

**Health Director's Report**  
**February 9, 2023**

**Division / Program: Dental: Processing Assistants Cross-train as Dental Assistants**  
**(Activity 24.2: The local health department shall have a staff development plan that includes identifying and addressing the training and continuing education needs of the staff.)**

**Program description**

- The Dental Division has four Dental Assistants to serve the clinic and Tooth Ferry.
- As dental appointments for the clinic are scheduled months in advance, having additional Dental Assistants prevent the need to reschedule patients in the event of staff shortage, emergency, etc.
- When Processing Assistants are hired in dental, they are given the option to cross-train to achieve a Dental Assistant I designation. This allows them to assist with operatory patients.

**Statement of goals**

- To ensure the clinic schedule is maintained, and minimize canceling/rescheduling appointments, it is advantageous to have 1-2 Dental Assistant I team members ready to help in the clinic (or on the Tooth Ferry).
- Having additional auxiliary staff reduces the need to bring in temporary Dental Assistants from a placement agency.
- Team members that wish to cross-train receive an overview with the Dental Practice Administrator, attend Radiography course, and work with other Dental Assistants when taking x-rays. Their shifts in the clinic are with the Dental Practice Administrator.
- After two years or 3,000 clinic hours the individual can earn the Dental Assistant II designation.

**Issues**

- **Opportunities**
  - As Processing Assistants are cross-trained, it allows the clinic to maintain schedule without moving appointments or hiring temporary staff from an outside agency.

**Implication(s)**

- **Outcomes**
  - In the past year, the Division filled a Dental Assistant opening with a Processing Assistant who had cross-trained for the position.
  - The clinic has not utilized temporary agency for auxiliary staff for the past 18 months.
- **Service Delivery**
  - Patients whose parents speak Spanish as a first language benefit as one of the cross-trained team members is bilingual.
  - Cross-trained assistants working at the front desk have a greater knowledge of dental procedures, etc.

- **Staffing**
  - As of January, the dental clinic has two Processing Assistants (Front Desk and Tooth Ferry Coordinator team members) who have cross-trained and earned Radiography certification.
- **Revenue**
  - Estimates show that cross-trained team members save the dental budget an estimated \$1,200 per week when not having to bring in temporary Dental Assistants to cover shifts.

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

- To continue to offer team members the chance to cross-train for dental positions, including covering the front desk, providing oral health presentations in the community, etc.

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

**Accreditation Activity 9.1: The local health department shall publish and disseminate data and information on current local health issues to the general public, community partners, and elected and appointed officials.**

#### **Program description**

The Maternal Health Dashboard provides new information for the Maternal Health team at the Durham County Department of Public Health. The dashboard was built using data from internal EPIC medical records and birth data sent to the health department from Duke University Health System.

The goal of the dashboard is to empower the Maternal Health team with information on how they can identify improvements to better birth outcomes, recommend steps to address the inequities within Black and Brown patient populations, and provide text analytics with detailed Durham specific data that explains these inequities. The dashboard includes gestational weeks at age of delivery, common problems during birth stratified by race, data about the Gravitas Prima (GP) score and length of birth and blood loss. DCoDPH also has information about the most common problem words found in each patients' notes to help identify discrepancies between races.

The Maternal Health program is using the dashboard to examine infant mortality and fetal mortality data trends by identifying common themes such as the number of times the patient is seen by the provider, gestational age at mortality and the text fields that indicate the problems seen by the provider. All of this is stratified by race and ethnicity.

#### **Statement of goals**

- Provide accurate and timely data to empower the Maternal Health program to enact change and understand where the discrepancies with maternal health exist in Durham.
- Provide a comprehensive understanding of the variables that may worsen the effects of maternal health and gestational health during pregnancy.

- Provide trainings and information to the maternal health community about improving birth outcomes.

## Issues

- **Opportunities**
  - Provide data to the media, stakeholders, partners, elected officials, and community residents.
  - Analyze data to track maternal health disparities in our community and develop strategies to address them.
- **Challenges**
  - Collecting and understanding all the data was quite a challenge, there were many disparate data sources for the information, and it took a lot of work to clean the data.

## Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**
  - December 2022 Maternal Health Birth Observations
    - First comprehensive and expandable dashboard to show and follow data trends.
    - Provides the Maternal Health program with talking points about inequalities in birthing outcomes as well as external stresses.
    - Potential solutions for inequities are being discussed internally.
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- **Staffing**
  - The Durham County Department of Public Health Data Scientist created and maintains the dashboard.
- **Revenue**
  - None

## Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

- Continue to update the Dashboard on a monthly basis with new data. Update features and information as needed.
- Develop tailored strategies for equitable approaches to reducing low birth weights, engaging with patients sooner and improving the information sharing efforts.

## **Division / Program: Population Health / Partnership for a Healthy Durham**

**Accreditation Activity 15.1 The local health department shall develop plans to guide its work.**

### **Program Description**

In partnership with Duke Health, The Partnership for a Healthy Durham applied for a grant from The Duke Endowment through Healthy People Healthy Carolinas in 2021. Duke Health and the Partnership for a Healthy Durham were awarded \$100,000 for January 1, 2022-December 31, 2022. Healthy People Healthy Carolinas is an initiative of The Duke Endowment is a

community-based approach to respond to chronic health diseases like diabetes, unhealthy weight, and heart disease. These funds were for a planning year, dedicated to work on the Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Food Access (PANFA) committee.

### **Statement of goals**

- Utilize grant funds and learning opportunities to operationalize racial equity principles in the Partnership.
- Align efforts with Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs) with other county-wide initiatives to improve rates of obesity, diabetes, and food access for those most impacted in Durham County.

### **Issues**

- **Opportunities**
  - Work towards operationalizing racial equity. Build a more community centered coalition.
  - Host a two-day racial equity training for the Partnership.
  - Hire a contractor to support the Partnership and The Duke Endowment grant.
  - Review and make changes to Durham Community Health Improvement Plans to ensure equity for those most impacted by obesity, diabetes, and food access.
  - Support community projects such as connecting parks to predominantly Black or Comunidad Latina neighborhoods.
- **Challenges**
  - Lack of established contract for simultaneous translation services for quarterly Partnership meetings prevented this service from being offered.
  - Short-term guarantee for position created a barrier to hiring a full-time specialist dedicated to grant activities.

### **Implication(s)**

- **Outcomes**
  - Created and distributed educational materials encouraging the use of school meals.
  - Publicized applications for free school meals.
  - Provided three racial equity and food justice trainings facilitated by a local Black woman led organization with an average of 25 participants in attendance for each session.
  - Hosted call-to action table at World Hunger Day event encouraging the purchase of culturally appropriate foods and opportunities for engagement. This opportunity resulted in more than thirty people pledging to be a part of the solution and twenty people expressing interest in participating in the PANFA committee.
  - Identified and initiated framework to build authentic and continuous community engagement (Community Cafes).
  - Maintaining current Healthy Mile Trails and redesigning signage to include Spanish language.

- **Staffing**
  - Partnership for a Healthy Durham Coordinator
  - PANFA Co-Chairs
- **Revenue**
  - \$100,00 for one year

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

- The Partnership PANFA committee will begin working with a racial equity consultant in 2023 and collaborate to build an action plan to embed equity into PANFA's processes and therefore produce more equitable outcomes
- The Partnership plans to hire a specialist in the first quarter of 2023. This specialist will support The Duke Endowment grant activities, assure that PANFA's fulfills its CHIPs, improve authentic engagement with community members, and support the Partnership overall.
- PANFA will host three Community Cafes focused on food security and physical activity in areas most impacted by these issues beginning in the spring of 2023.

### **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 prescriptions 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.
  - Medication drop-off is available during the hours of operation for the HHS building.

- **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.

## **Implications**

- **Outcomes**
  - Quarterly statistics, FY22-23 Q2
    - ~40 lbs. of medication disposed
  - Year-to-date statistics, FY22-23
    - ~80 lbs. of medication disposed
  - Previous year statistics, FY21-22
    - ~155 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.
  - Trilogy MedWaste Southeast, LLC 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 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).
  - Needle disposal is available during the hours of operation for the HHS building.
- **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 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. Both drop boxes have clear signage in English and Spanish.

## **Implications**

- **Outcomes**
  - Quarterly statistics, FY22-23 Q2
    - ~6487 needles/syringes returned
  - Year-to-date statistics, FY22-23
    - ~10,177 needles/syringes returned
  - Previous year statistics, FY21-22
    - ~6151 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.
  - Carolina Biomedical Disposal 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.

## **Division / Program: Pharmacy / 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 1.0 mL syringes with fixed needles
  - 10 Alcohol swabs
  - 1 Tourniquet
  - 6 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 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.
- Hours of distribution were changed effective September 06, 2022 due to conflicting demands of pharmacy operations. Staffing is now devoted to serve the SSP clients during the following specified hours:

***Tuesday/ Thursday: 9AM – 12Noon***

***Wednesday/ Friday: 1PM – 4PM***



- Participants will not be turned away if presented outside of the distribution hours to give participants time to adjust to this new schedule.

## **Implications**

- **Outcomes**
  - The following statistics have been collected for FY22-23 Q2:
    - New participants: 4
    - Total contacts: 29
    - Syringes dispensed: 105
    - Syringes returned\*: ~6487
    - Sharps containers dispensed: 7
    - Fentanyl Test Strip dispensed: 20
    - Naloxone kits distributed (with SSP): 17
    - Naloxone kits distributed (non-SSP): 188
    - 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)

- **How this measure is trending?**

- The volume for total program contacts has decreased by 77% when compared to Q1 FY23 and increased by 107% when compared to Q2 FY22. The volume for unique program contacts has decreased by 78% when compared to Q1 FY23 and decreased by 33% when compared to Q2 FY22. Possible explanations for this measure include possible stabilized community-wide access to safe syringe resources. The overall increases in total participants in FY22 versus FY23 can be attributed to established services and movement in the community.

- **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 quarterly.
- 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.

- The DCoDPH team submitted a grant proposal to NASTAD on January 20, 2023 to request funding to expand the program and establish a dedicated Safe Syringe Program Coordinator. We expect to hear back regarding award notifications by the end of February 2023.

**Division / Program: Community Health Division/Parenting Program-Triple P**  
**(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**

- Outreach efforts include organizing, developing, and providing community Triple P activities throughout the 9-county service area. Parent support activities included weekly trauma-informed parenting with the Criminal Justice Resource Center's (CJRC) substance abuse program and a parenting seminar series with Durham Charter School.
- Data collection regarding the provision of Triple P services earned the Durham County Triple P Services, 9-county area, a second-place ranking in the state for reaching and providing services to families.
- Team members are members of the Nexxus, a trauma-informed task force-the public health group. Triple P Durham is coordinating with Bull City United for parenting seminars, and the Durham Team also participated in at least four health fairs this past quarter.

**Statement of goals**

- Scaling communities, defined as a local municipality, a county, or a geographic region in which an organized approach to Triple P scale-up is the goal, is an organized approach that includes structured partnerships and systematic activities that span each level of Triple P. Community Triple P Coalitions facilitate leadership, management, and coordination of Triple P services.

**Issues**

- **Opportunities**  
The ability to meet with community members who discussed their concerns about toxic stress, poverty, and family preservation. Research shows that these determinants of health are heavily influenced by environmental and systemic factors such as racism, gun violence, and generational poverty
- **Challenges**
  - Parents and guardians who experience multiple stressors are less likely to function to the highest of their abilities and effectively meet the needs of their children experiencing toxic stress. Triple P can function as a network of support.

**Implication(s)**

- **Outcomes**

The program will continue provider training, parent support groups, and other events and activities to increase our communities' protective and support factors.

**Service delivery**

- The Triple P Durham Service Area will continue to collaborate with North Carolina's seven other service areas and community partners while coordinating with Triple P America and local stakeholders to provide the continuing implementation, expansion, and data tracking of Triple P services.

**Staffing**

- Durham County Triple P Service Area 3 Supervisor and Lead Coordinator (1)
- Durham County Triple P Service Area 3 Coordinator (2)
- Durham County Department of Public Health employees (Internal collaborations and partnerships)

**Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies**

- The Triple P Durham Service Area 3 supervisor and staff will continue to support parents, guardians, and other caretakers to increase and utilize support networks to effectively meet the needs of children and their families.