

Health Director's Report
July - August 2021

- July 8 & 26, 2021 – participated on State Health Coordinating Council Public Hearings
- July 6, 2021 - NCDPI & NCDHHS Joint COVID Updates Webinar
- July 8, 2021 – Volunteer Appreciation Ice Cream Social; Thank You to the many volunteers that assisted with the mass COVID-19 vaccination clinics held January – June 2021.
- July 14, 2021 – NCALHD Committee Meetings (Raleigh, NC)
- July 14, 2021 – Orange County ARPA Task Force Meeting; meeting with other County Human Service Departments
- July 15, 2021 – NC Association of Local Health Directors Meeting (Raleigh, NC)
- July 15, 2021 – NCALHD Education & Awards Committee Mtg; proposed changes to New Health Director Orientation Training (Raleigh, NC)
- July 19, 2021 – Large/High Impact County COVID-19 Call with DHHS
- July 19, 2021 – Region V Health Director's Meeting at Whitted in Hillsborough, NC
- July 20, 2021 - Region 4 Regional Meeting LHD CMHRP and CMARC) Meet and Greet
- July 20, 2021 – Orange County Employee Town Hall Meeting to discuss results of Employee Workplace Survey and Reopening Plans
- July 21, 2021 – K12 Guidance Updates Call with Dr. Betsy Tilson
- July 21, 2021 – Call to discuss CMARC/CMHRP Chatham and Orange Counties
- July 27, 2021 – Health Director & Medical Director/Medical Consultant meeting with Dr. Tilson and DHHS Team (Virtual)
- July 27, 2021 – Local Health Department COVID-19 Call with DHHS
- July 28, 2021 - Call with Harvard University, François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights
- July 28, 2021 - CHCCS/OCS/OCHD/ABC Collaborative - K12 Guidance Update Discussion
- July 28, 2021 – 1-on-1 with County Manager
- August 2, 2021 – Large/High Impact County COVID-19 Call with DHHS
- August 6-7, 2021 – Environmental Health Annual Mobile Home Park Inspections at Ridgewood
- August 7, 2021 – COVID-19 Update; Health & Justice Presentation for Northern Orange Democratic Party (Virtual)
- August 9, 2021 – NCALHD Advocacy Meeting (Virtual)
- August 9, 2021 – OCS Board of Education Meeting (Virtual)
- August 10, 2021 - Child Fatality Prevention Team Meeting (Virtual)
- August 11, 2021 - Orange County ARPA Task Force Meeting; meeting with other County Human Service Departments

- August 12, 2021 - Orange County Department Directors Meeting (Virtual)
- August 16, 2021 – NCALHD Executive Committee Meeting (Virtual)
- August 16, 2021 – Region V Health Directors Meeting (Virtual)
- August 16, 2021 - Large/High Impact County COVID-19 Call with DHHS
- August 17, 2021 – Orange County Long Term Recovery Planning Team Leads Meeting
- August 18-19, 2021 – NCALHD Committee & Full Association Meetings (Raleigh, NC)
- CONGRATULATIONS to Victoria Hudson, Environmental Health Director! Victoria received the Trenton G Davis Award at the 58th Annual Conference of Eastern District North Carolina Public Health Association on August 11, 2021.

The award is the EDNCPHA's highest award for environmental health professionals, presented in recognition of distinguished and devoted service. Victoria's devotion was recognized for her efforts with food safety in restaurants and bars through the Front of the House Food Safety curriculum, fully FDA standardized retail food inspection staffing, involvement in associations, and managing communications during Covid response.

Trenton Davis worked as a Public Health Sanitarian and a Professor for 30 years. He is considered the founder of Environmental Health Science in North Carolina before retiring from ECU's College of Health and Human Performance. Dr. Davis was an esteemed member of nationally recognized organizations which advocate and develop professionals for the field of Environmental Health.

Legislative Updates

The House has approved its budget and it includes the \$36 million for Communicable Disease for public health.

Senate Bill 191 (No Patient Left Alone Act) an act providing patient visitation rights will not be impacted during declared disasters and emergencies and directing the DHHS to impose a civil penalty for any violation of those rights; going back to Senate for review after multiple revisions.

State law (Session Law 2021-110) changed on August 20, 2021, and health care providers are now required to obtain **written consent** from a parent or legal guardian of a minor prior to administering *any vaccine that that has been granted emergency use authorization and is not yet fully approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration* to an individual under 18 years of age. Once a COVID-19 vaccine has received full FDA approval for a minor's age group, the previously established minor consent law NC General Statute 90-21.5 applies and gives minors the legal authority to consent for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of reportable communicable diseases, including COVID-19. Minors must also demonstrate decisional capacity to consent to the vaccine, meaning that they are able to understand and make decisions about their health.

As of August 23, 2021, the FDA **approved** the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (now marketed as **Comirnaty**) for the prevention of COVID-19 disease in individuals 16 years of age and older. Since Pfizer's authorization for 12-15 year olds was expanded later on May 20, 2021, after the initial Pfizer authorization for individuals 16 years and older, Pfizer continues to be available under emergency use authorization for 12-15 year olds. At this time, **written consent from parent or a legal guardian is required for 12-15 year olds to receive Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine** because of the emergency use authorization. **Adolescents 16 and 17 years of age have the ability to consent for COVID-19 vaccine**, if they show the decisional capacity to do so. Moderna and J&J COVID-19 vaccines are not currently authorized for individuals under 18 at this time.

COVID-19 Updates

Orange County Status:

As of August 25, 2021:

NC Cases –1,172,571 Deaths – 14, 212

OC Cases –9,602 Deaths – 102

Over the past 7 days we've had 194 new cases. We've had 1 additional death since the week of April 5th.

- % positive cases – 3.5% (NC rate is 13.5%); Per CDC our transmission rate is currently HIGH; this is determined by total # of new cases per 100,000 persons in past 7 days (≥ 100) AND % positive during last 7 days ($\geq 10\%$); if the two indicators suggest different transmission levels, the higher level is selected.
- We have 2 outbreaks in the County; both at Nursing Homes.
- NC DHHS Vaccinations dashboard found at <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard/vaccinations> :
- Orange County (Population 12+ years of age)
 - 118,857 first dose – 91%
 - 114,077 full vaccine series – 87%

Due to the highly contagious Delta variant of COVID-19, North Carolina is experiencing the fastest acceleration in cases since the pandemic started. Last week, we had the largest single-day jump in ICU admissions since the beginning of the pandemic. If cases keep increasing at the current rate, we will pass our previous peak, which occurred in January before vaccines were widely available, in a matter of weeks. The Delta variant's high rate of transmission leaves unvaccinated people very vulnerable.

Testing is Widely Available: Anyone who has symptoms of or has been exposed to COVID-19 should get tested as soon as possible. To find a testing site in your community, go

to ncdhhs.gov/GetTested. **People who are not experiencing serious symptoms should not go to the emergency department for routine COVID-19 testing.** People should seek medical attention immediately for serious symptoms such as trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, or bluish lips or face.

Early Testing Essential to Accessing Treatment: While vaccines are the best protection against serious illness, hospitalization and death, [monoclonal antibody therapy](#) can reduce the severity of COVID-19 symptoms and decrease the likelihood of hospitalization, especially in high-risk patients. If you test positive for COVID-19, monoclonal antibody therapy must be administered within 10 days of your first COVID-19 symptoms, so it is crucial to get tested early.

Vaccines Are Protecting Against Hospitalization and Death: The CDC shared new data this week showing that vaccines continue to be remarkably effective in reducing risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant. North Carolina hospital leaders have shared that almost everyone in the ICU and on a ventilator is unvaccinated. Bottom line is that vaccines save lives. [More than 10 million doses](#) of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in North Carolina.

Immunocompromised People Can Now Receive Additional Dose of Moderna/Pfizer Vaccines: The CDC recommends that immunocompromised individuals who received the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines get an [additional dose for better protection](#) from COVID-19. Emerging data suggest some people with moderately to severely compromised immune systems do not always build the same level of immunity after vaccination compared to people who are not immunocompromised.

Boosters May be Available by Late September: Although vaccination provides highly effective protection against hospitalizations and severe illness, we are seeing a decrease in vaccine effectiveness against mild to moderate infection—people getting sick but not severely ill and needing hospitalization. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced planning is underway to support booster shots for the general population. Boosters will likely be available beginning the end of September, pending full review and recommendations by the FDA and CDC. People who received the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines will likely be eligible, starting 8 months after their second dose. Research is still underway regarding boosters for Johnson & Johnson.