone’s talents and interests are being utilized in their jobs, making for more successful, satisfied and productive individuals and teams.”

Maria said she is glad she made the jump and loves it here at HCA, “I think we have been able to build trust here and we did it by letting people know they have a voice, their voice is heard, and individual achievements will be recognized and rewarded while maintaining the highest level of accountability. I also always try my best to communicate and share all that I know, encouraging transparency in all that we do. We are focusing on ensuring consistency across all units and service areas as well as increasing cross-training and collaboration to enable us to provide our internal and external customers the highest level of customer service.”

Service is in her family line. As a first-generation Italian American, Maria said she learned while watching her parents after they emigrated from Sicily. “My parents came here with nothing. I worked my entire childhood in my dad’s tailor shop - an experience that has given me a solid work ethic and has made me the grateful person I am. I am grateful for this team, this professional opportunity, my amazing family and life.”

Filling Needs with Donations for YOUNG LIVES

The generosity of OC Health Care Agency (HCA) employees is helping lots of babies, toddlers and their families in Orange County (OC). A total of 10,611 items were donated by HCA staff including diapers, baby wipes, formula and food, as well as baby care products, during the “2019 Essentials for Young Lives” campaign.

Donation boxes were placed around many HCA sites during the month-long drive. This year, staff at Environmental Health (EH) at 1241 Dyer Road, Santa Ana, divided into two teams, the ‘upstairs’ and the ‘downstairs’ teams, to see who could deliver the most donations. The ‘upstairs’ team included those who work on the building’s second floor, where the Food & Pools, Hazardous Materials Mitigation, Accounting, Administration and Water Quality programs are located. The ‘downstairs’ team was made up of those who work on the first floor, and had staff from Hazardous Materials Surveillance, Mobile & Wholesale Foods, Special Events, Plan Check and Office Support.

“We decided a friendly competition would encourage participation,” said drive co-coordinator **Geniece Higgins**, Supervising Hazardous Materials Specialist (SHMS) of the decision by her and fellow co-coordinator **Susan Berg**, SHMS, to offer a prize to the floor with the most donations. “Although the ‘upstairs team’ won the competition, participants on both floors shared the grand prize of Rice Krispy treats. We wanted to reward everyone for the impressive response to the drive.”

Items from the drive go to families experiencing homelessness. “On average, a family needs 4,320 diapers a year just for one infant,” said Gina Scott, Interim Executive Director of HomeAid Orange County. “The Essentials campaign helps fill a tremendous need.”



1. ‘Upstairs Team’: Haley Daub; Sandra Martin and Christine Lane. **2.** ‘Downstairs Team’ Back row (L-to-R): Tim Grogan; Shruth Sill; Angie Higareda; and Mark Sutphin. Middle row (L-to-R): Lori Ovalle; Suzanne Peralta; Britney Nguyen; and Suzanne Medina. Front row (L-to-R): Susan Berg and Geniece Higgins. **3.** ‘Upstairs Team’ (L-to-R): Tanya Juarez; Jose Godoy; Brian Wong; Sarah Wang; Bestoor Behizadeh; Alan Marr; Cassandra Gomez; Geniece Higgins; Taren Tseng; Jenafer Forester; Leslie Moreau; Mary Jin; Alan Reynolds; Lara Adourian; Kaiser Milo; Dennis Ho; Christine Lane; Haley Daub; Jennifer Mendoza; and Bao Huynh.



County of Orange ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



“Gold Star” Awarded to Jason Austin

continued from page 8

is tied to Jason.” Never one to disregard advice, I went to sit down with Jason. What I found was an extremely humble guy and he understands law enforcement and is willing to do what is necessary to safely and successfully accomplish the mission. He has an easy going disposition and has made himself available at all hours of the day and night. He is truly a subject matter expert that is an excellent foundation in our efforts to combat homelessness.

It might be a perfect time in history with the right people in place, but relationships within the County’s various Departments are at an all time high. We’re getting along so well, all the Departments in our County. Jason is a large part of that. As cops we know how important good partners are. He’s a great partner.

Jason is married and has two teenagers at home. Life with two teenagers can be challenging, and there’s never a dull moment. He also enjoys his three dogs and traveling.

Jason will you please come forward and accept your Gold Star Award.”



A Major Conference on Childhood Obesity

Staff from the Health Care Agency (HCA) Public Health Services (PHS) welcomed stakeholders to a reception during the 10th Biennial Childhood Obesity Conference, held in Anaheim. **Maridet Ibanez**, PHS Nutrition Services Administrative Manager, served as emcee. “We were thrilled to take part in this conference which drew more than 1,100 public health professionals, educators, nutritionists, policymakers and many more, to address childhood obesity,” said Maridet, “For me, this was a great opportunity to witness the passion and dedication of those who attended, to make a difference.”

Maridet introduced PHS Deputy Agency Director **David Souleles** who addressed the theme of the conference: “Beyond Obesity: Tackling Root Causes.” David said in Orange County (OC) more than 1 in 6 (17.7%) of 5th grade students are obese and there’s a plan to tackle that, “We have identified Healthy Weight and Fitness as a focus area of our Public Health Services Strategic Plan. We are engaging in activities to create policy, systems and environmental changes to increase access to

healthy choices.”

The conference set the goals of bringing together stakeholders to share research, best practices and strategies to reduce overweight/obesity in children and adolescents. “One highlight for me,” said **Anh Thu Cao**, Staff Specialist, “was seeing the evidence that government funding for early childhood programs has successfully improved health outcomes and helped vulnerable children thrive later in life.”

Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) were also a hot topic. “SSBs are the highest contributor of added sugar in the diet,” said **Miriam Son**, Research Analyst IV, “We have a long way to go, but programs such as [“Rethink Your Drink,”](#) which educates OC residents about healthy drink options, are promising.”

There are changes in strategies at the state and local levels, from a focus on diet and physical activity to the ‘whole person’ said **Gina Osborne**, Supervising Public Health Nutritionist, “Meaning that the environment, place of residence, race equity, local and government policy,



mental and physical health, are included in the approaches.”

And it takes a community effort said **Patty Stabile**, Public Health Nutritionist II, “Education alone is not enough. It’s time to think outside the box and include issues such as housing and food and include everyone in prevention efforts from families to schools, doctors, all health professionals and lawmakers.”

▲ Anna Luciano-Acenas; Martha Aleme-Selaissie; Liza Matias-Scammahorn; Maridet Ibanez; and Anh Thu Cao.

Labor Management Committee Reflections on Winning Steve Ambriz Award

How good does it feel to win the Steve Ambriz Award? Members of the 2018 winning team, at the Youth Reporting Center (YRC), tell the Labor Management Committee it’s had an impact.

“Winning the Award for the team has meant that all of our work feels recognized by our colleagues and enhances our motivation and sense of connection with the work that we do and those who we work with in the County,” said **Jeffrey Kashou**, Service Chief I, “Also, it was just plain fun to share the joy of being this year’s recipient with our collaborative partners and with the youth in the program. Several youth told us that it made them happy they were working with an award winning team.”

“It’s been a privilege to be with the YRC,” said **Josefina Wilhelm Szasz**, YRC Volunteer. “The team has been able to celebrate the success of winning such a prestigious award as a group. It has come with a lot of positive praise for a job well done. It gives me a great sense of pride in my continued work with youth on probation.”

“It was a highpoint in my 18 years at the Health Care Agency (HCA),” said **Craig Heyde**, Mental Health Specialist, “I feel that helped our team building experience as a whole, and we felt honored to be nominated, yet alone to actually win the award among the many excellent programs that were represented.”

“It’s been a great experience,” said **Yessica Cuenca-Garcia**, Behavioral Health Clinician II, “Being recognized is always great feeling. Given that we were competing for it, was even more meaningful. Winning for me is great, but the fact that others are recognizing the awesome YRC is what I enjoyed the most. We work so hard to support these at risk youth, that often times you feel like you are not doing much; but being recognized changed that for me. Has it impacted me, of course I think it’s a motivator to do more, to hustle more to continue to show our integrity and dedication to our youth.”

Monday, August 12, 2019 is the deadline to submit an application for the 2019 Steve Ambriz Team Excellence Award. It’s designed to encourage teams to exemplify qualities of effective communication, accountability, enthusiasm, creativity and collaboration. The 2019 winning team will be recognized during a ceremony on November 13, 2019 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. For more on the Award visit [here](#) and for an application click [here](#).



For Health



As we continue enjoying the warm summer weather, it's important to stay cool and hydrated.

People and pets need to take it easy in the heat and drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. If you're looking for a low calorie and nutritious drink, try this melon cooler. It's sure to keep you feeling refreshed during the warm summer and fall days in Orange County. You can also find ways to beat the heat [here](#).

MELON COOLER

Serves 4 | $\frac{3}{4}$ cup per serving

Ingredients:

2 cups chopped melon (cantaloupe, honeydew, or watermelon)

2 cups cold water

Directions:

1. Place all ingredients in a blender
2. Blend until smooth. Pour and serve.

To enjoy the recipe as a slushy cooler, simply blend ice with melon and water. For additional healthier beverage recipes visit [here](#).



Leveraging Your Benefits



Go Back to School with Tuition Reimbursement

You don't have to wait for the start of the traditional school year to go 'back to school.' The County of Orange offers full-time and regular part-time employees the opportunity to be reimbursed for courses, certificates, vocational programs, and more through the Educational & Professional Reimbursement Program (EPRP).

Here are some important details to note:

- The reimbursement must be for education or professional development that's related to the work you do currently; or
- It must prepare you to transition to an alternate County job; or
- It must prepare you to advance/promote here at the County; and
- The expense should contribute to achieving County business objectives.

"This is a program that employees use quite often," said **Adriana Quintana**, EPRP Coordinator. "It's a two-step process. The first is to fill out the online application before you incur any expense. Supporting documents need to be submitted showing a description and cost. After initial approval, proof of payment and completion documents are required. The second step is to fill out a claim form for final approval and payment processing."

For more information, search "Educational & Professional Reimbursement Program" or "EPRP" on the HCA Intranet. In the EPRP Menu, you will find the Frequently Asked Questions and Guidelines particularly helpful in understanding the program.

You can also find information on benefit programs on the County's Benefits and Wellness Calendar [here](#).

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

Introducing Electronic W-4/DE-4 Form

Auditor-Controller Central Payroll is excited to introduce the electronic W-4/DE-4 form. The website is to be used when a change in your W-4 withholding is needed. Instead of filling out a paper form and faxing or walking the form over to Central Payroll, County of Orange employees can change their withholding online [here](#).

If you already have a W-4 on file and are not interested in changing your tax withholding allowances, then you do not need to take any action at this point.

Benefits of submitting form W-4 electronically:

- Online W-4/DE-4 provides quicker setup of withholding than traditional paper process
- Online W-4/DE-4 provides an email confirmation of withholding submission

- Online W-4/DE-4 eliminates the W-4/DE-4 statement from getting lost, misdirected, delayed or incorrectly keyed
- Employees can complete their W-4/DE-4 form at any time of day from any location
- Employees can submit multiple forms easily throughout the year

If you have any questions, you can contact AskCentralPayroll@ac.ocgov.com.

Give Blood

Red Cross Blood Drive Orange County Health Care Agency

Location: Conference Room 433
405 West 5th Street
Santa Ana 92701

**Wednesday, August 7, 2019 and
Wednesday, August 21, 2019
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Please obtain approval from your supervisor prior to registering. Donating blood must be done during break times or posting leave balances; mileage is not reimbursable. For any questions, please contact Employee Health Services at EHS@ochca.com or call (714) 565-3780.



**American
Red Cross**

Every 2 seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood.



MISSION

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

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



Connect with Us



The **What's Up** newsletter is created and distributed monthly by HCA Communications. We welcome your ideas, input and/or insight into HCA people and programs. To contribute, comment or connect please email us at hcacomm@ochca.com or call (714) 834-2178. Thank you!