

Health Director's Report

February, 2016

- Just as I sat down to write this report I received an email that the contract for the software changes associated with Central Permitting for the county has just been signed! To put this into perspective for the newer members on the Board, this is a topic I first reported on in my very first Orange County Board of Health meeting over 4 years ago. At that time I reported that previous to my arrival a group had been working on this issue, but due to various challenges had abandoned the effort. A new group gathered together in 2012 and went methodically through every single issue, knocked down every single barrier and we are now ready to move forward to implement this new software/process. I never thought it would take this long and then I wondered if it would ever happen. So glad to report it has begun. Estimated implementation time is 18 months. As a result of this project, customers needing permits from the county can get the bulk of the work done on-line and transition relatively seamlessly through the process. The County will also be able to better monitor where the permit is in the approval process and identify/resolve slow spots in the system.
- Related to this is an action approved by the BOCC last month to approve an addition of a .5FTE front desk person in both Environmental Health and Planning. We will combine our .5FTE with an existing .5FTE to create a full-time (time-limited to 18 months) position in Environmental Health. This will allow programmatic staff to devote time to program implementation rather than working at the front desk as they do now.
- Liska gave a wonderful update to the BOCC last month covering the results of our annual report. This is the first year we won't have a joint BOH/BOCC meeting and Liska's report took the place of that. I've attached the annual report as a refresher.
- We are moving forward with our pilot of Health in All Policies work with Jail Health. We'll have an update for you in a few months.
- The County Manager has asked Nancy Coston (DSS Director) and me to work on a comprehensive plan for addressing mental health access issues in Orange County. She would like recommendations this time next year and I will keep you posted on our progress.
- A coalition of agencies (including the Health Department) is requesting that the Orange County Board of Education change its policy and allow collection of Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance data. We all need this information to monitor health and mental health issues in our youth and design/evaluate programs and services targeting these issues. Currently the BOE requires active consent to participate in the YRBS. That meant we had 15 responses from all High School students.
- We continue to monitor the Zika Virus situation with a focus on surveillance and mosquito control. This spring we'll be collaborating with our municipal partners to send out information in concert so everybody will see the same mosquito control information at multiple locations/times. So far we have no Zika Virus cases diagnosed in North Carolina.