

2020 ORANGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT



Screenshot taken at the June 15, 2020 Orange County Health Department all staff meeting.



NEW AND EMERGING IN 2020

COVID-19 in Orange County (OC)

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

January 25, 2020

The Orange County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) moves to a monitoring posture for COVID-19. **This counts as the first day of the pandemic response.**

March 3, 2020

Gov. Cooper and NCDHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen **confirmed the first case of COVID-19** in North Carolina, in Wake County.



March 10, 2020

Gov. Cooper signed an executive order **shutting down K-12 public schools for at least two weeks and banning public gatherings of over 100 people**. Three days later, he announced an executive order that closed restaurants and bars for dine-in customers.

March 13, 2020

The Orange County EOC is fully activated and **a state of emergency was declared** in order to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

March 17, 2020

UNC-Chapel Hill (UNC) closes the dorms to students. **COVID-19 cases are confirmed in all 50 states.**

March 19, 2020

The first case of COVID-19 is identified in OC. Contact tracing begins.

March 23, 2020

Gov. Cooper signed an executive order shutting down all hair salons, gyms and movie theatres as well as **banning public gatherings of over 50 people.**

March 30, 2020

Gov. Cooper **issues a Stay at Home Order** that limits leaving home to traveling to work, or engaging in essential activities such as seeking food or medical assistance.



April 10, 2020

OC reports first COVID-19 associated death. There are outbreaks of COVID-19 at two OC long-term care facilities.

COVID-19 in Orange County, continued

May 21, 2020

OC moves to “Safer at Home” Phase, **advising that all businesses require customers to wear a face covering while inside the business.**

BY ORDER OF ORANGE COUNTY

Face Coverings
REQUIRED
in Public



June 12, 2021

Ahead of the NC state order, **OC mandates face coverings in public** for everyone ages 12 and up. The age is later lowered to ages 5 and up. OCHD begins offering free weekday COVID-19 testing in Hillsborough.

June 10, 2020

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 hits 2 million in the United States as new infections continue to rise in 20 states. Cases begin to spike as states ease social distancing restrictions.



June 16, 2020

The OC Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) releases a resolution denouncing the murder of George Floyd and approves the health director’s **declaration of structural racism as a “public health crisis” in OC.**

July 29, 2020

In a letter to university leadership, **the Health Director recommends UNC consider begin the fall 2020 semester with virtual classes** and restrict on-campus housing to at-risk students with housing needs.

August 10, 2020

UNC students officially return to class with the requirement that they wear face masks and abide by social distancing guidelines.

August 17, 2020

After only a week of classes, **UNC announces it will move to remote learning** indefinitely due to the ongoing spread of COVID-19 on campus.



September 17, 2020

Gov. Cooper announces that elementary school and charter school students may return to classrooms at full capacity on October 5. **OCHD has worked closely with K-12 public schools and has successfully prevented any outbreaks in the 2020-2021 school year.**

October 15, 2020

President Trump visits NC and states, “North Carolina, tell your governor open up your state, open up your schools.” On the same day **North Carolina reported 2,532 new lab-confirmed cases, the highest daily count thus far.**

COVID-19 in Orange County, continued

December 1, 2020

*It is announced that COVID-19 vaccines will be free and distribution will begin soon in phases. **A record high of 2,033 are hospitalized in NC with illnesses related to COVID-19.***



December 14, 2020

*The first shipment of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine arrives in NC. **Despite pleas from public health officials to limit Thanksgiving celebrations to immediate households only, a post-holiday surge in COVID-19 infections leads to hospitalizations doubling in one month, which threatens to overwhelm the healthcare system.***

December 30, 2020

***OCHD hosts its first vaccine clinic** at Cedar Ridge High School in Hillsborough to vaccinate first responders.*

January 14, 2021

*The human services group convenes for the first time. **Consisting of community members, county staff, and partners, the group works to ensure equitable vaccine distribution in OC by eliminating barriers and facilitating pop-up vaccine events throughout the county.***

March 13, 2021

One-year anniversary of the pandemic in OC.

The county has had 7,852 cases of COVID-19 and 97 deaths and is averaging two new cases each day. 19.1% of OC is fully vaccinated.

GET YOUR SHOT 

April 7, 2021

***Everyone age 16 and up is eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.** On May 10th the emergency use authorization is approved to administer the Pfizer vaccine to ages 12 and up.*

May 21, 2021

OC has no long-term care facilities in outbreak status for the first time during the pandemic.

There were 25 outbreaks in 13 facilities. These outbreaks included 390 resident cases and 242 staff cases, resulting in 69 deaths (more than 2/3 of all deaths in the county).

June 30, 2021

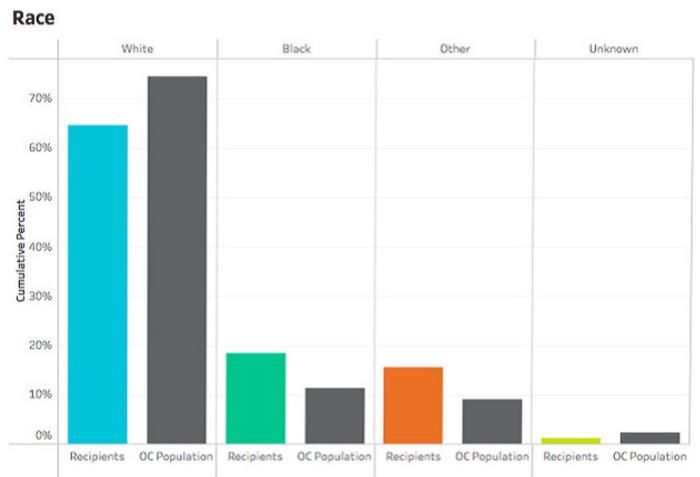
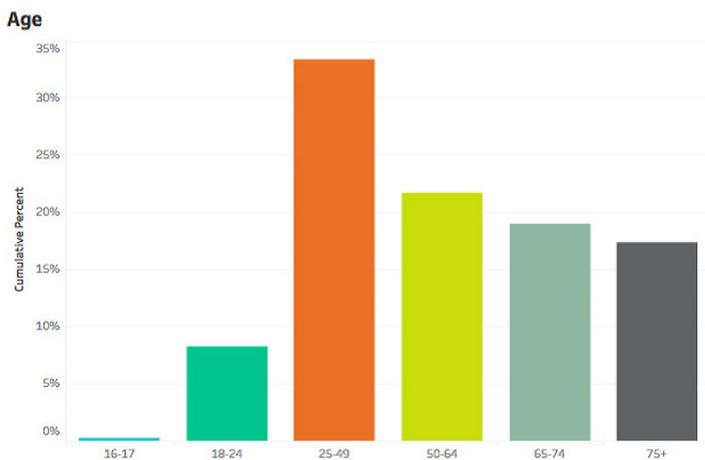
*The EOC is deactivated. This counts as the last day of the pandemic response. This is, by far, the longest EOC activation in the history of OC at 530 days. Prior to the pandemic, the longest was the 2004 ice storm for two weeks and four days for Hurricane Fran. **OC leads the state in vaccination with 62% fully vaccinated.***

Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in Orange County

The data below represents laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases, deaths, and other demographic information for both Orange County and North Carolina.

As of June 10, 2021	Orange County	North Carolina
Total Tests	376,753	13,455,767
Total Cases	8,576	1,007,273
Total Deaths	101	13,246
People Vaccinated with at least One Dose	94,099	4,287,113

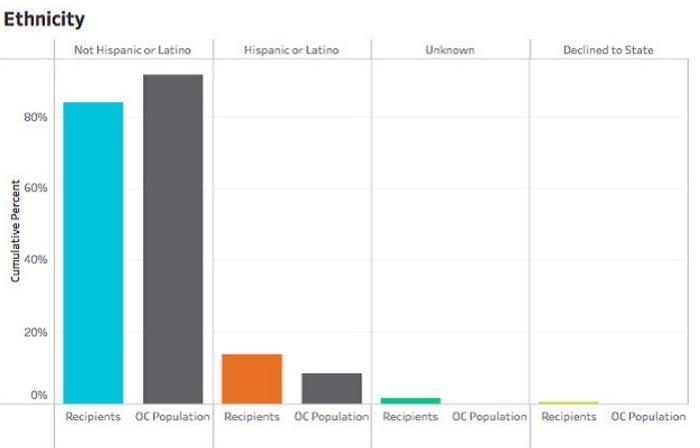
The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases is disaggregated by age, gender, race and ethnicity to help identify which groups, if any, are impacted more (or less) than any other group. Data shows that the **highest rates (32%) of cases are among those 18-24 and 25-49 years of age**. Women make up 54% of the population and 53% of confirmed cases, while 46% of OC are men but men represent 47% of the cases. **In regards to race and ethnicity, the majority of cases confirmed are experienced by non-Hispanic, white individuals.** It's important to note that Black and African Americans make up 11% of OC's total population but 16% of Blacks and African Americans tested positive for COVID-19².



EVERYONE 12 or older is now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine

The Pfizer vaccine is approved for ages 12 and up and Moderna and J & J are approved for ages 18 and up. Getting vaccinated is free and convenient. Check out www.orangecountync.gov/getyourshot to see the schedule of walk-in and pop-up clinics. Or visit www.myspot.nc.gov to choose a time and date that works for your schedule! You may also call 919-913-8088 to schedule. Spanish and other languages are available.





COVID-19 Vaccines

Vaccines are one of the most effective tools to prevent COVID-19. They work with your body's natural defenses create immunity, and prepare it to fight the virus, if exposed. OCHD made plans to ensure that Moderna, Pfizer and Jansen vaccines were, and continue to be distributed equitably and efficiently to the whole community. OCHD, Emergency Management and UNC Health worked

closely to begin setting up vaccine clinics throughout the county in December 2020. Stationary events have been provided at the Friday Center in Chapel Hill and at the Whitted Human Services Center, as well as pop-up events throughout the county. Initial phases of distribution concentrated on the most vulnerable populations, including long-term care facilities, first responders, healthcare workers and others involved in treating COVID-19 patients or administering the vaccine. The [OCHD vaccine page](#) has the latest schedule of walk-in and pop-up clinics.

OC is leading the state in vaccinations with over 60% of community members fully vaccinated*. However, there are still individuals who experience barriers to get vaccinated. The Mobile Vaccine Team encourages the homebound, or people who are otherwise unable to travel to a vaccine clinic, to visit www.orangecountync.gov/MobileVax or call (919) 245-6127. We encourage anyone who may be encountering challenges to getting vaccinated, such as a lack of transportation, to call the COVID-19 registration center at (919) 913-8088. Spanish and other languages available.

JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

During an emergency the county's EOC is activated as well as the Joint Information Center (JIC). **The JIC operates out of the Health Department and serves to unify the information network so that all community members receive consistent messaging about the emergency as it evolves.** It also serves as a centralized portal for information and complaints. Messaging is available in multiple languages and is delivered through many channels and in a variety of formats in order to bridge the digital and literacy divide. The JIC and the larger, county-wide communicators workgroup meet often to address disinformation, review new COVID-19 guidance and to disseminate ready to use resources in one, unified voice.

Joint Information Center (JIC)

Public Information Officer (PIO) | Kristin Prelipp

E-Newsletter Krishnaveni Balakrishnan		Media Inquiries Todd McGee	Call Center Donna King
Immigrant Refugee Susan Clifford		Web Master Lee Barnes	COVID 19 Email Dana Crews
FSA Families Erika Cervantes		Equity Officer Beverly Scurry	Emergency Preparedness Natalie Bontrager
FSA Partners Meredith McMonigle		Graphic Design Melissa Blackburn	SMS and Texting Caroline Shumaker
Refugee Community Partnership	OC Immigrant & Refugee Health Coalition	Business Liasion Victoria Hudson	
El Centro Hispano	Refugee Support Center	Social Media Ana Salas	
CHICLE	Family Success Alliance	Informatics Juliet Sheridan	
Town of Chapel Hill- Building Integrated Communities	Apoyo- Centro para la Comunidad	Resource Coordinator Rita Krosner	
		Liasion to OC Sheriff Alicia Stemper	
		Communicators Workgroup	
		Community Partners	
		Board of Health	
		Volunteers	
		Media	



Six Feet Apart
Social distancing graphics to remind people to keep a safe distance away from each other while out in public.



Image (PNG) in English, Español, Chinese, Arabic, Burmese, Karen, Kinyarwanda, Swahili

Stickers for printing on Avery mailing labels SIZE 94207 in English & Español

PDF in English/Español

Practice the 3Ws



Image (PNG) in English & Español

Social Distancing



PDF in English/Español

How to Wash Your Hands

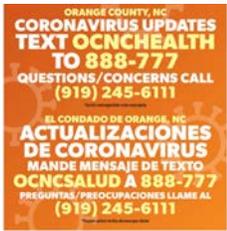


PDF in English, Español, & Chinese

Image (PNG) in English, Español, & Chinese



www.orangecountync.gov/Coronavirus



Thank You For WEARING A FACE COVERING
Turabashimiye ko MWAMBAYE AGAPFUKAMUNWA



* as of June 20, 2021

OCHD Pandemic Response by the Numbers

Item	Number	Description / Notes
Infection prevention visits to long-term care facilities	85	Performed by the OC Strike Team and the Regional Infection Prevention Support Team.
Total COVID-19 tests conducted by OCHD	36,200	Since September 2020 OCHD has offered free, daily, walk-in COVID-19 testing every at two locations in OC.
Hits to the OCHD COVID-19 website	321,000	www.orangecountync.gov/coronavirus
Hits to the OCHD COVID-19 vaccine website	180,000	www.orangecountync.gov/getyourshot
Hits to the OCHD COVID-19 testing website	89,000	www.orangecountync.gov/testing
COVID-19 text messages	525	Sent in English and Spanish to 4,305 community members each time.
COVID-19 newsletters	94	Each edition of the newsletter goes out to 1,716 subscribers and is also posted on multiple social media channels.
COVID-19 cases investigated	9,251	COVID-19 case investigations are initiated when OCHD receives a positive COVID-19 test result report from a laboratory.
COVID-19 contacts traced	9,168	Notifying contacts of exposure, addressing concerns, referring for SARS-CoV-2 testing, encouraging self-quarantine, monitoring of symptoms, and assessing the need for additional supportive services during the quarantine period.
COVID-19 vaccinations administered by OCHD	22,327	The total OC vaccination statistics may be found at the NCDHHS dashboard .
Pop-up COVID-19 vaccine clinics by OCHD	75	Includes community COVID-19 events held all over the county and organized by the human services group.
Calls answered by the COVID-19 information line	7,524	919-245-6111 has been available to community members for questions about COVID-19 and is able to serve non English-speaking callers.
Press releases	111	Press releases are regularly translated to other languages and include a weekly COVID-19 data update.
Vaccine postcards distributed	10,000+	A low-literacy, multilingual postcard has been distributed widely via businesses and community partners in order to span the digital divide.
Complaints addressed by Environmental Health	565	The JIC publicized a complaint form so community members could ask for assistance with COVID-19 regulations at businesses.
Social media posts	10,585	Multilingual COVID-19 information on Facebook Twitter, Instagram and Nextdoor. 8,801 shares with 59,331 clicks.
Videos published	55	Videos published on a variety of COVID-19 topics in English, Spanish, Chinese, Kinyarwanda, Swahili, Karen, Burmese and Arabic with a total of 9,274 views.
Volunteers trained and deployed to staff vaccine sites	2,270	66 volunteers and staff gave more than 100 shots each. The top vaccinator gave 837 shots.

(From January 25, 2020 to June 28, 2021)

DENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

2020 Highlights

- New Dental Director:** In November the Dental Clinic welcomed a new dental director, Dr. Monica Meng-Haggerty. She brings with her many years of experience working in public health, education and private practice. Dr. Meng-Haggerty is a familiar face as she has worked as a temporary dentist for the clinic before. Since starting, she has helped increased the number of patients seen each day. She has also worked to secure a steady supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including N95 masks, to allow the clinic to add an additional day of service to the schedule in an effort to return to pre-pandemic clinic operations.
- Delta Dental Grant:** The Dental Clinic received a \$2500 grant from Delta Dental Foundation to purchase oral hygiene supplies and toys for children. In addition, the grant provides for special fluoride varnishes and sealants that can be applied to younger children who are anxious about visiting the dentist. This increased exposure to fluoride early on helps prevent cavities in children and reduces the number of patients that would normally need more aggressive treatments such as fillings, stainless steel crowns and extractions.
- COVID-19 Response:** The Dental Clinic has done a tremendous job navigating the foreign waters of the pandemic. In March 2020, the clinic started limiting appointment types to emergencies. The clinic was forced to close from April 16th to May 11th. After reopening the clinic provided services on Tuesday through Thursday with extended appointment durations, proper PPE and following proper sanitizing protocol. Overall, more than 3,000 patients were rescheduled due to pandemic. Staff demonstrated extreme flexibility by taking on new duties such as contact tracing, community outreach, communication, as well as assisting at testing and vaccination events.



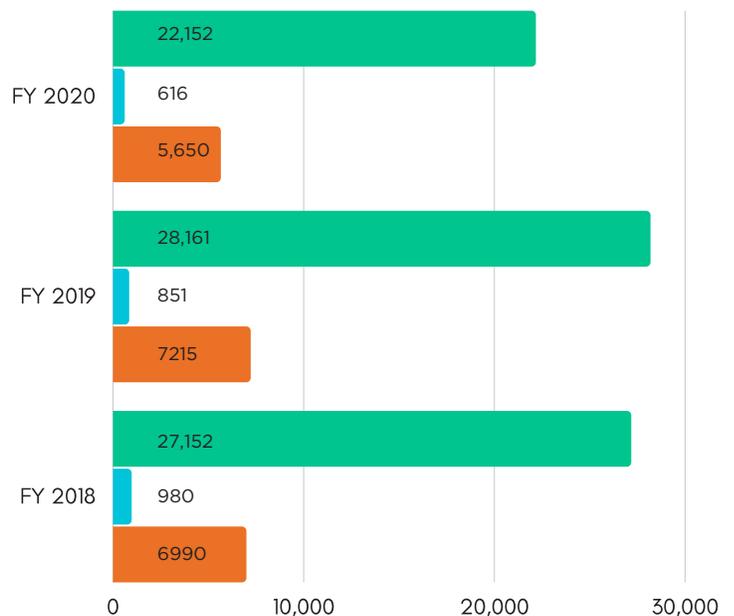
Dr. Meng-Haggerty

Coming in 2021

The Orange County Mobile Dental Clinic was delivered in June of 2020 and will be open to see patients in 2021.



- Total Procedures
- Total New Patients
- Total Visits



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

2020 Highlights

- COVID-19 Response:** Staff devoted their time to education, training, complaint investigation, safety plan review, and community partner meetings in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Orange County. As the stay at home restrictions were gradually lifted, staff worked to prepare employees of local businesses for their return to work by teaching them the **Count on Me NC curriculum**. This COVID-19 safe business guidance was presented in many languages and was critical to getting businesses safely back up and running.
- Continuity of Services:** Many environmental health departments in the state chose to discontinue the vast majority of their services during the pandemic but Orange County staff **devoted their time to both the COVID-19 response and pre-pandemic services**. Staff were recognized by local and State associations for this diligent work during the response and recovery.
- Well Policy Change:** As of July 1, 2020, a new policy was implemented to ensure that after a well repair, or anytime a well is unsealed, that the water is sampled **to make sure that it is safe to drink**. About 50% of the wells repaired in 2020 fell under the new policy, and it was well received by the well owners.



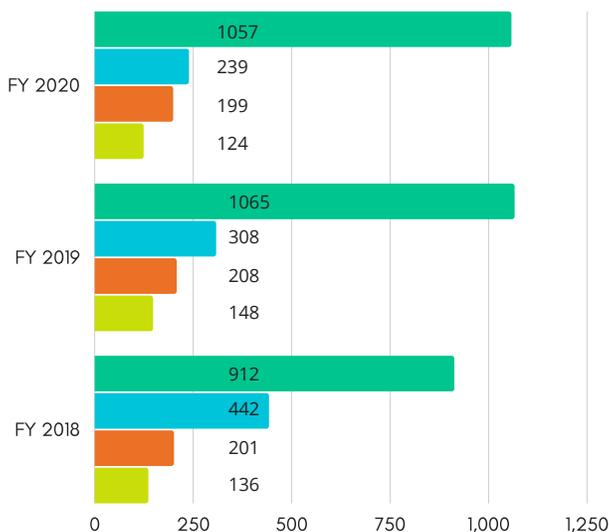
EH Director Victoria Hudson served as the Incident Commander for many COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics that took place throughout the county. They were instrumental in the equitable distribution of the vaccine.

Retail Food, Lodging and Institution Inspections

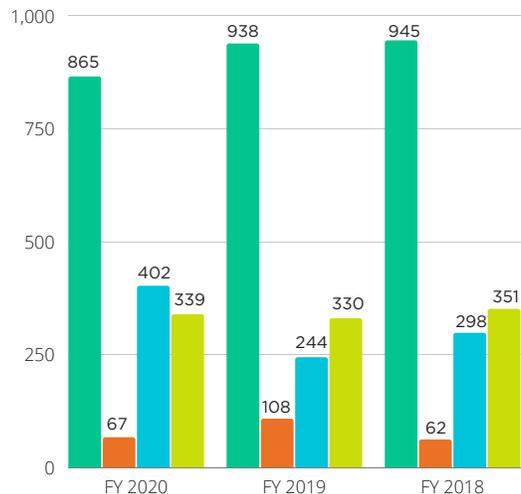
Total Inspections in 2020: 1720

- Retail Food Service
- Other Inspections*
- Public Swimming Pools
- Childcare Centers

**Examples of "Other Inspections" would be Adult Care Facilities, Food Trucks and Lodging Establishments.*

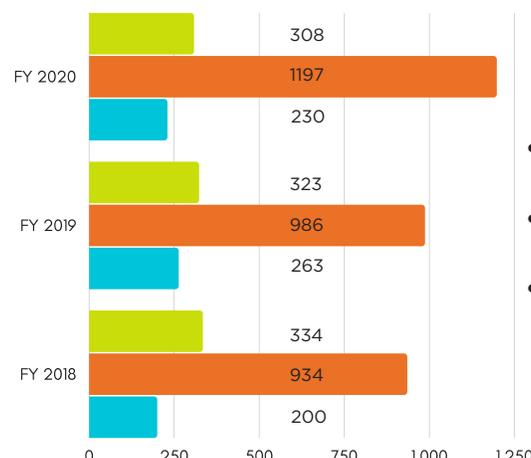


Onsite Water Protection Services



- Septic System Inspections
- Failing Systems Repaired
- Improvement Permits
- Septic Construction Permits

Wells



- New Well Permits Issued
- Water Samples Analyzed
- New Wells Completed

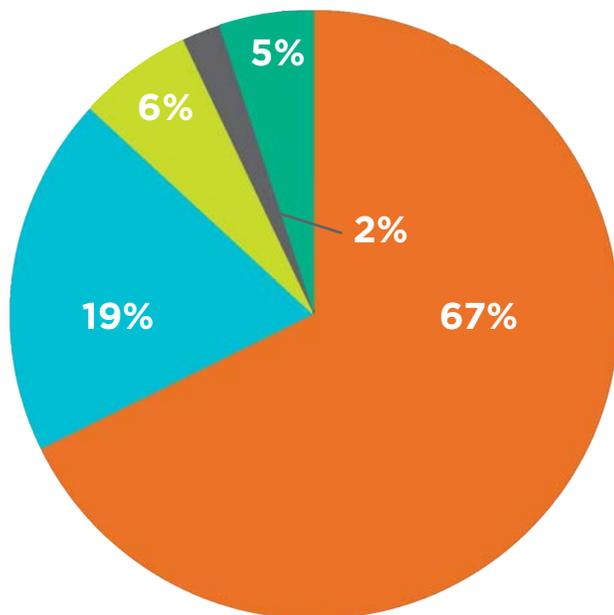
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

2020 Highlights

- **COVID-19 Response:** 50% of the Finance and Administrative (FAS) division staff were re-deployed to the pandemic response during 2020. New duties ranged from launching new systems to support COVID-19 case and vaccine tracking; supervising state call center staff for scheduling vaccine appointments; staffing COVID-19 testing sites; planning and staffing COVID-19 vaccine clinics; meeting with external groups about COVID-19 impacts and communication; and serving various roles in the Emergency Operations Center.
- **Electronic Death Certificate:** OC was one of the pilot counties to launch a new electronic death certificate process. During the pandemic the deputy registrar, Dominika Gazdzinska, also began performing affidavits of parentage (AOP) in order to serve over 100 couples who could not procure an AOP because the state's office was shut down due to pandemic.

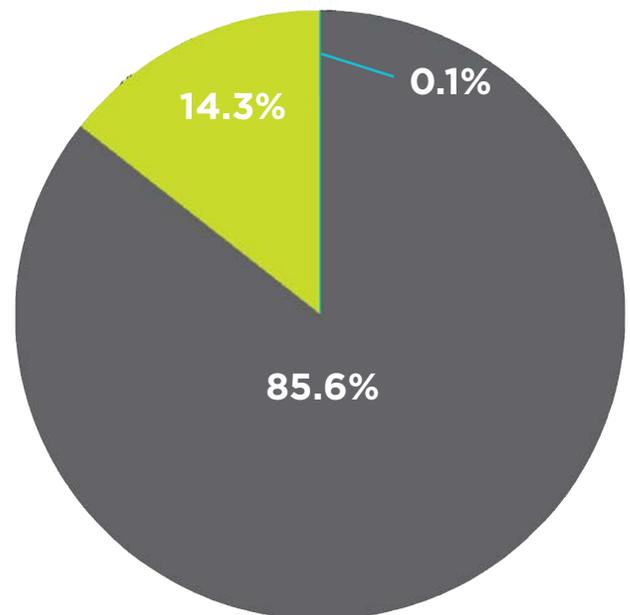
Revenue

Fiscal Year 2020 = \$9,870,050



Expenses

Fiscal Year 2020 = \$9,870,050



Revenue

- County Appropriation
- Personal Health
- Environmental Health
- Finance, Health Promotions, Multi-Year Grants
- Dental (Service & Grants)

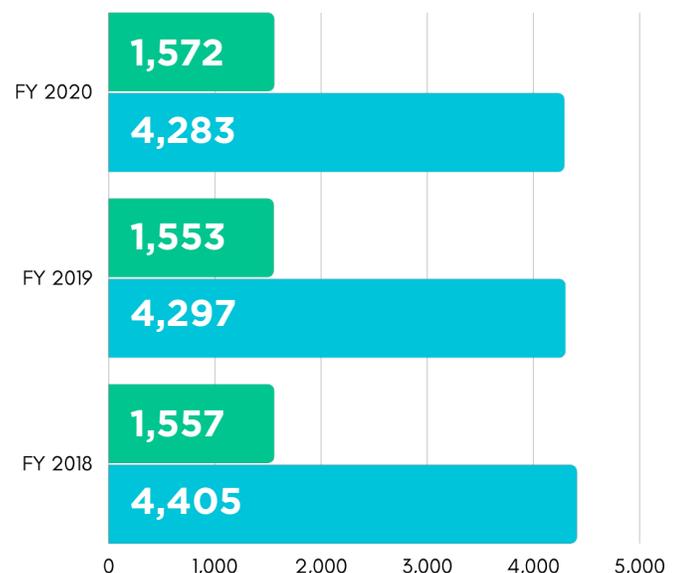
Expenses

- Capital
- Personnel
- Operating

Vital Records

- Death Certificates
- Birth Certificates

Vital Records



COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

2020 Highlights

In 2020 the Personal Health Services was divided, which created the new **Community Health Services Division**. It includes:

- Family Success Alliance (FSA)
- Family Home Visiting
- Health Promotion and Education



*Dana Crews,
Community Health
Services Director*

Family Success Alliance



FAMILY SUCCESS ALLIANCE

• **Community Council:** In January 2020, the FSA Community Council was formed. The Council currently consists of 10 FSA parents and other representatives of specific communities in Orange County who have a strong interest in advocating and making changes with their neighbors. It is FSA's mission to learn from these leaders about the strengths and needs of each community to better support and promote healthy outcomes for all.



*Erika Cervantes Muñoz, FSA Connections
Navigator at a COVID-19 testing event in
July of 2020*

• **COVID-19 Response:** Navigators worked to:

- link families to food resources
- identify communities for distribution sites
- to support parents and children in adapting to distance learning
- complete emergency rental, unemployment and utility assistance applications
- help families to secure childcare
- provide COVID-19 information updates at the county and state level
- staff testing and vaccination distribution sites.
- perform contact tracing and daily monitoring of positive COVID-19 community members
- respond to calls and emails for the Orange County vaccination hotline

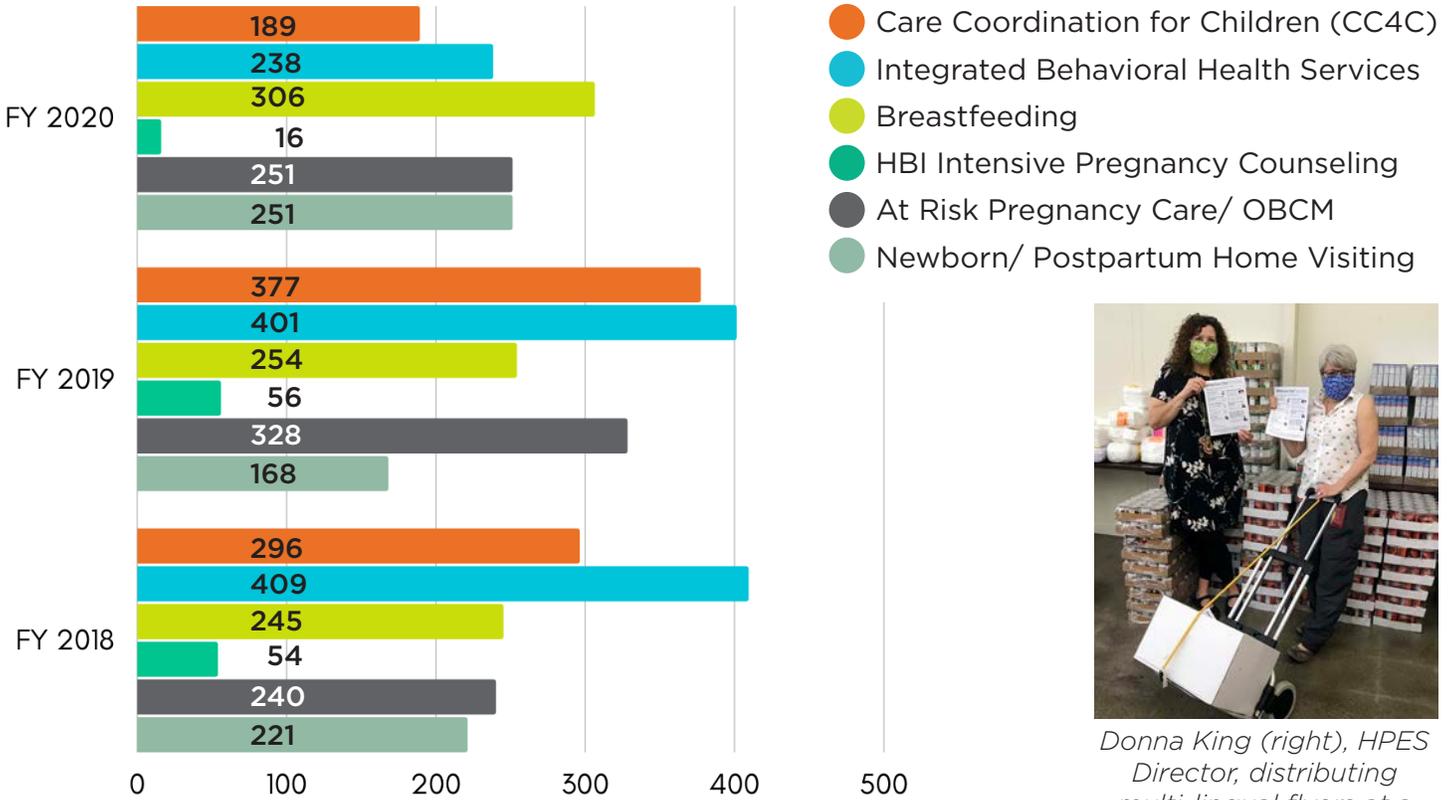
• **Emergency Housing Assistance:** FSA was recognized by the Orange County Housing and Community Development Department for the Navigator's work to connect Orange County residents to housing resources. This program served 1,245 households and provided over \$4 million to prevent eviction.

• **FSA Connections:** The FSA Connections program, which offers access to information about new and existing resources and programs in the county, saw a great increase in enrollment in 2020. The program is now available to any resident of Orange County who needs short-term support, regardless of whether or not there is a child in the home.

COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

Family Home Visiting

Annual Visits by Maternal Health and Family Home Visiting Programs



Donna King (right), HPES Director, distributing multi-lingual flyers at a food distribution event.

Health Promotion and Education

• Tobacco Prevention and Control

- 25 referrals for individual Tobacco Treatment Counseling. Of the 25 referrals, 10 participated in six or more weekly sessions and eight clients on a weekly basis. Of these eight clients four have been smoke free for at least three months.
- Six FreshStart classes were offered virtually serving 78 community members.
- 261 Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) boxes were distributed to community members.

• Healthy Carolinians of Orange County (HCOOC)

- The HCOOC manager completed Results Based Accountability (RBA) certification.
- The [2020 State of the County Health Report \(SOTCH\)](#) was completed.

• Healthy Homes

- 15 referrals
- Two virtual Healthy Homes classes hosted in both English and Spanish



Rita Krosner, Tobacco Prevention and Control, staffing a COVID-19 testing event.

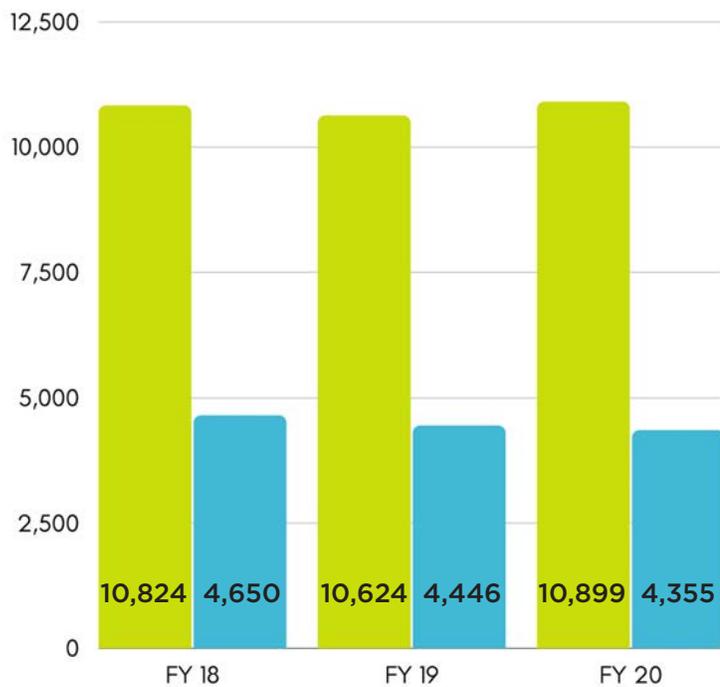
PERSONAL HEALTH SERVICES

2020 Highlights

In 2020 the Personal Health Services was divided. It now includes:

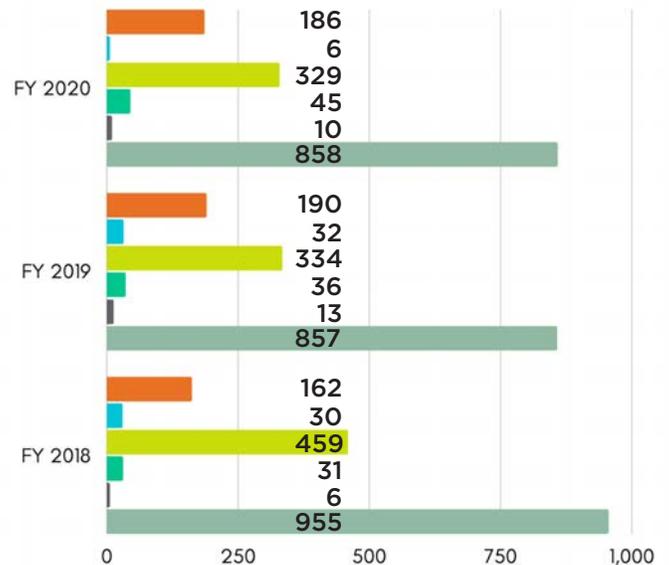
- Medical Services
- Communicable Disease
- Nutrition Services
- Immigrant and Refugee Health
- **COVID-19 Response:** Personal Health Services staff assisted in the COVID-19 response by conducting case investigations, respiratory diagnostic clinic referral follow-up, as well as answering medical questions for the COVID-19 call center.
- **Tele-Health:** To limit the spread of COVID-19 many interventions were put in place, such as conducting well child checks and family planning appointments via tele-health. In the case of appointments that must take place in-person, visits were structured to eliminate face-to-face interactions as much as possible, such as conducting patient screenings by telephone. Prior to entering the building people were screened and medications were mailed directly. Routine Immunizations were distributed through drive-thru events throughout Orange County.
- **Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Clinic:** The demand for STD treatment increased. In response, a STD express clinic was launched to promote early screening and prevention.
- **Self-Monitoring Blood Pressure:** The maternal health staff changed the frequency of visits and provided blood pressure cuffs and education to promote self-monitoring for pregnant patients.

Medical Clinic



- Patient Encounters
- Unique Patients

Community Health



- Reportable CD Investigations
- Refugee Health Screenings
- Rabies-related Referrals
- New Syphilis Cases
- New HIV Cases
- New STD Investigations

PERSONAL HEALTH SERVICES

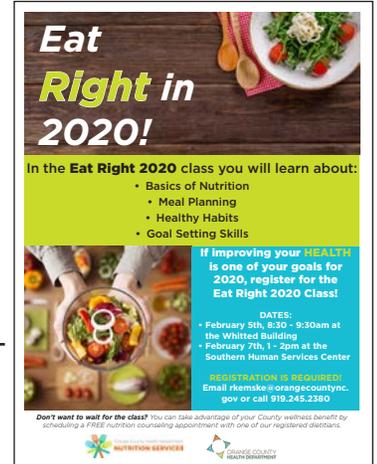
Nutrition Services

The Nutrition Services Section offers:

- **Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT)** 852 encounters in 2020
- **Employee Wellness** programs include Eat Right 2020, Staying Well at Home, and Nutrition for Exercise with a total of 98 wellness nutrition services appointments
- **CDC Minority Diabetes Prevention Program**
- **Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME)** enrolled 433 (29 new) clients. 82% completed 9 of 10-hours and 61% completed all 10-hours of education. Of those who have completed all education components, 74% have shown improved A1C levels, and 98% reported conducting self foot exams. DSME Program Customer Service Comments:

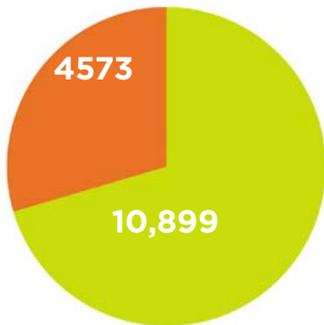
“The education was good and balanced. The focus on how a person can still live a good life if they focus on managing diabetes.”

- **Community Health Grant:** In collaboration with the Chatham County Health Department, provided **288 scholarships** to community members for appointments to help manage chronic conditions. Offered two **diabetes classes in Spanish**. With the Department on Aging, provided **four glucose and cholesterol screenings** and participated in 12 other outreach events to increase awareness of Nutrition Services.

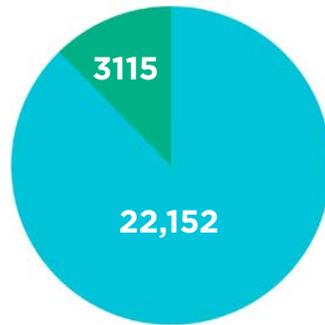


Limited English Proficient (LEP) Encounters

Medical LEP Encounters: 30%



Dental LEP Encounters: 12%

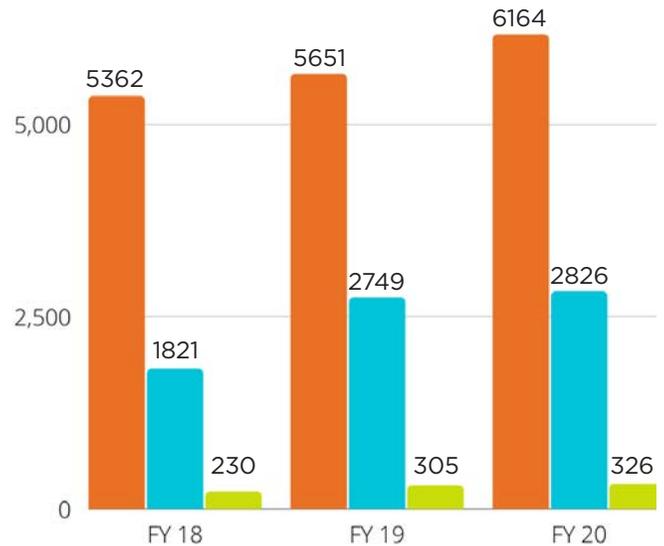


- Medical LEP Encounters
- Total Medical Encounters
- Dental LEP Encounters
- Total Dental Encounters

Total COVID-19 Translations = 145

Total Translations = 196

Immigrant and Refugee Health Interpreter Services



- Staff/Contract Interpreter Encounters
- Telephonic Remote Interpretation Calls
- Video Remote Interpretation Calls

BOARD OF HEALTH (BOH)

2020 Highlights

In 2020, the BOH continued to meet monthly using a virtual platform to participate in community education sessions and to address departmental policies and business. During 2020, the Board:

- Supported and approved the department's Racial Equity Strategic Plan
- Updated the BOH Policy Manual
- Created and approved a fluoride recommendation that supported Orange Water and Sewer Authorities' (OWASA) community water fluoridation process.
- Approved new environmental health rules that are in alignment with the State's new permitting, construction, and inspection requirements regarding groundwater.
- Received a presentation of the 2019 Community Health Assessment. In alignment with the Community Health Assessment the BOH adopted the following top three priorities for future strategic planning efforts:
 - Access to Care
 - Substance Use Disorders
 - Health Equity
- Received monthly COVID-19 updates from the Health Director

RACIAL EQUITY COMMISSION (REC)

- **COVID-19 Response:** Racial equity efforts were prioritized during the COVID-19 pandemic response and vaccination efforts. A racial equity officer was utilized to ensure equitable outreach and messaging. Vaccination efforts in historically marginalized communities were coordinated through the newly created **Human Services Consulting Group** which consists of community agencies, organizations, and community members. This group provided a feedback loop to communities to create easier access, reduce barriers, and coordinate mobile vaccination efforts. Equitable volunteer efforts were also considered through the creation of the **Equity Volunteer Manual**.
- **Equity Webpage:** OCHD's new [Racial Equity Website](#) was created to help staff and community members engage in racial and health resources, practices, and organizations.
- **Innovation Grants:** REC was awarded two innovation grants to purchase racial and health equity books and resources that are available to all staff and also to create an **Eat Up to Meet Up** program to help staff across divisions get to know each other over food. Both grants were interrupted due to the pandemic but will resume as soon as possible.
- **UNC Capstone Team:** REC guided a UNC Capstone in assessing equity within the department. The Capstone Team created an evidence table of resources regarding equitable decision making, hiring practices, employee resource groups, mentorship, 360 evaluations, and community engagement during COVID-19. They also performed a racial equity assessment to gauge staff readiness and knowledge of equity within the department along with a report of the findings from the assessment.



The Orange County Health Department (OCHD) acknowledges that public health is a system that was and continues to be structurally and foundationally built on racist policies, practices, and procedures. Due to this history, OCHD must actively work to gain the public's trust and to grow the department to become a more equitable system.

OCHD also acknowledges that our county's marginalized populations face barriers across systems due to racial inequities in housing, banking, education, employment, etc. all of which contribute to poor health outcomes. This is why Health Director Quintana Stewart declared [Structural Racism a public health crisis](#).

In 2017, a courageous group of staff began a health equity journey to ensure all members of the community receive health services and support based on their needs and not their race. This health equity webpage was created to help others in our community grow with us in this work, to show our community what strides we have made in this work, and to help us stay accountable to our community.

