

**Health Director's Report**  
**February 10, 2022**

**Division/Program: Dental: UNC Adams School of Dentistry Services in Dental Clinic**  
**(Accreditation Activity 20.1- The local health department shall collaborate with community health care providers to provide personal and preventative health services.)**

**Program description:**

- The Dental Division contracts with the UNC Adams School of Dentistry to provide pediatric dental services in the Department of Public Health Dental Clinic.

**Statement of goals:**

- To offer a comprehensive array of dental services to pediatric dental patients.
- To provide Residents and Dental students hands-on experience in a public health setting.

**Issues**

- **Opportunities**

- For the eleven years the Department has contracted with the School of Pediatric Dentistry. Throughout the past year, the following schedule was put in place:
  - Tuesdays: Faculty (DDS), Pediatric Dental Resident and up to four Dental students.
  - Wednesdays: Faculty (DDS) and Resident, with 2-4 students on some dates.
  - Thursdays: Faculty member (DDS) and up to six students.
- During the summers, two hygiene students attend on Tuesdays for six weeks.
- Grayson, a golden retriever that is a certified therapy dog, has visited the Division multiple times. She was trained to comfort anxious children visiting a dental office.
- Arrangement ensures Department of Public Health Dental team has access to latest research in the field, and our patients benefit from advancements in care.

- **Challenges**

- During their first day, students may be seeing column of patients for the first time, so they are each scheduled two patients for the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Division Director must ensure faculty, residents and students have completed HIPAA training within the past year and meet with them to cover confidentiality issues and HIPAA requirements for contractors.
- Arranging for access to Epic Wisdom, to make certain that the combo sub-template is assigned for incoming Resident or Faculty.
- The Adams School of Dentistry has reduced one day from the contract, meaning that our Director of Dental Practice must cover the clinic 1.5 days per week. This can take away from the days that we can treat children in DPS Elementary Schools.

**Implication(s)**

- **Outcomes**

- The current schedule will allow the clinic to see additional patients each month, allowing the Division the chance to work on its wait list.
- Residents and students gain experience working within the Public Health setting.

**Service delivery**

- **Staffing-** Dental Division provides auxiliary staff to work with UNC SOD faculty, residents, and students. The Division employs two PH Hygienists that work in the clinic.

- **Revenue** – Dependent on coverage type (Medicaid or self-pay).
- **Other** –N/A

### **Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies**

The Dental Division and UNC School of Dentistry has been exploring options to work together. This may lead to additional assignments on the Tooth Ferry, as the mobile unit prepares to visit DPS Elementary schools.

### **Division / Program: Population Health / Epidemiology**

**(Accreditation Activity 15.5: The local health department shall ensure that new staff is oriented to program policies and procedures and existing staff receives training on updated or revised program policies and procedures. Activity 16.2: Local health department new employee orientation shall address public health laws and rules.)**

### **Program Description:**

The DCoDPH Employee Quick Reference Guide was initially developed in 2013 to provide staff with a handy pocket reference to important agency information. The guide was recently updated in December 2021 and provides the agency’s mission and vision and the most up-to-date information regarding governance, leadership, organizational structure, agency history, divisions/programs, committees, agency sponsored groups, community alliances, reports/assessments and strategic initiatives, policy, and preparedness/response.

### **Statement of goals**

- Provide staff a comprehensive easily accessible guide to agency information
- Provide new public health employees with a quick reference to agency information to assist them during their orientation
- Provide a quick reference that could be helpful to staff in addressing questions during the agency’s 2023 NC Local Health Department Accreditation Site Visit as well as other site visits.

### **Issues**

- **Opportunities**
  - Orient and keep staff abreast of important agency and county information
  - Provide staff ready access to basic public health laws
  - Provide staff location of department, program and county policies and procedures
- **Challenges**
  - Keeping information updated and current in light of frequent changes in programs and staff
  - Software/applications used to complete the guide can cause minor challenges during the conversion for printing vendor

### **Implication(s)**

- **Outcomes**
  - Final guidebook is 57 pages and a convenient size to be kept handy by staff.
  - Provides program information that gives staff an overview of services agency provides and encourages collaboration between staff/programs.
  - Provides information on agency linkages to community

- Provides easy access to location of both agency and county policies, important plans and reports
- **Staffing**
  - Information update involved division directors and population health staff
  - Population Health Director and staff reviewed and modified draft in preparation for final printing
  - Final copies distributed to each Division Director/designee for distribution
- **Revenue**
  - None.

#### **Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies**

- Develop system to provide guide to all new employees early in their onboarding
- Update guide annually and include any additional pertinent information

**Division / Program: Health Education and Community Transformation / Health Promotion and Wellness-Chronic Disease Prevention (Accreditation Activity 10.1: The local health department shall develop, implement, and evaluate population-based health promotion/disease prevention programs and educational materials for the general public.)**

#### **Program description**

- The chronic disease health education specialist's (HES) mission is to educate through evidence-based programs to improve overall well-being and quality of life. In this position, Yvonne Reza, aims to reduce health inequities and disparities through her work focused on diabetes, provided in English and Spanish.

#### **Statement of goals**

- Reduce health disparities among community members by providing outreach services.
- Improve residents' health and quality of life by developing and implementing programs designed to support individuals to better manage their diabetes.
  - Health forums and presentations of evidence-based information delivered by health and medical experts.
  - Workshops on disease management
  - Monthly support group meetings

#### **Issues**

- **Opportunities**
  - Through outreach and education, participants learn about:
    - Risks for developing diabetes;
    - Risks associated with living with diabetes; and
    - How to live a healthy lifestyle.
  - Virtual activities may increase accessibility, especially for those who are less likely to attend evening activities for safety reasons.
  - November is recognized as Diabetes Awareness Month. Since there is heightened awareness during the month, it is a perfect opportunity to offer educational events.

- **Challenges**
  - It has been difficult to recruit and/or retain participants for webinars and support groups during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Virtual programs can be an opportunity, but also a challenge. At this point in the pandemic, many residents are suffering from what is known as “Zoom Fatigue” and may be less likely to participate in virtual offerings. Another challenge is accessibility to phone and/or internet to participate in virtual educational programs.
  - Recruiting participants for virtual activities is more challenging since health educators are not at public events and don’t have a database to reach residents virtually.

## **Implication(s)**

- **Outcomes**
  - During Diabetes Awareness Month (November 2021), the HES presented a webinar about the Diabetic Eye and co-facilitated a virtual information session with a local physician title “Concerns and Fears of Persons Living with Diabetes.” These sessions reached a total of 24 participants.
  - The Diabetes Support Group was restarted in November 2021. The education specialist also offered a diabetes support group meeting on two different days and times. While participation was low, it gave the opportunity to further discuss and strategize how to actively promote the group for future sessions. Meetings are resuming in January 2022.
- **Service delivery**
  - Three events were conducted by the HES, who recruited participants through the DCoDPH website, word of mouth, and email delivery.
- **Staffing**
  - Two health education specialists, Yvonne Reza and Joyce Page, collaborated on the Concerns & Fears of Persons Living with Diabetes
- **Revenue**
  - None. Education is provided at no cost to the participants.

## **Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies**

- Increase opportunities for outreach and community participation both in English and in Spanish by working in collaboration with local clinics and community centers.
- The HES will offer opportunities for community members to participate in evidence-based diabetes prevention and chronic disease management programs.
- The HES will continue to offer webinar/information sessions about topics related to diabetes, diabetes management, and diabetes prevention.

**Division / Program: Health Education and Community Transformation /Community Linkages to Care (CLC): Peer Support Program for Overdose Prevention and Response (Accreditation Activity 20.2: The local health department shall collaborate with community health care providers and agencies to reduce barriers to access to care.)**

## **Program Description**

- The CLC program links Durham residents with substance use disorder (SUD) to evidence-based treatment, harm reduction, housing, transportation, and other support services through community-based partnerships and a proven peer support model.

- Peer Support Specialists (PSS) are based at the Durham Recovery Response Center (DRRC) and partner with the Durham EMS community paramedics to form the Durham Post-Overdose Response Team (PORT). The PORT aims to visit and provide support to every individual who experiences an overdose in Durham.
- Duke hospitals refer post-overdose patients and hospitalized patients diagnosed with SUD to the program. Peer support services are also offered to individuals with SUD at the DRRC Crisis Facility and individuals with SUD who are released from the Durham County Detention Center.
- Other program activities include expanding housing resources, training healthcare providers and public health staff, and developing educational and outreach materials for individuals with SUD.

### **Statement of Goals**

- To reduce overdose hospital visits and fatalities in Durham County.
- To connect Durham County residents who are struggling with SUD to recovery support, harm reduction resources and evidence-based care which acknowledges social determinants of health and responds to current housing challenges.
- To increase the number of naloxone kits distributed to Durham County residents with SUD.
- To engage key stakeholders across Durham County to help respond to the overdose crisis and address social determinants of health for individuals affected by SUD.

### **Implication(s)**

- **Service Delivery:**
  - The PORT aims to follow-up and provide support to patients who experience a non-fatal overdose within 72 hours of the overdose event.
  - PSS aim to follow-up with Duke hospital patients within one hour of referral.
  - At the initial visit with each patient, PSS provide a naloxone kit, a folder of information, and referrals to community support resources and services. PSS assess participant needs using motivational interview techniques.
  - After initial contact, PSS provide continuing follow-up on a regular basis to assess and support the continuing needs of all CLC participants. PSS also provide materials for creating Wellness Recovery Action Plans (WRAP), when appropriate.
  - Participants who reside in Durham County and agree to meet with their PSS at the DRRC are enrolled into a more extensive follow-up evaluation and are offered office-based opioid treatment (Suboxone) if diagnosed with opioid use disorder.
  - PSS provide Uber gift cards for participants to attend appointments for treatment and other services.
- **Outcomes**
  - We have reached 168 total participants through December 31, 2021, and 133 of those participants enrolled in the follow-up program at DRRC. The PSS have had over 600 total contacts with program participants.
  - About 57% of enrollees joined the office-based opioid treatment program at DRRC and attended their first appointment for medication-assisted treatment (MAT) with Suboxone.
  - Of the enrollees who remained in the program for at least three months, about 70% are no longer using substances.
  - We have distributed a total of 97 naloxone kits to program participants.

- We produced two publications with information on low-cost treatment, housing, and other resources available in Durham County for individuals who use substances.
- We offered three training opportunities on SUD: 1) a webinar for Durham County employees, 2) a training course for healthcare providers that provided continuing medical education (CME) credits, and 3) a webinar to train employers on how to become a recover-friendly workplace. Over 300 individuals attended these trainings.
- **Staffing**
  - 1 full-time PSS (contracted) and 1 part-time PSS (contracted, 25 hours/week)
  - 1 PSS Supervisor (contracted)
  - 1 part-time Program Coordinator (contracted, 18 hours/week)
  - 2 part-time Data Evaluators (contracted)
  - 2 Durham County EMS Community Paramedics
  - 1 DCoDPH Injury Prevention Public Health Education Specialist
  - Fiscal administration through Health Education & Community Transformation Division Director
- **Revenue**
  - Program services are offered free of charge to participants.
  - The program is supported with state grant funds awarded through the Injury & Violence Prevention Branch of the Division of Public Health.
  - The award – AA491 – began December 1, 2019 and will continue through May 31, 2023. Funds are distributed over a period of 42 months, spread across four fiscal years. The total amount awarded is \$360,000.

**Division/Program: Medical Services Division/ School Health Program**

**(Accreditation Activity: Activity 10.3 The local health department shall employ evidence-based health promotion/disease prevention strategies, when such evidence exists)**

**Program Description**

- Immunization status of many of our Kindergarten, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students were out of compliance for NC State requirements.
- Of particular concern were the high school seniors that are slated to graduate but will be unable to do so due to the lapse in their Meningococcal vaccine.
- The number of those high school seniors that were out of compliance according to DPS staff was over 750 students.
- Durham County Public Health Administrators and Senior Public Health School Nurses realized the need and developed a plan to offer solutions.

**Statement of Goals**

- To improve immunization compliance rates and target high school seniors that are out of compliance to provide opportunity for required Meningococcal vaccine.

**Issues**

- **Opportunities**
  - To raise awareness of mandated state guidelines.

- To raise awareness of the importance of vaccines to promote preventable communicable diseases and decrease the chance of sometimes life threatening or life altering diagnosis.
- To increase the knowledge base of our Senior Public Health School Nurses in the documentation fields of EPIC.
- **Challenges**
  - Communication to coordinate the required paperwork for the students with regards to their insurance status.
  - Paperwork and phone calls were a little labor intensive for the nurses.
  - Time required for the EPIC training modules and the effort required by IT to ensure the nurse's access in EPIC.
  - School nurses staffed the immunization clinic times which kept them away from their schools for 3 days.

## **Implications**

- **Outcomes**
  - Students were made aware of state guidelines of mandated immunizations.
  - 25 students were immunized with the Meningococcal vaccine and a few also received their COVID vaccine while they were here.
  - Some of the family members decided to receive their COVID vaccine while here.
  - This required a coordinated effort with School Health, Communicable Disease, DPS and PH administration which will benefit this process in the future.
- **Service Delivery**
  - The Senior Public Health Nurses showed a tremendous amount of dedication to this public health issue and rose to the occasion with the immense time commitment to training and to staffing the clinic time.
  - The Communicable Disease leadership team spearheaded the coordination of the set up and provided space in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor vaccine clinic area.
- **Staffing**
  - The Senior Public Health Nurses staffed the event to ensure that students received required vaccines and the proper documentation that the school requires.
  - The Women's Health Clinic staffed and assisted in training our school nurses in the documentation of EPIC and were a tremendous help ensuring the success of this clinic effort.

## **Next Steps**

- Communication will be ongoing with DPS and Durham County to continue addressing this need. This effort will be widened to address the needs in kindergarten, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades in which the NC immunizations are mandated.

## **Division / Program: Medical Services Division/School Health Program**

**(Accreditation Activity 12.3-The local health department shall participate in a collaborative process to implement population-based programs to address community health problems.)**

## **Program Description**

Mass Vision Screenings conducted at elementary schools, which had a 20% fail rate. Most of these students were identified by school personnel as needing financial assistance, so they were referred to Project Sight.

- Project Sight, a partnership with Durham County Public Health/School Health Nurses and Durham Tech Community College, to provide free eye exams and prescription eyewear.
- Prescription eyewear – fitted, manufactured, and dispensed by Opticianry students supervised by NC Licensed Dispensing Opticians
- Eye Exams – comprehensive eye exams provided by volunteer optometrists

## **Statement of Goals**

- To provide visual aid resources to underserved elementary students in 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

## **Issues**

- **Opportunities**
  - To provide a resource for visual aid that will enhance the chances of academic success and confidence in the learning environment that will have lifelong impact.
  - To remove the barriers of transportation, financial restraints, required time off work for parent/guardians to achieve the basic need of functional vision.
  - To partner with Durham Tech Community College Mobile van.
- **Challenges**
  - The van was not available on the set day, so parents had to go to Durham Tech for their appointment.
  - Paperwork and phone calls were a little labor intensive for the nurses.

## **Implications**

- **Outcomes**
  - Students from Lakewood and Forest View Elementary Schools had the opportunity to receive free services if they failed their initial vision screen.
  - 24 students received a voucher and appointment for a comprehensive eye exam and free eyewear. About half of those students have already been seen and the remainder are scheduled in March.
  - These students will improve their chance for success in the classroom exponentially and could have lifelong benefits.
  - This partnership has proved to be very valuable and will continue to grow and reach more students and families.
- **Service Delivery**
  - The Senior Public Health Nurses played a huge role in coordinating this event. They reached out to school administrators, social workers, teachers, parents to strategically identify students with the highest need.
  - The entire grade levels were screened to make sure that all students received the proper attention to identify any deficiencies.
  - Services were provided at Durham Tech Community College.



- **Staffing**
  - The Senior Public Health Nurses staffed the event to provide support and continuity for families needing assistance.
  - They were supportive to the Project Sight staff members to fill any gaps in the event to ensure its success.

### **Next Steps**

- Communication will be ongoing with the partners at Durham Tech. We will assess the needs at each school and develop a plan moving forward to offer this on a wider basis.

### **Division / Program: Pharmacy & Health Education / Safe Syringe Program**

**(Accreditation Activity 10.1** -The local health department shall develop, implement, and evaluate population-based health promotion/disease prevention programs and materials for the general public.)

### **Program description**

- On April 2, 2018, the DCoDPH Pharmacy launched the Safe Syringe Program based on the guidance and program requirements from the NC Division of Public Health.

### **Statement of goals**

- To offer new needles, syringes, and injection supplies to reduce the transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C in the community.
- To offer free HIV and Hepatitis C testing and follow-up care.
- To offer education, treatment information, and referrals to community members.
- To provide a safe method of disposal for used needles and syringes.

### **Issues**

- **Opportunities**
  - Reduce the transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C by offering new needles, syringes, and injection supplies.
  - Reduce the risk of bacterial infections (i.e. endocarditis) that occur when injection supplies are reused.
  - Connect participants with community resources including treatment options, health care, and housing assistance.
  - The following items are provided in the Safe Syringe Kit:
    - 10 sterile 1.0mL syringes with fixed needles
    - Alcohol swabs
    - Tourniquet
    - Condoms
    - Sharps Container
    - Additional injection supplies
    - Participant ID card
    - Printed material for harm reduction and ancillary services
  - Fentanyl testing strips and Naloxone kits are also offered with each SSP Kit.
- **Challenges**
  - Ensure that used needles and syringes are properly discarded in a puncture proof container. Sharps containers are included with SSP Kits and participants are encouraged to use of them and return the container to the DCoDPH Pharmacy.

- Ensure that used needles and syringes are not deposited in the medication drop box in the HHS lobby.
- Bull City United was previously housed within the Department of Public Health but moved to form a separate County department for FY 21-22. BCU staff are working closely with DCoDPH staff to update all protocols to continue to distribute naloxone to program participants.

## **Implications**

- **Outcomes**

- The following statistics have been collected for Dec 2021-Jan 2021:
  - New participants: 6
  - Total contacts: 16
  - Syringes dispensed: 380
  - Syringes returned\*: ~1,376
  - Sharps containers dispensed: 4
  - Fentanyl strips dispensed: 0
  - Naloxone kits distributed (with SSP): 14
  - Naloxone kits distributed (non-SSP): 59
  - Naloxone reversals reported: 0

\*“Syringes returned” metric includes needles/syringes returned directly to staff regardless of usage (i.e. substance use, medical use, prescription use)

- **Service delivery**

- Planning and implementation were completed by the Opioid Response Committee with guidance and support from the NC Division of Public Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch.

- **Staffing**

- Pharmacy and Health Education team members have received training from the NC Division of Public Health and the NC Harm Reduction Coalition regarding harm reduction strategies and Safe Syringe Program practices.

## **Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies:**

- Statistics from the Safe Syringe Program will be monitored and reported to the Board of Health bimonthly.
- The Opioid Response Committee will continue to work with the NC Division of Public Health to improve our program and develop strategies to further our goals.

## **Division / Program: Pharmacy/ Medication Drop Box**

(Accreditation Activity 10.1 -The local health department shall develop, implement, and evaluate population-based health promotion/disease prevention programs and materials for the general public.)

## **Program description**

- On March 15, 2018, the DCoDPH Pharmacy partnered with Project Pill Drop to install a Medication Drop Box in the lobby of the HHS building.

## Statement of goals

- To offer a safe method of disposal for unused and expired over-the-counter and prescription medications.

## Issues

### • Opportunities

- The following items are accepted in the box:
  - Over-the-counter medications
  - Prescription medications
  - Prescription patches
  - Prescription ointments
  - Vitamins
- Reduce environmental concerns caused by flushing unwanted medications.
- Alleviate prescription drug abuse from expired medications left in medicine cabinets.

### • Challenges

- Ensuring that used needles and syringes are not deposited in the drop box. The needle/syringe disposal box is located next to the medication drop box.
- Due to COVID-19, the hours of operation for the HHS building decreased in Q4 of FY19-20 and FY20-21, although this was not reflected in program participation.

## Implications

### • Outcomes

- Quarterly statistics, FY21-22 Q2
  - ~0 lbs of medication disposed
- Year-to-date statistics, FY21-22
  - ~40 lbs of medication disposed
- Previous year statistics, FY20-21
  - ~270 lbs of medication disposed

### • Service delivery

- Planning and implementation were completed by the Pharmacy Manager and Allied Health Division Director.
- General Services installed the drop box in the HHS lobby with input from Security and General Services.

### • Staffing

- Pharmacy staff will regularly monitor the drop box and empty when necessary.
- Assurant Waste Disposal is contracted to dispose of the medications.

## Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies:

- The drop box will be monitored regularly and emptied when necessary.
- Statistics will be monitored and reported to the Board of Health quarterly.

## **Division / Program: Pharmacy / Needle Disposal Box**

(Accreditation Activity 10.1 -The local health department shall develop, implement, and evaluate population-based health promotion/disease prevention programs and materials for the general public.)

### **Program description**

- In September 2018, DCoDPH Pharmacy installed a Needle Disposal Box in the lobby of the HHS building. In June 2020, the box was relocated to the pharmacy sub-lobby.

### **Statement of goals**

- To offer a safe method of disposal for used or expired needles and syringes.

### **Issues**

- **Opportunities**
  - The following items are accepted in the box:
    - Used or expired needles and syringes
    - Used or expired medications with attached needles (i.e. Epipens)
  - Reduce environmental concerns caused by improper needle disposal.
  - Reduce accidental needle sticks caused by improper needle disposal.
  - Reduce the transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C by disposing of needles after each use coupled with offering new needles, syringes, and injection supplies through the Safe Syringe Program.
  - Reduce the risk of staff needlesticks by providing sharps containers to *all* clients prior to needles being deposited in Needle Disposal Box (implemented August 2021).
- **Challenges**
  - Ensuring that used needles and syringes are not deposited in the medication drop box. Both drop boxes have clear signage in English and Spanish.
  - Due to COVID-19, the hours of operation for the HHS building decreased in Q4 of FY19-20 and FY20-21, although this was not reflected in program participation.

### **Implications**

- **Outcomes**
  - Quarterly statistics, FY21-22 Q2
    - ~22,480 needles/syringes returned
  - Year-to-date statistics, FY21-22
    - ~89,920 needles/syringes returned
  - Previous year statistics, FY20-21
    - ~73,925 needles/syringes returned
- **Service delivery**
  - Planning and implementation were completed by the Pharmacy Manager and Allied Health Division Director.
  - General Services installed the drop box in the HHS lobby with input from Security and General Services.

- **Staffing**
  - Pharmacy staff will regularly monitor the drop box and empty when necessary.
  - Piedmont Biomedical is contracted to dispose of the used needles and syringes.

**Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies:**

- The disposal box will be monitored regularly and emptied when necessary.
- Statistics from the Needle Disposal Box will be monitored and reported to the Board of Health quarterly.