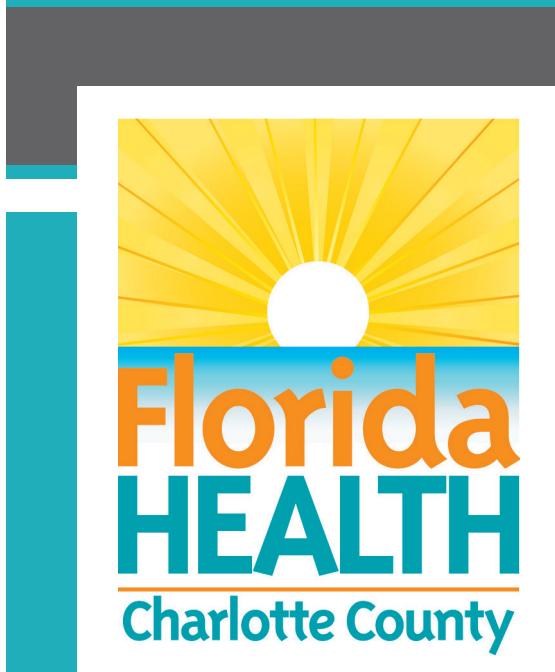


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# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN CHARLOTTE COUNTY

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ANNUAL  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
PERFORMANCE  
REPORT  
2020





*Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County*

1100 Loveland Boulevard, Port Charlotte, Florida 33980

<http://charlotte.floridahealth.gov>

March 2021



### Our Mission

To protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

### Our Vision

To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

### Our Values

**I**nnovation: We search for creative solutions and manage resources wisely.

**C**ollaboration: We use teamwork to achieve common goals and solve problems.

**A**ccountability: We perform with integrity and respect.

**R**esponsiveness: We achieve our mission by serving our customers and engaging our partners.

**E**xcellence: We promote quality outcomes through learning and continuous performance improvement.



## Table of Contents

Health Officer's Message .....	1
The 2020 Challenge.....	2
Administrative Services .....	4
Fiscal .....	4
Front Office Operations.....	5
Management Information Systems (MIS).....	6
Strategic Planning & Communications.....	8
Strategic Planning.....	8
Communications.....	9
Community Health and Needs Assessment .....	10
Community Health Improvement.....	10
Quality Improvement .....	11
Clinical and Community Health.....	12
WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) .....	12
Dental and Dental Sealant .....	13
Family Planning.....	14
School Health.....	14
Growing Strong Families.....	15
Health Promotion .....	16
Immunizations .....	19
Epidemiology .....	20
COVID-19 .....	21
Public Health Preparedness.....	24
Environmental Health .....	26

# Health Officer's Message



Dear Friends,

One the eve of 2020 we began monitoring an emerging threat that would ultimately become one of the largest global public health responses of our time. Like we have done so many times before, our community rose to the challenge of fighting COVID-19.

We began the year with a commitment to build stronger programs that are directly impacting our health in positive ways. In collaboration with our community partners, Board of County Commissioners, and dedicated community members, we completed and presented the final community assessment to Charlotte County in February 2020. As a result of this information, the data was used to build a Community Health Improvement Plan that aligns with our community needs and our community partners' needs. This joint effort allows us to work toward the common goal of protecting, promoting and improving our lives. I encourage our community to view this plan and get involved wherever possible.

As the Community Health Assessment was finalized and presented, a new trend was emerging. A challenge greater than anything we have experienced in our lifetimes. The Coronavirus global crisis tested us in so many ways. The COVID-19 pandemic challenged us to find new ways to serve our community while continuing other core public health services like clinic, WIC, and Environmental Health.

Together, with our partners in emergency management, CERT Volunteers, law enforcement, health practitioners, hospitals, churches, housing communities, homeless services and so many others, we are making progress towards protecting our most vulnerable. We tested over 78,000 people and investigated over 11,000 cases. This crisis required us all to take on roles we have never been in before. Cold weather, tropical weather, extreme heat did not stop our progress in this fight. I cannot begin to thank all our staff and partners for their commitment and service in the time of need and for their great dedication to our community.

Together we are making a difference.

It is my belief that Charlotte is a special community. Moving forward we will continue to work together on health and safety. I want to thank the countless people who played a role in our collective success amid the greatest public health challenge we have faced in this generation. I look forward to serving our great community in 2021.

Joseph D. Pepe



# The 2020 Challenge

Public health touches every aspect of our daily lives. By definition, public health aims to provide the maximum benefit for the largest number of people. It is what we do collectively to assure conditions in which people can be healthy.

The overarching goal of public health is to protect and improve the health of communities through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and research for disease and injury prevention. Through research, surveillance, and data analysis, we develop programs and policies that protect the health of the entire community.

The reality of how great of an impact public health can have on a society can be no more evident than in the year 2020. The goals of public health and the adaptability of our human resources were undoubtedly put to the greatest challenge this generation has known.

In March of 2020, it became evident that an emerging health threat, now known as Coronavirus COVID-19, would require an emergency response effort that would affect the normal operations of all DOH-Charlotte programs and activities.

Life in general seemed to take an unexpected curve. Terms, such as, wear a mask, social distance, wash your hands, quarantine and self-isolate became a new part of everyday language across all sectors of life, public and private. Activities that were previously taken for granted as a part of everyday life were suspended, canceled, or no longer.

Staff members, along with their families, were affected not only on a professional level but personally as well. While DOH-Charlotte staff did an amazing job of maintaining professionalism, their sacrifice, stress, and worry for their own personal safety as well as their family's, cannot go unnoticed. DOH-Charlotte staff faced the challenge head-on.

While the goals and commitment to public health remained the same, it took creative thinking to offer some of the basic services that are normally provided throughout DOH-Charlotte.

Health Promotions, Clinic, Clerical, Dental, and Environmental Health all found themselves creating new ways to "see" clients while limiting close contact and often eliminating in person contact altogether.

- › Protective glass was installed to create a safety barrier between clients and staff.
- › Screening for all clients entering was provided at the front entrance.
- › Payments for septic and other Environmental Health services were made contactless.
- › Health Promotion and Dental presentations to the school were offered virtually.
- › WIC offered remote issuance of benefits, options to certify over e-mail and phone, waivers for physical presence and anthropometric measurements, and daily phone calls to inform clients of current process and procedures.
- › The Clinical and Clerical team encouraged qualifying women to apply for medicaid through the Florida Department of Children and Families before medical appointments in order to approve them before appointments to allow them to service customers safely and efficiently.

In addition to providing basic public health services, many staff members participated in a variety of tasks and duties beyond their normal scope. Members from Nursing, Environmental Health, Dental, Strategic Planning/Communications, Administration, Fiscal, Health Promotions, and Information Technology all played a major part in the set up and continuity of COVID-19 operations, while still continuing work and

maintain their current roles.

- › Drive-thru testing and in-house testing.
  - . Administering COVID-19 tests.
  - . Registration.
  - . Results notifications.
  - . Logistics – supplies, staff, and coordination.
  - . Strike teams providing targeted testing for populations in need.
- › Contact tracing.
- › Community outreach.
- › On site airport data collection and coordination.
- › A dedicated COVID-19 hot line for questions from general public regarding testing and vaccination.
- › Vaccine planning and preparation.
- › Creating a contact tracing center to include computers, phones, and a consolidated workspace.

Throughout the agency, many changes were made to accommodate the ever-changing COVID-19 pandemic for the safety of clients and staff alike.

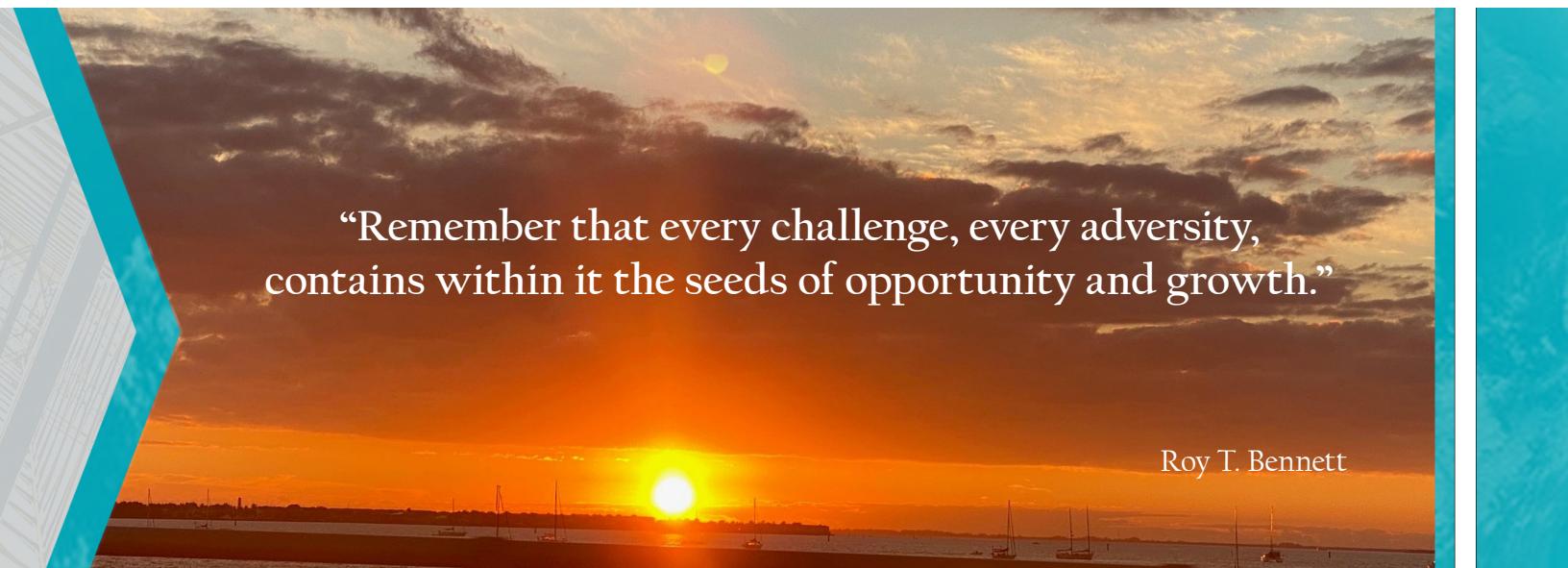
- › Front entrance greeters provided daily staff screening, temperature checks of staff and visitors, and a modified check-in process.
- › Remote work opportunities were offered, when

possible, as well as other accommodations as necessary for the safety and wellbeing of staff.

- › Expanded and/or strengthened partnerships throughout the county and state.
  - . Including integrated collaboration with State Emergency Support Incident Management Team - Region 6 IMT
- › Internal as well as external meetings and presentations were made virtual via Microsoft Teams, Skype, conference calls and more.
- › The Disease Control and Prevention (DCAP) program was expanded from one Epidemiologist at the beginning of 2020 to, at times, over 20 staff members who strictly supported COVID-19 operations in some way.

The DOH-Charlotte team has learned together. We have struggled, debated, rallied, and celebrated together. As 2020 comes to a close, we are looking forward to 2021 and all the future holds.

In the near future, we look for the distribution of COVID-19 vaccination, ongoing COVID-19 testing, and the continued use of protective measures. That said, we also look forward to serving the community in the best way possible and providing many of the same services we have provided in the past, in addition to the services yet to come.



“Remember that every challenge, every adversity, contains within it the seeds of opportunity and growth.”

Roy T. Bennett

# Administrative Services

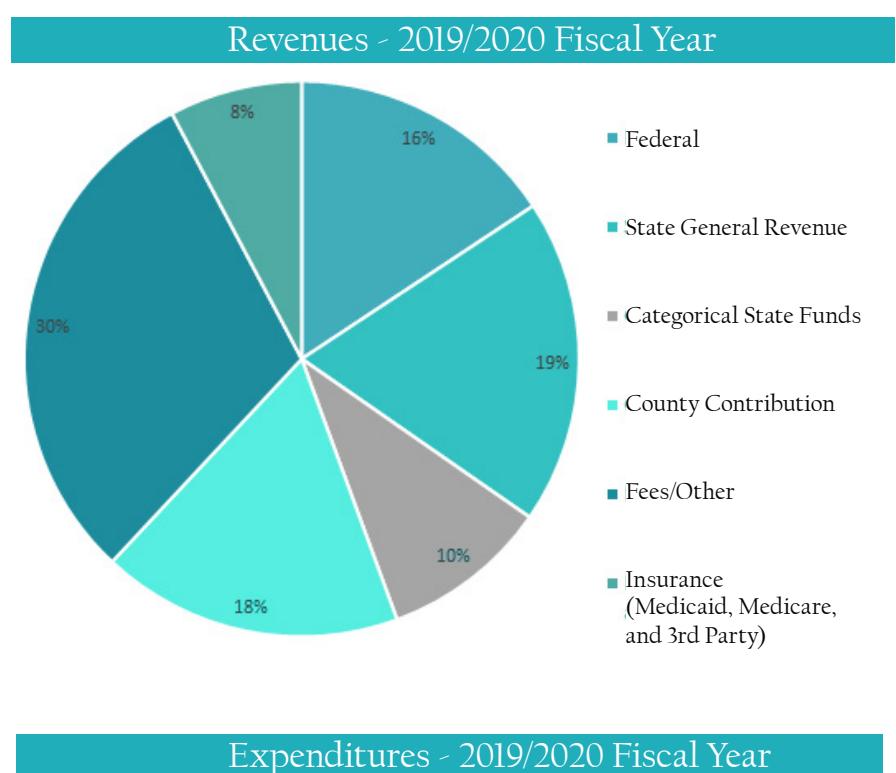
The Administrative Services Department at DOH-Charlotte aims to align with our strategic goals, specifically:  
Priority Issue #4: Operational Efficiency.

## Fiscal

### Revenue:

The annual budget for DOH-Charlotte in fiscal year 2019/2020 was \$4,705,023, which is a 10% increase from the previous year. The funding used to cover these expenses comes from different sources that include federal funds, state funds, fees, insurance payments, and our local County contribution.

- › Federal
- › State General Revenue
- › Categorical State funds
- › County Contribution
- › Fees and other revenues
- › Insurance (Medicaid, Medicare, and third-party insurance)



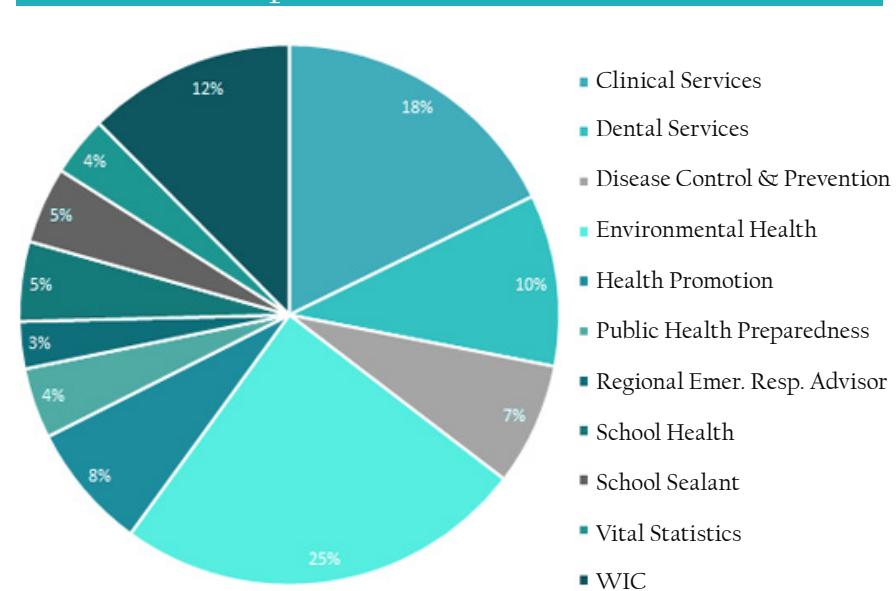
### Expenditures:

Expenditures for the fiscal year are summarized by program.

Our clinical, dental, school health services, and environmental health department make up more than half of our total expenditures.

### Staffing:

The Charlotte County Health Department had 47 full time employees and 15 part time positions.



## Front Office Operations

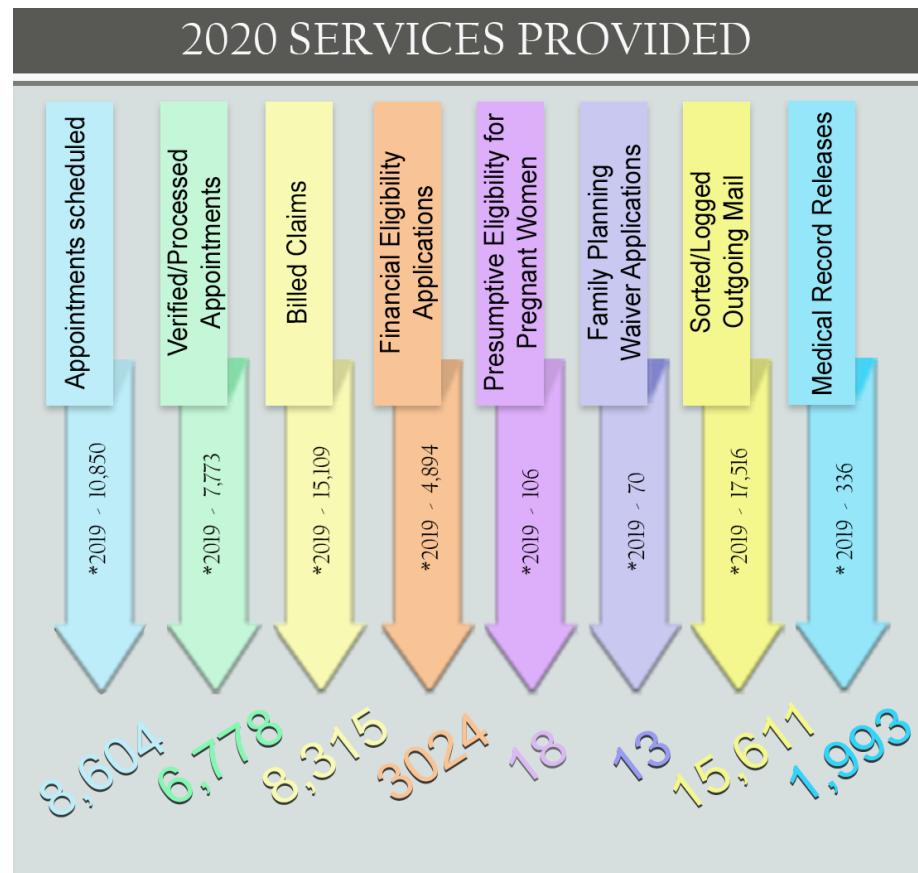
DOH-Charlotte prides itself on listening to the voice of the customer. The front office team are the front-line of the DOH-Charlotte mission. In addition to scheduling and processing client appointments, the front office team processes medical records requests, completes financial eligibility determinations, assists in the completion of applications for temporary Medicaid assistance for pregnant women (PEPW), and provides customer service to all clients and community partners.

Additionally, 2020 allowed the Clerical team to serve the community by answering a large influx of callers questions and providing information regarding COVID-19. Although a dedicated COVID-19 hotline was eventually established, the clerical team took on the brunt of the beginning of the pandemic calls. Even with the creation of the dedicated hot line, clerical continues to screen, direct, and assist many of the callers.

Due to COVID-19, the Clerical team has been proactive in adjusting processes to continue to provide services to clients, while keeping both staff and clients safe.

For example, the Clerical team was proactive in reducing the number of applications processed for pregnant women and family planning services by assisting callers to apply for their benefits on-line.

While 2020 has been a challenge for the entire clerical team, it has taught teamwork and creativity while bringing a new level of understanding for compassion and community service.



### BIRTH/DEATH CERTIFICATES & SCREENINGS

The Vital Statistics team assists customers issuing birth and death certificates for the State of Florida and processes prenatal/postnatal Healthy Start screenings, used by community partners to determine eligibility for relevant services.

Filing Charlotte Birth Records

909

\*2019 - 896

Filing Charlotte Death Records

3,284

\*2019 - 2,779

Issued Florida Birth Certificates

2,791

\*2019 - 3,316

Issued Florida Death Certificates

26,313

\*2019 - 20,336

Assist Tax Collector Florida Birth Records

95

\*2019 - 128

Healthy Start Prenatal Screening

752

\*2019 - 932

Healthy Start Postnatal Screening

940

\*2019 - 919

## *Management Information Systems (MIS)*

Management Information Systems (MIS) improves productivity through technology by making information easy to access and use. While the DOH-Charlotte MIS team closed out 1,012 Help Desk tickets in 2020. The MIS team provided the agency so much more than just Help Desk support.

All aspects of operations at DOH-Charlotte are touched by information technology and rely heavily on the MIS team. MIS staff play an active role on the agency's Performance Management Council, A-Team (which provides oversight to changes at the operational level), Safety Committee, HMS Administration Workgroup, and Information, Security, and Privacy Workgroup in addition to performing disaster response duties as needed. This close collaboration across the entire agency is crucial to successful change management.

The DOH-Charlotte MIS department completed upgrades to the Loveland facility security.

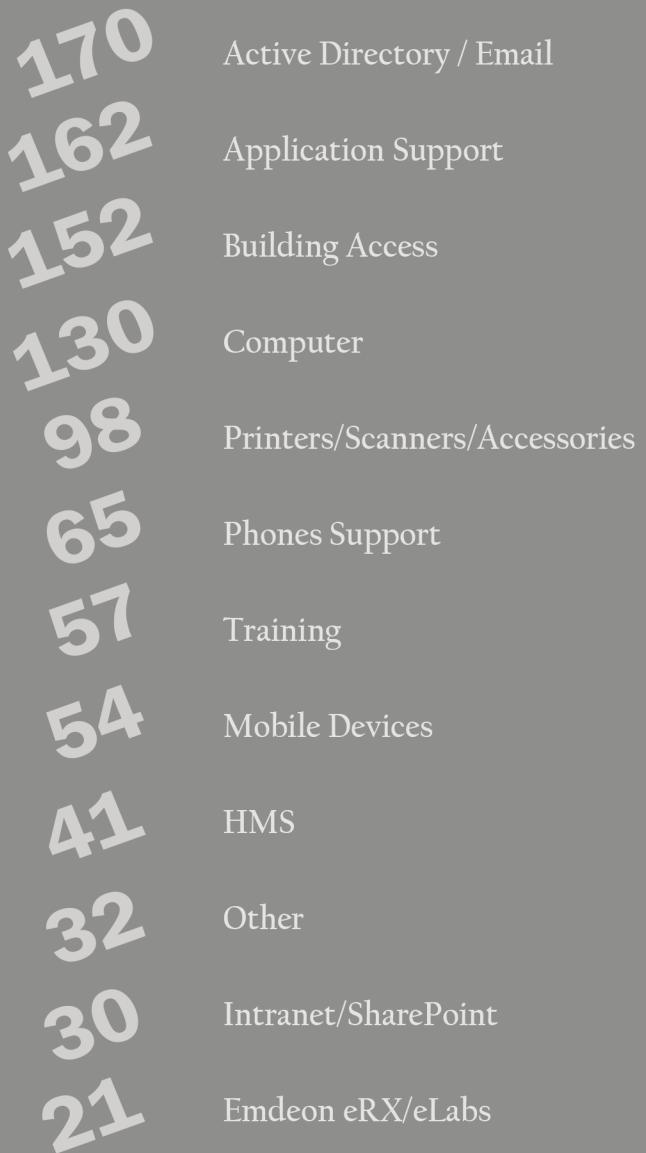
The DOH-Charlotte MIS department completed an upgrade to the Loveland Auditorium technology. The new technology will support group training, video/tele-conference, meetings and presentation, as well as improve collaboration on work products with internal and external partners. The Loveland Auditorium was used as an Incident Command Center by the Region 6 COVID-19 Incident Management Team to support both command and response activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The DOH-Charlotte MIS department converted the Loveland Training room into an Incident Command Center for use by the DOH-Charlotte Epidemiology team.

The DOH-Charlotte MIS department implemented an electronic hosted fax solution that meets the Florida Department of Health information security and privacy requirements while reducing the utilization of consumables and improving internal processes.

The DOH-Charlotte MIS department implemented a new inventory control and asset management system that will support current department processes while adding mobility and improving inventory system access.

## *Requests by Category*



The mobile application allows for real-time auditing and management of department inventory and assets using a mobile device. The DOH-Charlotte MIS department completed a quality improvement project using the new inventory control and asset management system that focused on reducing the number of misplaced assets. The quality improvement project exceeded the anticipated results.

## 2020 Community COVID-19 Test Sites



# Strategic Planning & Communications

The Office of Strategic Planning and Communications, Strategic Planning, Communications, Community Health and Needs Assessment, Community Health Improvement, and Quality Improvement at DOH-Charlotte aim to align with our strategic goals, specifically: Priority Issue #2: Long, Healthy Life and Priority Issue #4: Operational Efficiency.

## Strategic Planning

In July 2020, the Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County (DOH-Charlotte) began implementation of the second fiscal year goals and objectives of its three-year Strategic Plan. While the five Strategic Priorities remain firm, the achievement of some of the objectives and measures was stalled by the reallocation of resources to address the COVID-19 pandemic response. The Performance Management Council (PMC) has determined that a thorough revision of the Strategic Plan will be conducted in 2021 to determine if the existing strategies, goals and objectives reflect the department's current needs or require re-prioritization.

Consequently, long-range planning and short-range performance management activities including strategic planning, were affected. Many of the Plan objectives and goals set to be accomplished in 2020 have been revised

### 1. Priority: Health Equity

**Goal:** Ensure community members have opportunities to achieve healthier outcomes.

### 2. Priority: Long, Healthy Life

**Goal:** Increase healthy life expectancy, including the reduction of health disparities to improve the health of all groups.

### 3. Priority: Readiness for Emerging Health Threats

**Goal:** Prevent the spread of communicable diseases and demonstrate readiness to protect the public from emergency disasters and health threats.

### 4. Priority: Operational Efficiency

**Goal:** Achieve operational efficiencies through sound financial, process improvement, and business practices.

### 5. Priority: Workforce Development

**Goal:** Foster a healthy work environment to ensure a highly competent, satisfied, knowledgeable workforce with opportunities for professional growth and development.

and extended to reflect current time needs and a paced approach to resuming normal operations.

However, even under the most uncertain circumstances, there were many accomplishments in multiple areas of our agency. The DOH team was able to continue providing public health services to our community and fulfilling our mission to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and Community efforts.

Some of the Office of Strategic Planning and Communications (OSPC) accomplishments in 2020 were:

- › Submitted all documents required for reaccreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board.
- › Published the 2020 Community Health and Needs Assessment in collaboration with Charlotte County Human Services Department, United Way of Charlotte County, Charlotte Behavioral Health Care, and the Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida.
- › Completed the new Community Health Improvement Plan with a focus on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- › Completed the automation of the Customer Feedback Survey and increased participation by 288% with a 96% Customer Satisfaction Rating.
- › Conducted the Quality Improvement Self-Assessment and Completed four quality and process improvement projects.
- › Implemented the second year of the Workforce Development Plan with 90% completion.
- › Partnered with Humana Health Services in the promotion of Flu Vaccination and provided basic health and hygiene products with a focus on the most vulnerable population such as the elderly, disabled, uninsured, under-insured, indigent and homeless.

## Communications

The communications section is a part of a great effort of the agency to educate the community of health and safety concerns and to prevent communicable diseases.

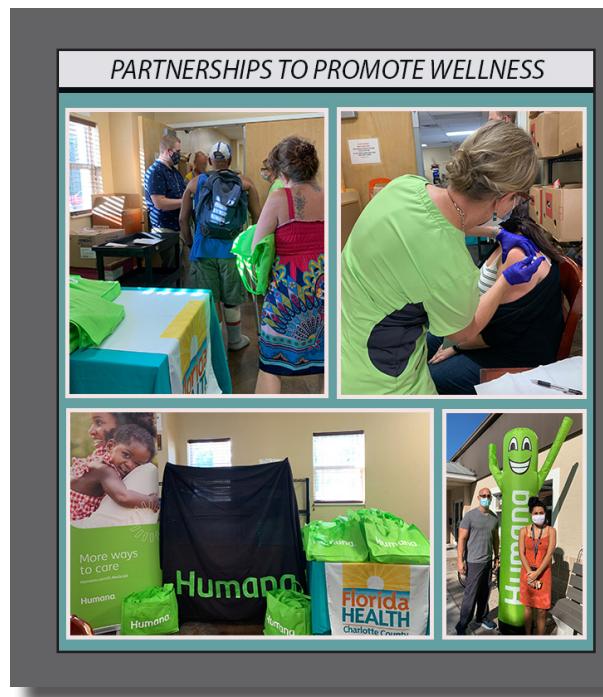
It goes without saying, COVID-19 messaging consumed the bulk of public and in-house communications for 2020. Communications in the form of billboards, print material, web communications, press releases, signage, newsletters, and agency updates went out to create awareness for COVID-19 prevention, safety, and coping.

Even though the focus of the past year has been on COVID-19, multiple campaigns promoting basic public health information were created. With the help of other agency departments, a few of the campaigns were created were:

- › National Breastfeeding Awareness Month
- › National Immunization Awareness Month
- › Back-to-School
  - . Back-to-School Planning: How to Protect Your Family and Loved Ones
  - . Childhood Obesity Awareness
  - . Child Passenger Safety
- › Influenza Vaccination - Encouraging Flu Shots

## Community Health and Needs Assessment

The Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County conducted the 2020 Community Health and Needs Assessment (CHNA) between June 2019-December 2020 in partnership with Charlotte County Human Services (CCHS), Charlotte Behavioral Health Care



(CBHC), United Way of Charlotte County (UWCC), and the Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida (HPCSWFL). The CHNA was guided by the MAPP framework throughout its 7-month development process, with Charlotte County residents and local agency and business representatives meeting to complete: 4 assessments, 1 vision, 1 community-wide survey with 1,367 respondents, 7 focus groups, and the prioritization of strategic issues.

The full 2020 CHNA Report was completed and presented to the community in February 2020 and can be accessed on the Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County website and will remain in effect through June 30, 2025, with annual updates to follow, accordingly. Additionally, the CHNA report was used to inform the development of the Community Health Improvement Plan and will also provide valuable insight to local agencies in their decision-making processes in the community for years to come.

### *Community Health Improvement*

The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) at the Department of Health in Charlotte County (DOH-Charlotte) endeavors to align with state and national strategic goals to support consistent health service delivery and coherent community health priorities. The CHIP functions as the actionable arm to our overall community health assessment process.

In 2018, DOH-Charlotte, along with members of the department's community collaborative Healthy Charlotte, developed an abridged Community Health Assessment to produce a new CHIP that would span from 2019-2020. By the end of 2018, community members voted and chose Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as the community health priority for the 2019-2020 CHIP due to its significant correlation with health risk behaviors and poor health outcomes.

The second and final year of the 2019-2020 CHIP is complete, and the community's efforts have made a significant impact on our goal to "reduce Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and their long-term health effects through the development of a peaceful, resilient, and connected community."

## *2020 CHIP Accomplishments*

**344 RESIDENTS**

344 residents were educated on Adverse Childhood Experiences.

**20 AGENCIES**

20 local agencies signed the Healthy Charlotte ACEs Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

**4 RELEASES**

4 Press Releases on ACEs were presented to the community.

**2 SPEAKERS**

2 Guest Speakers

Carey Sipp – the Southeast Regional Director and Facilitator of Acesconnection

Dr. Mimi Graham – Director of Florida State University's Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy

**1 PROCLAMATION**

1 Proclamation by the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners Recognizing October as Adverse Childhood Experiences Action and Awareness Day.

*~ Improving quality of life through positive health impacts. ~*

The CHIP had four strategies and eleven objectives.

2019 objectives included:

1. Develop an inventory of organizations who are using the ACEs questionnaire and/or are trauma informed.
2. Assemble a Speaker's Bureau.
3. Develop shared messaging that describes Healthy Charlotte's vision for a trauma-informed, trauma sensitive, and resilient community.
4. Develop a Letter of Commitment or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that can be shared with Charlotte County businesses.

2020 objectives included:

1. Provide ACEs Science education to 1% (1,740) of Charlotte County, FL population.
2. Obtain official recognition to raise awareness of ACEs (i.e. Proclamation).
3. Organize a community-wide event in celebration of our efforts to fight ACEs.
4. Obtain 20 MOUs from Charlotte County organizations.
5. Continue to use social media platforms (i.e. Facebook) to promote knowledge and action on ACEs.
6. Publish quarterly press releases to inform the community on ACEs.

As every sector of our society was deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, local health departments including DOH-Charlotte shifted priorities to ensure the health and safety of our community from this novel virus. In all, only two objectives were unaccomplished; one of which has been included in the 2021-2023 CHIP. Nonetheless, many of our efforts were able to continue despite challenges.

DOH-Charlotte closes out the 2019-2020 Community Health Improvement Plan with nine of eleven objectives completed for Charlotte County and is pleased to announce that the 2021-2023 CHIP will continue the county's efforts on addressing ACEs through a concerted and robust partnership of all our member agencies.

## Quality Improvement

DOH-Charlotte worked diligently toward another successful year of Quality and Process Improvement projects.

The 2019/2020 quality improvement projects were:

- › Worksite Wellness
- › Customer Service Satisfaction Surveys
- › Property Management
- › Information Security and Privacy:

### Worksite Wellness

A robust worksite wellness program can boost moral, productivity and employee retention. The project aimed to improve participation through a reduction on barriers by 22%. Improvement results achieved 25%.

### Customer Service Satisfaction Surveys

Customer Satisfaction Survey Participation is key to continuous improvement. The project aimed to increase participation by 50%. Results achieved 1,439% improvement.

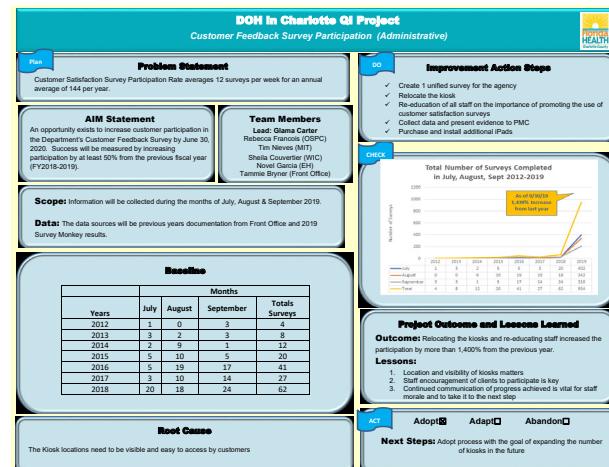
### Property Management

The project focused on decreasing the percentage of misplaced assets by 5%. While the 5% goal was not achieved, positive improvement was made and a 3.04% decreased was obtained.

### Information Security and Privacy:

#### Access to Information

The project focused on increasing compliance with the Department of Health Information Security and Privacy Policy by achieving 100% documentation of information resources. Substantial improvement was achieved by reaching 80% of documented resources.



# Clinical and Community Health

*The Clinical and Community Health Programs at DOH-Charlotte aim to align with our strategic goals, specifically:  
Priority Issue #1: Health Equity and Priority Issue #2: Long, Healthy Life.*

## *WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)*

WIC is a Special Supplement Nutrition Program that serves low to moderate-income women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or postpartum; infants; and children under 5 years of age.

Charlotte County WIC's latest September 2020 closeout participation was at 2028 clients, which is about an 8.48% decrease from September 2019.

Throughout the state, WIC agencies have seen a decrease in the percentage of eligible clients served during FFY 2020. The overall State percentage of participation decreased about 1.5%. The reason for this decrease is likely attributed to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was declared as a National Emergency in March 2020.

Although participation has dropped, the WIC program has developed ways to continue serving clients and help ease any concerns. Some of the ways developed include, remote issuance of benefits, options to certify over e-mail and phone, waivers for physical presence and anthropometric measurements, and daily phone calls to inform clients of the current process and procedure. These methods and waivers will continue to be in place until further notice.

Despite these challenging times, a highlight for Charlotte County WIC has been the percentage of infants and children under 24 months ever breastfed. Charlotte County WIC is at an impressive 87.95%, compared to the overall State average of 82.90%. Currently, WIC provides remote breastfeeding education and resources for clients

to continue emphasizing the importance and benefits of breastfeeding.

In addition, Charlotte County WIC has maintained collaboration with community partners such as Healthy Start and Bayfront Health. WIC has been connected and informed via remote meetings and electronic messaging. Along with these collaborations, Charlotte County WIC is looking forward to the opening of the new Family Health Center, where WIC services may be offered to help even more clients in our community.

The year 2020 will be remembered for many reasons, but Charlotte County WIC, along with all the other DOH programs, will also be remembered for all the efforts made in continuing to provide excellent services to clients, despite these challenging times.



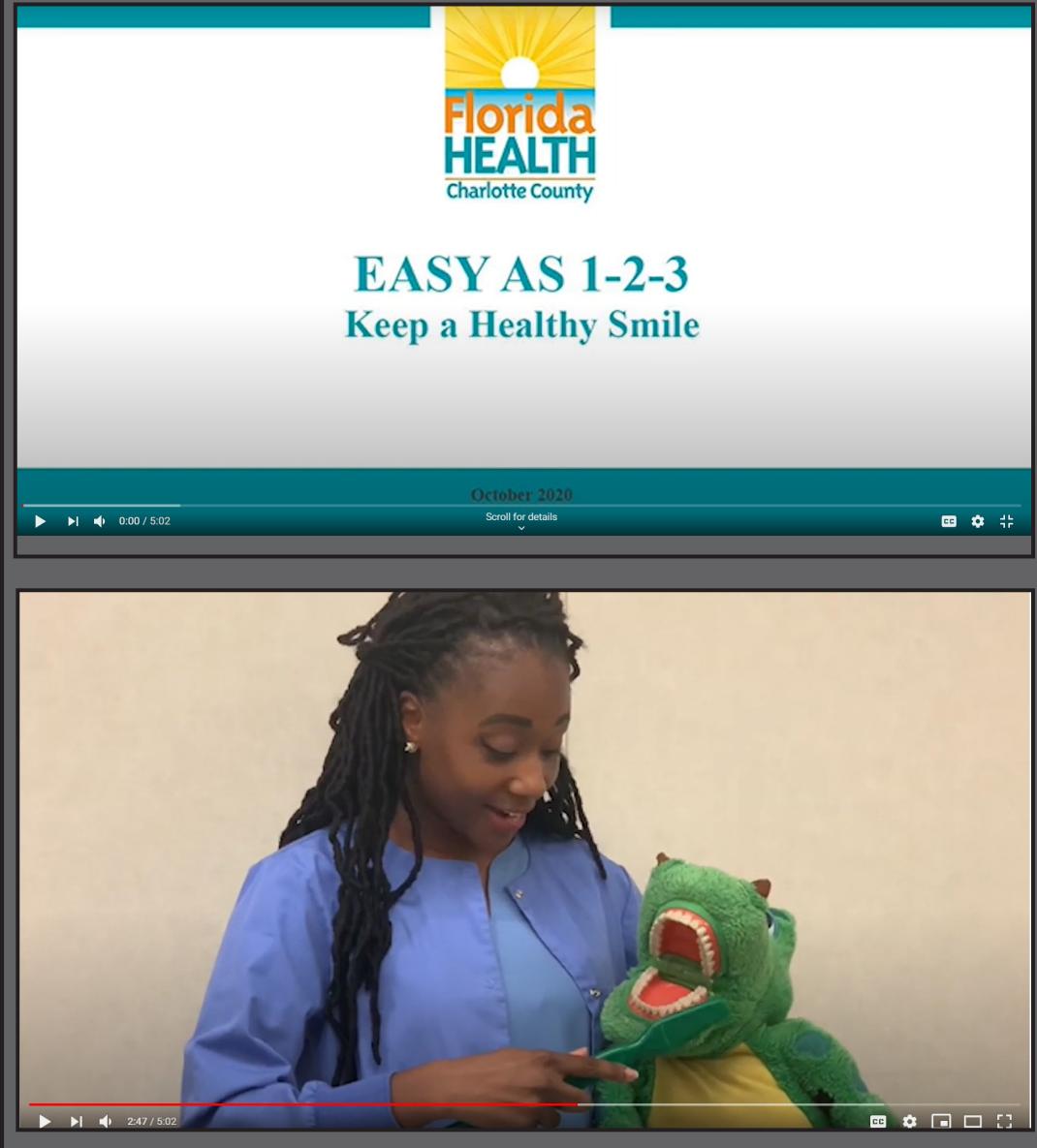
*The DOH-Charlotte WIC staff work diligently to provide continued services for the clients of Charlotte County.*

## Dental and Dental Sealant

In 2020, the School-Based Dental Sealant Program served 394 Charlotte County Public School students with 1535 services in kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade and 4th grade.

Due to COVID-19, the program was put in hold in March and continued to be on hold for the remainder of the calendar year.

*Ketia Simons, Certified Registered Dental Hygienist and student at St. Petersburg College of Health Sciences, executed her Capstone Practicum at DOH-Charlotte. As part of her practicum, she created a 3 minute professional video for elementary age children discussing and demonstrating oral hygiene instruction. The video was utilized in conjunction with 5-2-1-0.*



The program provided dental screenings, oral health education, preventive services of sealants and topical fluoride and referrals to the dental clinic with DOH-Charlotte as their “dental home”.

In 2020, the dental clinic at DOH-Charlotte served a total of 1,328 clients with 2,856 visits and 9,514 services provided.

On March 21, 2020, through the issuance of Executive Order 20-72, Gov. Ron DeSantis mandated the prohibition of any medically unnecessary, non-urgent or non-emergency procedure or surgery in the State of Florida. Dentist were still required to see emergency patients. The Executive Order was lifted in May 2020.

Among all workers, dental teams have the highest occupational risk with hygienists being the single highest-risk profession.

Kudos to the dental staff for following the recommended infection prevention and control practices.

Despite the COVID-19 challenges, Dr. Richard Cocchieri, DDS and Lauren Schmidt, Health Education Program Consultant, mentored two dental students working toward their advanced degrees.

## Family Planning

Charlotte County residents of child-bearing age are encouraged to utilize the services of the Family Planning program at DOH-Charlotte.

This program provides individuals with information related to their choices of family planning methods in order to assist in spacing the birth of children. The program offers counseling, education, promotion of vaccines, screenings, referrals, and access to long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC), and other effective methods of birth control. There are also limited funds to support irreversible birth control methods such as male (vasectomy) and female (tubal ligation) surgical sterilizations through contractual relationships with community partners.

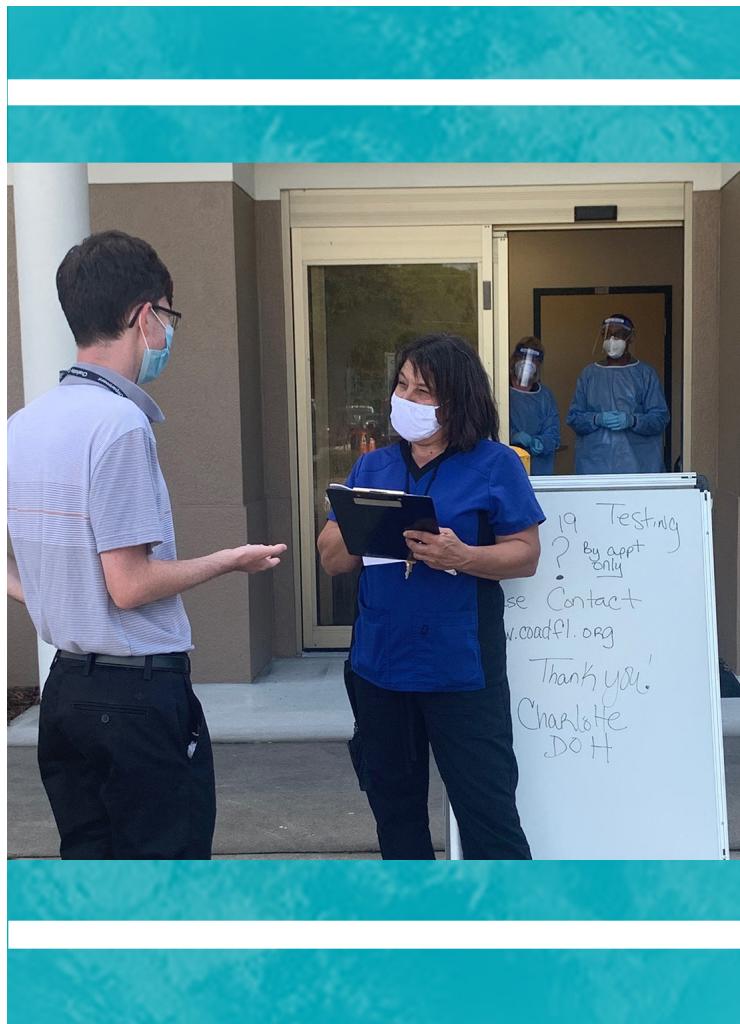
In 2020, DOH-Charlotte remained committed to the community.

- › Number of clients served 585
- › Percentage of teen clients adopting effective or highly effective birth control method
  - 97.8% (state benchmark is 80%)
- › Percentage of all clients adopting effective or highly effective birth control method
  - 92.2% (state benchmark is 75%)
- › Percentage of clients who are long acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) users
  - 8.7% (state benchmark is 1-2%)

DOH-Charlotte continued to provide uninterrupted Family Planning services despite a declared pandemic situation; workflow and the type of services offered had to be adjusted and modified, however, the Family Planning clinic stayed open every single business day throughout the entire pandemic, which received positive feedback from the community.

coordinates and performs routine state-mandated screenings for public and private school students in Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd, and 6th grades. These screenings evaluate physical development and include checks of height, weight, Body Mass Index, vision, and hearing.

- › Four flu clinics have been organized at several Charlotte County public school locations during October-November 2020 despite pandemic challenges with a total of 365 flu vaccines provided to school-aged children.
- › COVID-19 testing was offered at Loveland to school personnel and students as soon as in-person classroom instruction resumed on 08/31/20. The Clinical team worked hard to offset back-to-school challenges during these unprecedented times by providing school health immunizations on site and in schools.



## School Health

The goal of school health services is to ensure that students are healthy, in school, and ready to learn. The School Health program in Charlotte County

## Growing Strong Families

Growing Strong Families (GSF) is a program created by The Department of Health in Charlotte County. The program delivers Trauma Informed Care. The program is driven by client needs. GSF addresses the social determinants of health impacting one's ability to achieve specific health goals. A registered nurse provides education and other services to young families through home visits, with special emphasis on parental bonding and increasing health literacy.

GSF provides services at no charge to women and their families. Families may enter the program in the prenatal period or any time from birth until the child's transition to school. Focus areas for the program are: prenatal and postpartum health, breastfeeding support, healthy relationships, addiction management, safety and child development. All services are based on the needs of the client.

The GSF nurse is DOH-Charlotte's point person in addressing the opioid crisis in Charlotte County. She collaborates with community partners and serves as the secretary of the Charlotte County Substance Exposed Newborn (SEN) Task Force. She actively works to decrease the negative stigma about people with opioid dependency by educating people in the community. She supports and educates families with substance use disorder to improve outcomes for their substance exposed newborns (SENs). In 2020, she ministered to 15 families who have substance use disorder.

Specific GSF accomplishments in 2020 include:

- › During the COVID-19 pandemic, the GSF nurse provided trauma informed care via virtual and home/office visiting services to 51 families.
- › Completed 340 virtual and home/office visits.
- › Collaborated with Health Promotions, DOH-Dental, Harry Chapin Food Bank, Farm to Family, Healthy Start, Pregnancy Solutions, Mother's House, and Imagination Library to obtain supplies for families.
- › Completed 84 deliveries of food, formula, diapers, toiletries, breast pumps, kids' yoga booklets, gift bags, toothbrushes and books to

Growing Strong Families participants during the time of quarantine and limited contact.

- › Provided bi-weekly to monthly educational and inspirational e-mails to all GSF clients. E-mails included COVID-19 updates and listings of available resources for financial, nutritional and emotional support.
- › Increased health literacy and family bonding by providing 263 books to parents and children during those visits.
- › Completed 14 outreach visits to Jesus Loves You Ministries, the Homeless Shelter and Charlotte Behavioral Health providing COVID-19 testing and immunizations.
- › Provided support through virtual and home visits to 15 families with substance use disorder.
- › Assisted clients in accessing DOH services including immunizations, dental care, family planning, treatment for STDs and education on car seat installation.



- › Collaborated with Kids Thrive to support families with substance use disorder via Zoom and park/playground gatherings.
- › Served as secretary of the Charlotte County Substance Exposed Newborn Task Force.
- › Represented DOH Charlotte at the Regional Opioid Summit.
- › Provided COVID-19 testing at DOH-Charlotte.

## *Health Promotion*

The Health Promotion Department is responsible for promoting health and preventing chronic diseases, acts of violence, and injuries in Charlotte County. Health Educators in this department plan and coordinate the use of educational resources in the community to motivate and assist individuals and groups to adopt and maintain healthful practices and lifestyles.

Despite COVID-19, or due to it, depending on the perspective, many unique and challenging opportunities presented themselves this past year to continue delivering or create new ways to deliver educational information and materials to the community.

In addition to continuing to promote health education and prevention in the community, the Health Promotion Team also stepped up to help with the DOH-Charlotte response to COVID-19 through off-site mass testing, the COVID-19 hotline, contact tracing, scheduling testing for community members and partners, and more.

## **In the Schools**

Farrah Fishman, Health Educator Consultant, has reinvented the approach to reaching the elementary schools with health promotion and prevention education by moving all classes to a virtual platform in coordination with tremendous support from the elementary schools' physical education teachers. DOH-Charlotte has reached 4,469 students during the 2020 calendar year with a wide array of information including 5-2-1-0, water safety, over the counter medication safety, the importance of handwashing, bullying and cyberbullying and dental health.

## **5-2-1-0 Let's Go!**

5-2-1-0 Let's Go! is a nationally recognized childhood obesity prevention program. Students learn the importance of eating a variety of fruits and vegetables every day, as well as avoiding sugary drinks. Physical activity is encouraged over sedentary screen-based entertainment.

## **The Violence and Injury Prevention**

The Violence and Injury Prevention Program seeks to prevent and reduce intentional and unintentional injuries and death to create a healthy and safe Florida. Health Educators provide information on bicycle safety, water safety, how to prevent and handle bullying and cyberbullying, and over-the-counter medication safety.

Drowning prevention is important to all ages, but especially for young children who may not yet be skilled swimmers. With this in mind, DOH-Charlotte works diligently to ensure our youngest public-school students know how to be safe around water. Students were introduced to the harmful effects of bullying and cyberbullying and what to do when they witness bullying in-person or on line. Medications are the leading cause of child poisoning.

Health Educators took this knowledge to the classroom and engaged Charlotte County fifth graders in a critical conversation about responsible medicine use.

## **Community Outreach**

Farrah collaborated with the Mid-County Library to film four "How To" videos on Choose 5-2-1-0, Install a Car Seat, Swim Safely, Bike Safely, and Over the Counter Medication Safety, which were aired to the public. DOH-Charlotte spearheaded the provision of educational materials and activities to 1,100 recipients of school lunches during the 19/20 school year while the students were all learning virtually and created folders with educational activities for 140 camp kids.

The Health Promotions Team applied for and received funds to provide education on eating healthy and moving more to those in the community eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and James Hemingway, Health Educator Consultant, has collaborated with Farm to Families to link families with food sources and food pantries in the community.

## **Virtual How-To Festival**

*DOH-Charlotte's very own, Farrah Fishman, presents at the Charlotte County Virtual How-To Festival.*



### **How to choose 5-2-1-0**

**August 18th, 2020**

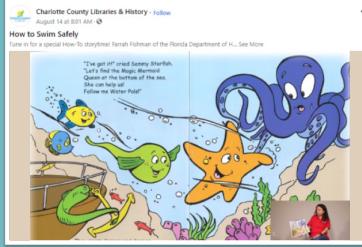
Join Farrah Fishman of the Florida Department of Health to learn how to practice 5-2-1-0 for your health every day.



### **Bonus! How to Install a Car Seat**

**August 10th, 2020**

Farrah Fishman of the Florida Department of Health is back to explain the importance of proper car seat installation. Watch to learn more about keeping child passengers safe on the go.



### **How to Swim Safely**

**August 14th, 2020**

Tune in for a special How-To Storytime! Farrah Fishman of the Florida Department of Health reads a children's book with important lessons about pool safety.



### **How to Bike Safely**

**August 10th, 2020**

Join Farrah Fishman of the Florida Department of Health to learn about bike helmet safety, using hand signals, and more!

In collaboration with the Mid County Library, DOH-Charlotte Health Promotions developed a “How To” series of videos. Topics included 5-2-1-0, Bicycle Safety, Car Seat Safety, Water Safety, and Medication Safety.

Health Promotions partnered with Sonshine Baptist Church and several other community partners to provide a Drive Thru Holiday Event for families, with bags of educational and fun activities given to 197 children and bicycle helmets fitted and provided to 127 children. Wearing a helmet can reduce the risk of head injury to bicyclists by as much as 85%. An additional 70 helmets were provided to School Resource Officers to fit on students who bike to school and are in need of a helmet.

## **Playing it Safe Kids and Cars**

In addition to educating students to prevent injury in the community, trained Child Passenger Safety Technicians provided education on proper use, care, and installation of car seats, and completed car seat checks or installations. Playing It Safe Kids and Cars Classes moved to a virtual platform in March 2020. Car seat installs are done in-person while practicing social distancing and wearing face coverings. From January to December 2020, 12 car seat classes were held, and 39 car seats were installed. DOH-Charlotte also acts as a referral source for families that need car seat checks and/or car seats due to income or special circumstances.

## National Diabetes Prevention

One out of every ten adults in the U.S. has diabetes and one in three has prediabetes. But losing weight, through healthy eating and moving more, can cut the risk of diabetes in HALF. The Health Promotions team partners with community organizations and members to offer the Prevent T2 Diabetes Prevention Program. The Diabetes Prevention Program has also been moved to a virtual

platform, allowing community members more access and fewer barriers to participation. In 2020, 6 classes were offered, 2 in-person and 4 virtual.

## Screen-Free Week 2020

The aim of Screen-Free Week is for children, families, entire schools, and communities to rediscover the joys of life beyond the screen and unplug from digital devices. In May of 2020, especially with so many individuals,

# Heart Healthy Luncheon



## A “Think Tank” session on Workplace Wellness Initiatives

In February, DOH-Charlotte staff were invited to participate in a workplace wellness think tank to discuss ideas for wellness initiatives within the workplace. Healthy snacks were served along with a health conversation..

families, and organizations moving to teleworking and virtual platforms to continue working and learning, Screen-Free Week 2020 was promoted through local community partners with ideas and materials for screen-free activities that were feasible while practicing social distancing.

### HIV and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

DOH-Charlotte regularly conducts screenings for HIV and other Sexually Transmitted diseases (STDs) at multiple locations in the community. When a positive test is identified, disease investigation specialist, and nursing staff provide treatment and additional resources.

DOH-Charlotte is currently providing high priority outreach services to these locations:

- › Charlotte County Jail
- › DOH-Charlotte Clinic Services
- › Gulf Cove United Methodist Church
- › Homeless Coalition
- › Jesus Loves You Ministry
- › Operation PAR Clinic
- › The Compass Center

In 2020, DOH-Charlotte provided at least 400 STD/HIV outreach and clinic testing services to clients.

DOH-Charlotte works with more than 25 businesses and providers as part of the ongoing fight to reduce the spread of STD/HIV through monthly condom distribution.

These locations have been identified as key traffic areas and serve as the front line towards providing client protection.

### Immunizations

Immunization is a key primary prevention tool used in public health as it is one of the most cost-effective means of public health promotion and disease prevention. Vaccines prevent disease, disability, and death in children and adults. In 2020, 3,438 vaccinations were administered by DOH-Charlotte staff to Charlotte County clients.

Of the vaccinations administered in 2020, 103 doses were for the HPV vaccine, which protects against cancers caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). In addition to promoting the HPV vaccine to both boys and girls (typically given at ages 11 and 12; 2 doses 6 months apart), DOH-Charlotte staff administered 727 doses of the flu vaccine of which 517 flu shots were provided to children. The state mandated 2 year old immunization report should be at 95% compliance with DOH-Charlotte being at 100%.

- › Total number of vaccines provided 3,878
- › Pediatric vaccines provided 2,220
- › Adult vaccines provided 1,658
- › Flu adults 219
- › Flu children 526
- › Hep A adults 663
- › Hep A children 146

DOH-Charlotte continued to provide uninterrupted immunization services despite being in a declared pandemic situation every single business day throughout the entire pandemic, which received positive feedback from the community.



## Epidemiology

Epidemiology is the study of the distribution and determinants of health-related states or events (including disease), and the application of this study to the control of diseases and other health problems. DOH-Charlotte conducts disease surveillance and investigates suspected occurrences of infectious diseases and conditions that are reported from hospitals, physician's offices, laboratories and other medical providers and community partners.

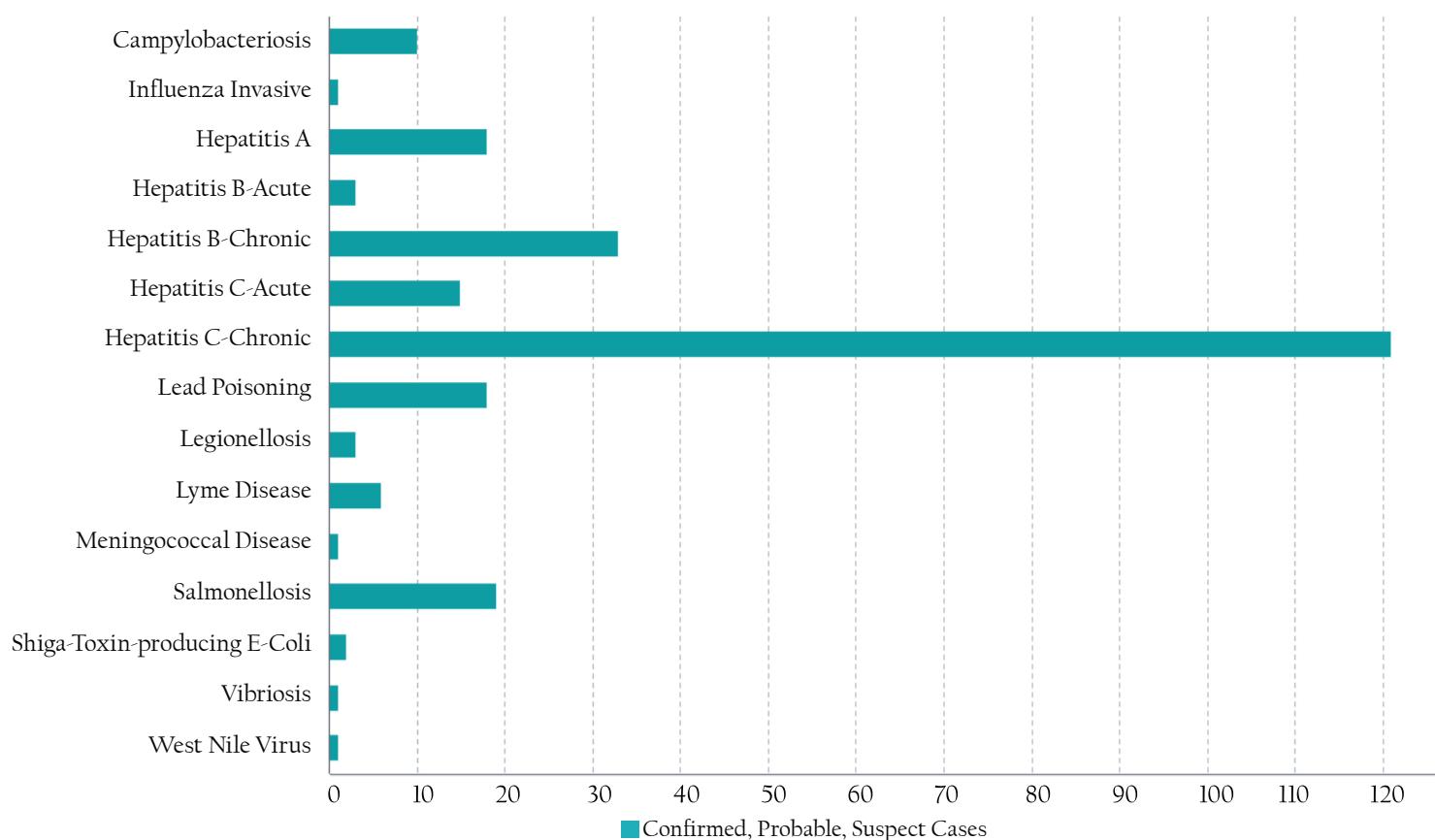
DOH-Charlotte's Epidemiologist, Nathalie Moise, also serves as a consultant to the medical community on issues of communicable diseases, and provides general education to the community and community based organizations. In 2020, DOH-Charlotte's epidemiology program investigated 33 confirmed, probable, or suspect cases of chronic Hepatitis C, a longterm, contagious liver disease which is spread primarily through contact with the blood of an infected person, often through sharing needles or other equipment to inject drugs. Hepatitis C virus infection can last a lifetime and lead to serious

liver problems. The Hepatitis C cases investigated in Charlotte County in 2020 totaled 136, drastically lower compared to 211 in 2019.

In 2020 DOH-Charlotte investigated 18 lead exposure cases, 18 Hepatitis A cases and 36 confirmed, probable, or suspect cases of chronic Hepatitis B. Other cases investigated included enteric diseases, zoonotic diseases, waterborne diseases, mosquito-borne viruses, and vaccine preventable diseases (such as pertussis/whooping cough and varicella/chicken pox). In 2020, the epidemiology program investigated a total of 252 cases, in addition to the 7,616 COVID-19 case investigations.

The epidemiology program at DOH-Charlotte collaborates with other State agencies as appropriate to investigate possible outbreaks in the community such as food-borne complaints, flu outbreaks, and contagious illnesses in daycare or long term care facilities.

## 2020 Reportable Diseases

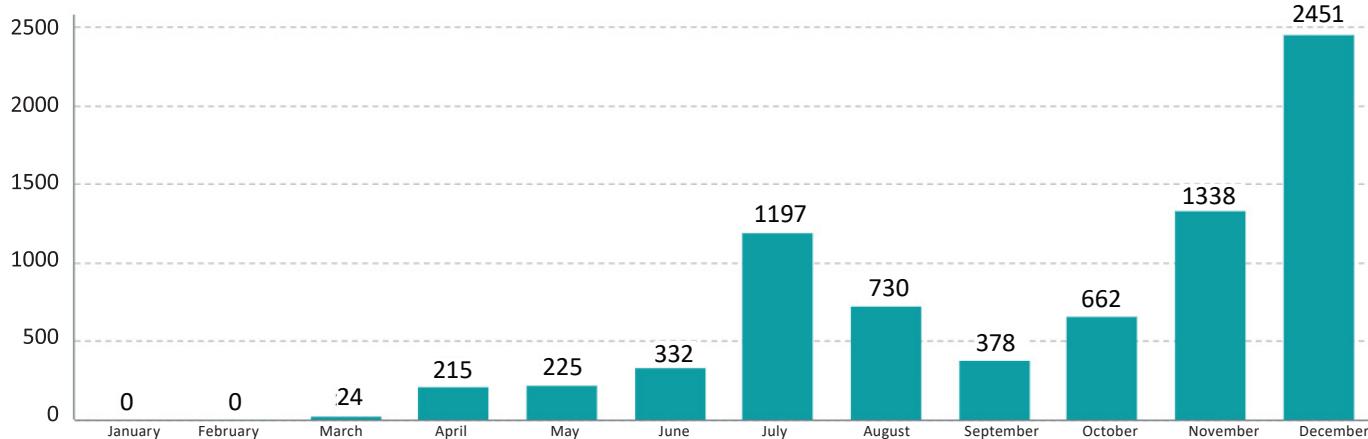


## COVID-19

In early March 2020, the first case of the 2019 Novel Corona Virus Disease was identified in Charlotte County. During the investigation of the index case, DOH-Charlotte uncovered over 400 individuals throughout the central Florida region who were also linked to this initial case and traveled to the Middle East. Subsequently, the Florida Department of Health Central Office sent out a press release to facilitate case findings of the ongoing investigation.

Case investigation and contact tracing are fundamental public health activities. They require collaboration with patients diagnosed with an infectious disease and necessitate the identification and support of persons who may have been infected through exposure to confirmed cases. This process prevents further transmission of disease by separating individuals who have developed or may go on to develop the disease from others who remain uninfected. These two components are core communicable disease control measures that have been employed in disease surveillance and investigation for decades to interrupt the transmission of sexually

**COVID-19 Incidence Charlotte County, 2020**



## Positive Cases

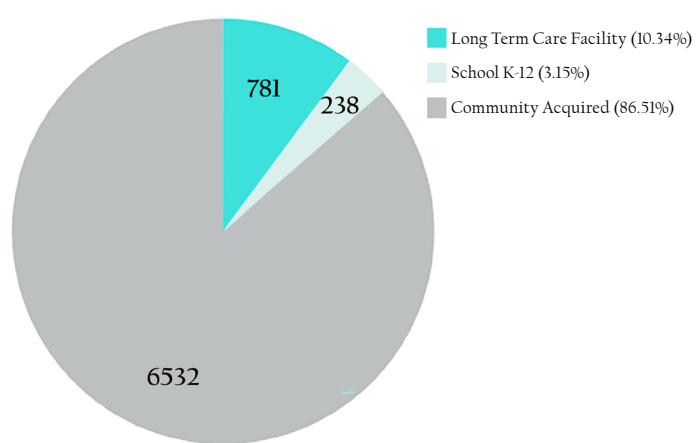
For 2020, March through June marked the lowest incidence of COVID-19 cases in Charlotte County. In July 2020 the monthly case load increased by 72%. The COVID-19 case distribution per setting within the county were as follows:

- › 10% Long Term Care Facilities
- › 3% School K-12
- › 87% Community Acquired

## Contact Tracing

Contact tracing and case investigation are vital components in the overall strategy of containing and stopping transmission of COVID-19. Contact tracing for COVID-19 includes identifying, assessing and managing people who may have been exposed to the disease to prevent further spread of the infectious disease and thwart potential outbreaks.

**COVID-19 Case Distribution**



transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV, Zika virus infections and other communicable diseases. The effectiveness of these processes has made them a standard public health approach to prevent further spread of COVID-19.

The goals of contact tracing are to:

- › Rapidly identify all persons with close contact to a confirmed case or probable COVID-19 positive case.
- › Ensure all identified close contacts are notified and directed to self-quarantine and monitored for symptoms.
- › Provide information and linkage to support services and refer or provide access to testing as appropriate.

## Testing

DOH-Charlotte began testing for COVID-19 on March 16th, 2020. In 2020, there were 6080 scheduled appointments, of which, 5080 tests were performed. Of the 5080 tests performed, 544 yielded positive test

results, which represents a 10.71% positivity rate.

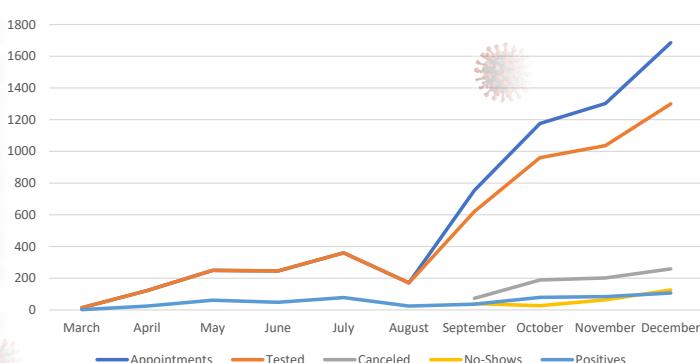
The Epidemiology department investigated over seven thousand positive cases of COVID-19 from March to December 2020.

## Vaccination

The Epidemiology team is making preparations to support agency vaccination efforts in any way possible.

While testing and contact tracing will remain the focus for the Epi team into 2021, the team will assist the community's through targeted outreach with an equitable approach towards vulnerable populations, such as homebound individuals and group home residents facing transportation barriers in an effort to close the gaps in disparities in the Charlotte community.

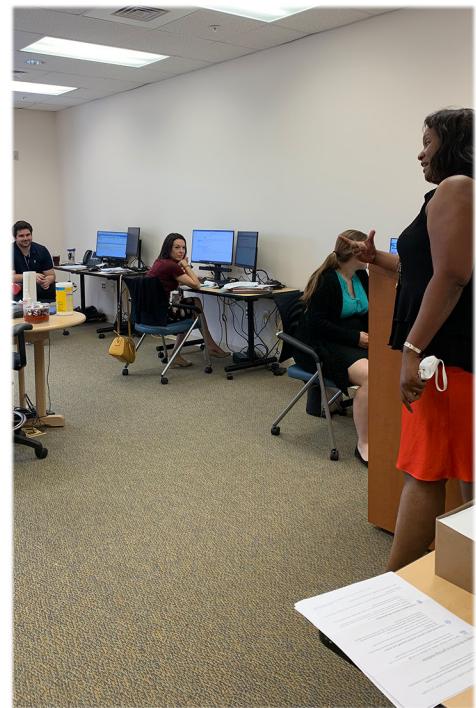
2020 COVID-19 Testing



2020 COVID-19 Cases by Month



In 2020, due to COVID-19 response, many positions were added, new or additional roles were taken on, and a dedicated work center was created to accomodate the needs of the community.



# Public Health Preparedness

The Public Health Preparedness program at DOH-Charlotte aims to align with our strategic goals, specifically Priority Issue #3: Readiness for Emerging Health Threats.

## Special Needs Shelter

Twice in 2020, DOH-Charlotte was on standby to activate the Special Needs Shelter, due to Hurricane Dorian and Tropical Storm Eta. The staff learned the importance of family preparedness, monitoring various channels of communication, implementing mass notification messages (Everbridge) and standing ready to implement their Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP), if an activation was declared.

On December 1st, 2020 a cold weather shelter was activated for nine hours to allow the homeless population to seek refuge during extremely low temperatures. It was a coordinated effort with many county services being provided. DOH-Charlotte staff was requested to conduct COVID-19 rapid tests to incoming individuals.

## COVID-19 Test Points of Dispensing (PODs)

In April 2020, COVID-19 test supplies were extremely limited. There was a great demand from the public. As supplies became available, DOH-Charlotte worked with partners to make testing available to all demographics of Charlotte County. Multiple mass test sites were set up. The Preparedness Planner, with assistance from staff from almost every department at DOH-Charlotte, assisted in planning, coordinating, and executing drive-up test sites at the Charlotte Sports Complex and Cooper Street Recreation Center.

In addition to the drive-up sites, pop-up sites were made available at the Homeless Coalition, Jesus Loves You Ministries, Heritage Oak Parks Community, and many others to serve some of the most vulnerable populations in the county.

From April through August of 2020, DOH-Charlotte

had a great investment of resources into testing. Supplies and availability increased among partners in the community through providers, walk-in clinics, pharmacies, and state run test sites. As the supply increased, DOH-Charlotte was able to move testing operations from the drive-up site to a walk-up site located at the Department of Health.

## Wrap Around Missions

In August of 2019, there had been a statewide public health emergency declaration for the Hepatitis A (HEP A) virus. At that time a wave of vaccination education and promotion was prioritized. Although reported cases have substantially decreased (3405 in 2019 vs 941 in 2020), local county health departments continue to promote vaccinations.

With the introduction of COVID-19, before a vaccine existed, there was a push to have the underserved and immunocompromised individuals get the H1N1 Flu vaccine. Surveillance data from the Florida COVID-19 dashboard determined the need to advocate for community testing and immunizations. Using data to determine zones of high COVID-19 occurrences allowed DOH-Charlotte to concentrate on the areas of greatest need.

Flu vaccines, Hepatitis A vaccines, and COVID-19 testing were offered as a combined service. This pandemic wrap around mission was initiated by the COVID-19 Incident Management Team (IMT).

## Community Protection and Resilience

Almost the entire year of 2020 focused on how the DOH-Charlotte Disease Control and Preparedness taskforce could protect the residents of the county from the

spread of COVID-19; especially since an emergency use authorization vaccine was not available until December 11, 2020.

Protective measures were offered to partners in the community, including long term care facilities/skilled nursing facilities (LTC/SNF), private healthcare providers, non-profit organizations, homeless service providers and local officials. The following are a few of the measures DOH-Charlotte had a part in:

- › Overflow sites to accommodate higher shelter demands.
- › Isolation sites for positive COVID-19 cases.
- › Quarantine sites for exposed individuals or those awaiting testing or results.
- › Protective housing for those who are at increased risk for severe illness.
- › Precautionary education.
- › Specialized testing measures.

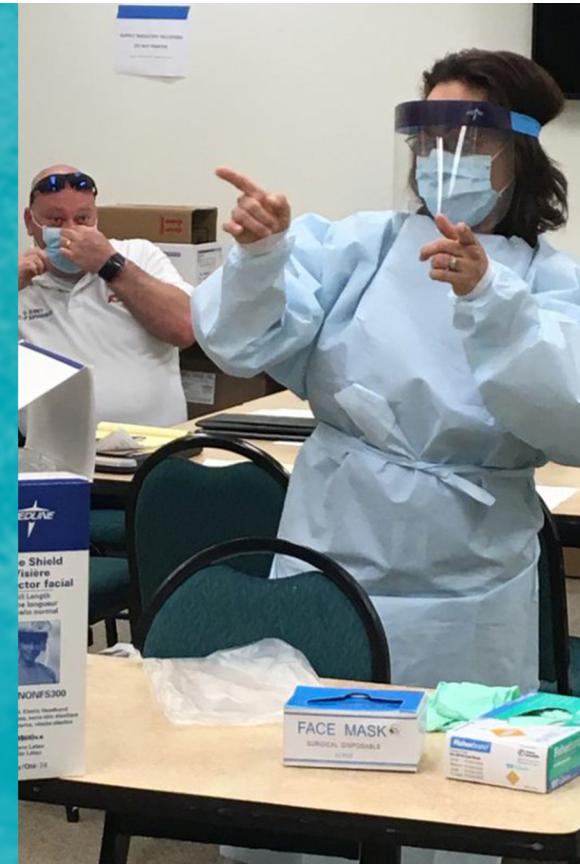
DOH-Charlotte assisted the community, local businesses

and partners in keeping up with the fast paced changes as the state, country, and world all learned together.

Some of the resources and education offered included:

- › Resources for replenishing personal protective equipment (PPE).
- › Updates to federal and state mandated guidelines.
- › Educational tools and guidelines
  - . Operating schools during COVID-19
  - . Safe Winter Holiday Celebration education.
  - . Proper use of masks, good hygiene, and best social distancing practices.

By the end of 2020, the second phase of preparedness transitioned into recovery mode. Throughout this lengthy pandemic experience, the COVID-19 preparedness incident management team continues to stay alert and ready to respond accordingly.



# Environmental Health

The Environmental Health Department at DOH-Charlotte aims to align with our strategic goals, specifically: Priority Issue #3: Readiness for Emerging Health Threats.

The Environmental Health department is responsible for safety, sanitation, and enforcement of public health laws in the community. The services provided by Environmental Health staff are focused on preventing disease outbreaks and protecting the public.

The Department is very broad in scope and covers fourteen separate programs governed by Florida Statutes and Florida Administrative Codes. Cross training of all EH staff in most Environmental Health programs has begun and will be a continuous process, creating a more experienced and professional team.

## Facilities

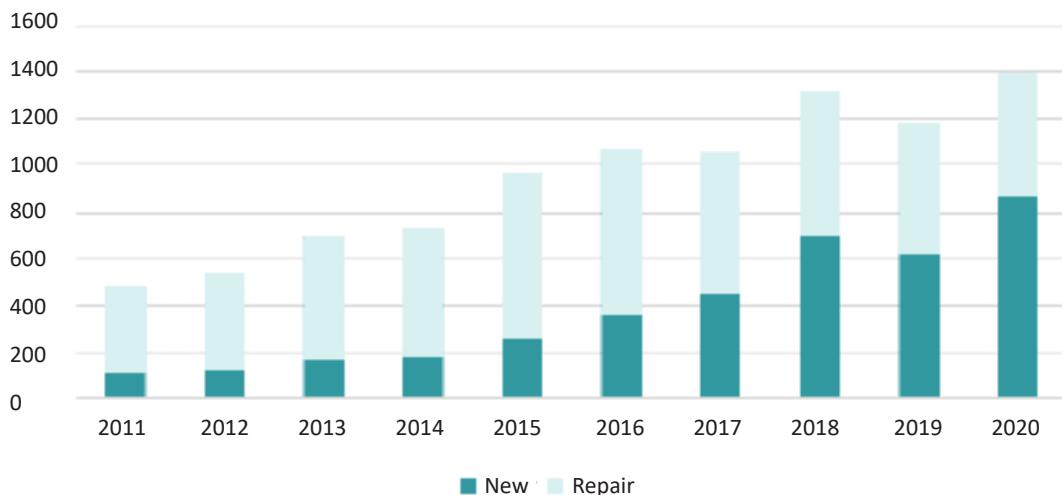
Due to COVID 19 the water program evaluation for 2020 was postponed, although the team stands ready! Facility staff work closely with Epidemiology staff and other agencies such as the Department of Hotels and Restaurants, Department of Agriculture and Department of Children and Families to investigate

reports of outbreaks related to foodborne illnesses in the county. Environmental Health facilities staff have been increasingly challenged with conducting annual inspections during the pandemic taking all necessary precautions for personal protection.

Environmental Health staff also monitored area beaches under the Florida Healthy Beaches Program. Significant challenges were experienced in 2020 with incidents of red tide and harmful algal blooms along the coast of Charlotte County. Bacteriological beach sample frequency collection increased to weekly as incidents increased. All samples were sent to a laboratory for testing.

By monitoring the level of bacteria and working closely with FWC and Parks and Recreations, DOH-Charlotte is able to advise residents and visitors when it is unsafe to go into the water.

Repair and New Construction Permits by Year



## OSTDS

The largest section of the Environmental Health program is Onsite Sewage. Due to increased building activity in the County, the program experienced significant increases in permitting for new septic systems in 2020, with the trend anticipated to continue in the future. Charlotte County currently has approximately 50,000 septic systems including approximately 2,500 aerobic treatment units which need to be inspected annually. The OSTDS staff have successfully inspected every system this year, a tremendous goal to achieve while still managing a daily work load with minimum staff.

The Onsite Sewage program also regulates the County mandated managed septic system program. The program objective is to assist home owners manage their systems more efficiently while protecting vulnerable wetlands and drinking water supplies.

Days to issue currently:

- › New construction: 3 days (target time 30 days).
- › Repair permits 2 days (target time 2 days).
- › Construction inspections Year to Date:  
(Dec 2019-Nov 30 2020) 1606

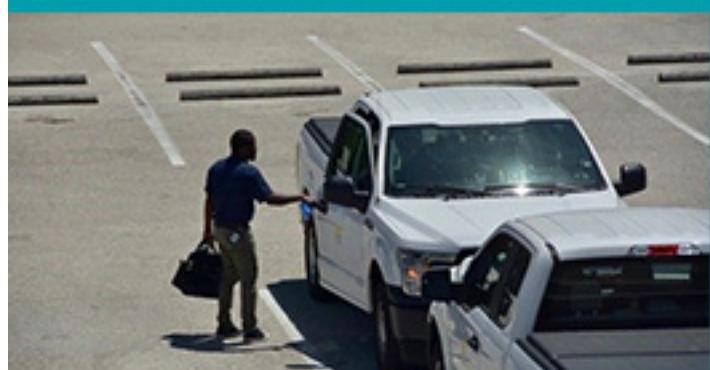
As part of a Quality Improvement project, Environmental Health is looking to technology to give the specialist's the ability to route plan more efficiently and pull up information for each facility utilizing only their mobile phone. In 2020, the department began implementing the Google Maps program. The information is updated regularly and future features will be added for ease of use.

## COVID-19

As part of the commitment to the DOH-Charlotte team, the Environmental Health department assisted with the ongoing tasks of the agency to combat COVID-19.

Environmental Health has been instrumental in their response to COVID-19 to assist with Emergency Preparedness and Epidemiology. From working the front lines at mass testing sites, collecting forms and handing out educational material at the airport, to transporting samples to the state lab in Tampa, the team is always willing to serve the community and the agency.

## In this Together



# *Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County*

The mission of the Florida Department of Health is to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

*Improving quality of life through positive health outcomes.*

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