

HIGHLIGHTS

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Director's Report

by **Connie Beck**

► In mid-October, a group of DHHS staff attended the County Welfare Directors Association of California's (CWDA) annual conference. The three-day event was packed each day with presentations and breakout sessions on topics ranging from addressing secondary trauma, to Adult Protective Services teams that specialize in addressing homelessness and other catastrophic events to the Americans with Disabilities Act and everything in between.



There was also a heavy focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the work various agencies are doing to lift that work, and I am proud to say that our team from DHHS presented "Building a Racial Equity Strategy in Humboldt County

DHHS." The presentation was given by Monique Upshaw-Smith, Ryan Bishop, Eric Kanaga and Neftali Miller-Rubio to a packed room and was very well received.

I always enjoy attending the CWDA conference and learning more about how other counties are addressing the same issues we deal with every day and being part of discussions about long term solutions. I also enjoy the evenings when I get to relax with staff. It is something I don't often have the opportunity to do, and it is so rewarding to get a chance to form deeper relationships with people I work with, but rarely get a opportunity to spend time with.

Another highlight for me and someone who I really resonated with was keynote speaker and author Stephanie Land who wrote, "Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay and a Mother's Will to Survive."

The book she wrote, is the inspiration behind the Netflix series "Maid," and tells her story of a four-month

relationship leading to an unplanned pregnancy and eventually leading to her finding herself a single mom scraping by as a housecleaner to make ends meet while pursuing a college degree.

She is a compelling writer and speaker, and her message is simple yet profound. Empathy. We provide services to people who need them, and we have to follow policies that put a lot of barriers in the way making it very difficult to help people help themselves get out of poverty, and then we wonder why they are still struggling. Sometimes the work we do is challenging. It's difficult to see people struggling, especially when it seems like things are not getting better, and keeping empathy in mind is helpful.

As we continue to go about our days at work, at home and in the world, let's remember to continue to take care of each other and ourselves, and that a little bit of empathy goes a long way. ◀

ShakeOut is a reminder to be ready

by **Terrence McNally**, DHHS Emergency Preparedness Program Coordinator



► A recent string of morning earthquakes were a literal wakeup call to prepare for earthquakes and a reminder that we live in earthquake country, with three plates converging off our coast. While these quakes were smaller than last December and January's Rio Dell-centered shakers, they were felt throughout the county. And there's a good chance you'll experience

the next one while at work.

On Oct. 19, DHHS staff participated in the Great California ShakeOut, the annual drill designed to simulate response. Workers got to practice their Drop, Cover and Hold On techniques, the go-to moves for riding out an earthquake in the safest possible manner.

We're all Disaster Service Workers with the expectation to assist the county in response efforts during a major incident. But family comes first, so make sure that you and your loved ones are safe following any emergency. How can you best prepare your family for the aftermath of an earthquake? It's more simple than you might think:

Make a communication plan. During a disaster, cell lines may be interrupted. With lines overwhelmed, calls may not go through, however, texts may be able to be sent and received, making that a good alternative. Addi-



Social Services Program Coordinator Maricruz Gomez participates in the Great California ShakeOut drill.

Preparedness, continued from page 1

tionally, you should designate a family or friend outside of the area who can field communication between your family members. Let that person know beforehand that they may be receiving communication when and if Humboldt is impacted.

Have a meet-up spot. That may be a nearby park or a child's school where family members can gather. Obviously that location should be well outside of tsunami inundation zones. Check out the [Humboldt County tsunami map](#). Keep in mind that schools may institute their own emergency plan that keeps children on campus until it's determined all danger is cleared so you may not be able to immediately pick up your child. Talk about these issues with family members beforehand.

Prep your home. Simple techniques like securing heavy items to the wall and bolting shelving will reduce the

danger of falling things and reduce cleanup after a major shaker. Know how to turn off your home's gas and water lines. FEMA provides a good Earthquake Safety Checklist with easy-to-follow steps.

Have disaster supplies on hand such as adequate food and water that can last two weeks. That may sound daunting, but even the act of picking up a few non-perishable items each time you go shopping will help build a disaster kit quickly. Don't forget about having food on hand for your pets. Each family member should have a Go Kit in a backpack or other easily transportable container should you need to evacuate your home. Many of the items you'll need may already be part of your camping supplies.

Disaster preparedness should be a family project so that everyone knows the location and inventory of supplies.

The [Redwood Coast Tsunami Work Group](#) has an excellent webpage with helpful tips for involving kids in preparedness here. Local schools are doing good work discussing disaster readiness so your child might already have their own valuable insights to share. It starts with a conversation.

Don't forget to have all members sign up for Humboldt Alert on their phones. The system will be used to notify residents about imminent threats to health and safety such as the need to evacuate or take other appropriate actions in the event of a flood or other critical police activity. Having each family member informed will be crucial during a disaster.

There's much more to consider but taking incremental steps now will go a long way toward getting ready for the next earthquake. ◀



Staff from the Homeless Outreach & Mobile Engagement program take part in the Great California ShakeOut drill.

Social Services Report

by **Ryan Bishop**, Deputy Branch Director

► I would like to shed light on a pressing issue that has been gaining momentum nationwide and hitting close to home



in Humboldt County. We bring your attention to the worrisome increase in EBT theft, a phenomenon that poses significant challenges to individuals relying on vital assistance programs such as CalFresh, CalWORKs and General Relief.

EBT cards, akin to debit cards, serve as lifelines for those in need, offering a convenient means to access essential funds. However, the unfortunate reality is that these cards have become targets for theft,

leaving vulnerable individuals and families in further distress. As we delve into this topic, we aim to raise awareness and explore potential solutions to combat this growing concern.

The two primary forms of EBT theft are skimming and scamming. Skimming, which accounts for over 90% of reported cases in California, involves thieves using skimming devices to copy card numbers and PINs. These devices are typically attached to point of sale (POS) machines or ATMs. The stolen information is then used to create counterfeit cards, allowing criminals to steal benefits. Scamming, on the other hand, occurs when criminals impersonate legitimate sources through calls, texts or emails. They deceive individuals into providing their card numbers, PINs or personal information. These scams have become increasingly sophisti-

cated and convincing.

To help mitigate impacts to those in need, the Social Services Branch has been working diligently to replace stolen benefits. Since January of this year, we have processed 150 claims related to EBT electronic theft, resulting in the replacement of over \$65,000 in stolen benefits. Also, our Special Investigations Unit has been working collaboratively with the California Department of Social Services to identify compromised EBT cards and deactivate them. This proactive approach helps reduce the number of benefits that can be stolen from an individual cardholder.

EBT recipients are being advised to protect themselves from skimming and scamming, it is crucial to be vigilant. They're being told, before using ATMs or POS machines, to inspect them by gently tugging on them to ensure no skimming devices

are attached. Additionally, they should exercise caution when receiving calls or texts that request financial information or passwords. Additionally, they should know that Social Services will never ask them for their card or PIN number over the phone, text or email.

Another effective measure to safeguard EBT accounts is to download the upcoming ebtEDGE mobile and web-based application. This free app provides cardholders with various features, including checking balances, reviewing transaction history,

blocking certain transactions, changing PINs, freezing or unfreezing cards and requesting replacement cards. The app will be available on Nov. 10, 2023, offering added convenience and control over an EBT account. ◀

Humboldt County takes the SNAP Challenge

▶ The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors declared Nov. 1 through 7, 2023, Humboldt County SNAP Challenge Week.

The Food Research & Action Cen-

ter started the “SNAP Challenge” 10 years ago to give individuals an opportunity to experience what


life is like for millions of low-income Americans who are enrolled in SNAP, the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP Challenge participants can spend a total of \$43.63 for the week and only eat food that is included in that amount, deducting for the amount of food that has already been purchased or given by friends or family.

In Humboldt County, there are approximately 18,500 families consisting of 29,000 individuals who receive CalFresh benefits, California’s food supplement program formerly

known as food stamps.

This year, a group of county residents organized a weeklong SNAP Challenge Nov. 1 through 7, which gives participants an opportunity to experience how difficult it is for families who rely on CalFresh benefits to avoid hunger, afford nutritious food and stay healthy on limited resources. With an invitation from community member Vernon Price, Fourth District Supervisor Natalie Arroyo said she will be participating in the SNAP Challenge and sharing her experiences online to help raise awareness.

Community members interested in participating can get more information by visiting frac.org/programs/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/take-fracs-snap-challenge. To see if you are eligible for CalFresh, visit getcalfresh.org or benefitscal.com. ◀



2023-2024 CalFresh Income & Eligibility Limits
Effective October 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024

Monthly Income Limits		
People in Household	Gross Monthly Income	Net Monthly Income
1	\$2,430	\$1,215
2	\$3,288	\$1,644
3	\$4,144	\$2,072
4	\$5,000	\$2,500
5	\$5,858	\$2,929
6	\$6,714	\$3,357
7	\$7,570	\$3,785
8	\$8,428	\$4,214
Each Additional Member	+\$858	+\$429

Maximum Monthly Allotment	
People in Household	Maximum CalFresh Allotment
1	\$291
2	\$535
3	\$766
4	\$973
5	\$1,155
6	\$1,386
7	\$1,532
8	\$1,751
Each Additional Member	+\$219



From left, Humboldt County Fourth District Supervisor Natalie Arroyo, community member Vernon Price, Social Services Program Manager II Monique Upshaw-Smith and Social Services Deputy Branch Director Ryan Bishop.

CWS Report

by CWS Administration and Workforce Development Program staff

► Finding more heroes among our community to do child welfare work remains a top priority for Child Welfare Services (CWS) administration, as does supporting our current heroes by bolstering a positive work environment and improving staff retention and morale.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw heroes in action in so many sectors — hospitals, child care and those working front lines to provide essential goods and services, to name just a few. One sector that continued to provide essential services to our community, and did so without much fanfare, was CWS. Humboldt County CWS Social Workers continued to provide in-home safety assessments and ongoing essential services throughout the pandemic to ensure child safety and promote permanency and wellbeing. Our amazing CWS workforce truly proved that they are heroes! It's an honor to work alongside these amazing humans who do incredibly hard work with care and compassion.

Not unlike other child welfare jurisdictions, Humboldt County CWS has faced challenges with high vacancy rates over the years. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the job market, requiring employers to do more and work harder to fill vacancies.

We know there is much more to be done to improve staffing levels and morale for CWS, and we want to highlight some of the ongoing and new efforts.

- **Wage Adjustment for CWS workers:** In recognition of the specialized work required for the child welfare sector, all CWS Social Workers, Social Worker Supervisors and Social Services Aides in Humboldt County receive a 3% base wage adjustment at hire. This means staff who hold these positions in CWS, earn 3%

more than the standard pay for those same classifications that work in other county divisions. In addition, our CWS Social Workers, Social Worker Supervisors and Social Services Aides receive a 5% base wage adjustment to the established compensation schedule after four years of employment in the CWS division.

- **Retention Stipends:** All CWS Social Workers and Social Worker Supervisors receive a \$2,000 stipend after three years with CWS.
- **Promotional Opportunities:** CWS provides a promotional career path within the division by offering Social Worker I (entry level) through Social Worker IV (master's degree level) positions. Additionally, CWS offers the Social Services Aide position, providing an additional opportunity for advancement to the Social Worker series after one year of experience as a Social Services Aide.
- **Continual Recruitments:** CWS has

implemented continual recruitments for our Social Worker III and Social Worker IV positions, meaning that our job openings for these positions are posted year-round on the county job openings website and applicants can apply at any time. This promotes retention by allowing current CWS employees to apply for promotional opportunities as soon as they have gained the experience or education necessary, as they don't need to wait for a new recruitment to open. This also increases our opportunities to find new workers, as they can apply as soon as they have met the educational or work experience necessary.

- **On the Job Training:** All new Social Workers are provided on-the-job training, starting in the division's onboarding unit. For the first four-to-six months, all new Social Workers receive a mix of class-

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Social Worker Training

► In October, staff from Child Welfare Services (CWS), Humboldt Domestic Violence Services (HDVS) and Trinidad Rancheria took part in a two-day joint training. The groups held conversations around the challenges faced when working with families and leaned into

each other's perspectives on collaborative safety planning.

CWS Program Manager II Pamela Miller, who facilitated the training said, "I believe we share the ultimate goal of improving outcomes for Native children and building strong relationships between CWS and Tribal partners." ◀



From left, HDVS Outreach Coordinator Diana Guerrero, HDVS Safe Haven Director Jeff Delgadillo, Trinidad Rancheria Coordinator Kayla Henry and CWS Program Manager II Pamela Miller participate in a domestic violence panel.

room training and shadowing, as well as field training and coaching, before taking on a caseload and/or being assigned to work within a specific program.

- **Paid Internship for Current CWS Employees:** CWS employees who are also enrolled to earn a bachelor's or master's degree in Social Work through Cal Poly Humboldt may complete their field internship within CWS, receiving their full salary, while also fulfilling their field internship requirement for their degree.
- **Conversion to an Approved Local Merit System (ALMS):** Humboldt County has historically been an Interagency Merit System (IMS) agency, which relies on a centralized state office to process many steps in the recruitment process for all CWS positions. Effective Jan. 1, 2023, this state office made many changes to their recruitment process that went above and beyond legal requirements and

adversely impacted our recruitment efforts, creating unnecessary barriers and delays. In August 2023, DHHS formally requested that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) initiate the conversion process from being an IMS agency to becoming an ALMS, in an effort to streamline and bring all aspects of the recruitment process locally. The BOS voted to initiate the conversion process, and efforts to convert are underway.

- **Specialized CWS Support Positions:** Similar to other disciplines and sectors, new mandates, as well as new documentation requirements for child welfare agencies increase dramatically year after year, reducing available time to actually do the important work—the social work. CWS has added and continues to explore new classifications and specialized positions to conduct critical key activities for investigations and open cases that can be completed by someone other than a

case carrying social worker. These additional support positions have included Legal Clerks, Youth Support Specialists, Senior Office Assistants and Social Services Aides, for example.

- **Caseload Goals:** CWS has established caseload goals for all program areas and continually monitors actual caseloads to those targeted goals to leverage meaningful data that informs staffing decisions to promote balanced and manageable caseloads across the agency, while ensuring the agency has the staffing levels necessary to cover emergency response and safety-focused services.
- **Recruitment Efforts:** CWS is utilizing online recruitment platforms such as Handshake, and also posting Social Worker recruitment advertisements at all CalSWEC Universities.
- **MSW candidates can now apply within 6 months of graduation:** DHHS formally requested that the BOS adopt a modified job specification that specifically states that applicants can apply within 6 months of graduation and the BOS approved. This allows graduates to begin their career with a minimal gap between graduation and employment.
- **Strategic Planning:** CWS has contracted with California Center for Rural Policy to develop a positive, strengths-focused vision and action plan that includes competencies that connect CWS vision and values to actions and daily practice, including practices focused on onboarding, training, staff recruitment and retention, maintaining a positive work environment and quality improvement.

We recognize there is still much more work to do and are committed to continuing to implement additional action items to increase our staffing levels and promote a positive working environment within CWS. ◀

Longtime Behavioral Health Board member retires



▶ At its Aug. 15 meeting, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors celebrated the dedication and contributions of Tim Ash, who served on the county's Behavioral Health Board starting in 2006. From left, Behavioral Health Director Emi Botzler-Rodgers, Tim Ash, and Fifth District Supervisor Steve Madrone. ◀



Quality Improvement Process provides opportunity for WTW to

review services

by James Thompson, Program Manager

► Welfare-to-Work (WTW) is a program within CalWORKs that assists families in becoming self-sufficient through goal achievement. Employment and Training Workers appraise participants to determine goals and barriers. They provide case management to CalWORKs participants including referrals to services and supportive services such as child care subsidy, transportation assistance and assistance with work and training-related expenses.

In 2017, California passed Senate Bill 89 requiring county CalWORKs WTW programs to participate in the California CalWORKs Outcomes and Accountability Review (Cal-OAR). Cal-OAR is a data-driven Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program consisting of three main parts: performance indicators, a CalWORKs self-assessment (Cal-CSA) and a CalWORKs system improvement plan (Cal-SIP). After a statewide delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2021, Humboldt started the exciting and important work of reviewing data with the goal of program improvement, asking how are we doing and how can we do better?

Cal-OAR works in five-year cycles with the first cycle running from July 2021 through June 2026. Each cycle starts with data collection, analysis and stakeholder engagement. Findings are used to write the County Cal-CSA including agency characteristics, demographic information, stakeholder feedback, participant engagement and an analysis of performance measures. This self-assessment provides a structured review of WTW services and a foundation to design the Cal-SIP. The Cal-SIP includes per-



formance measures identified for improvement, a plan for improvement and insight from peer review with other counties. The Cal-SIP runs for five years with two progress reports written during this cycle outlining the status of strategies, successes and barriers and any strategy adjustments. Then the process repeats.

WTW conducted surveys and focus groups, reviewed Client Satisfaction Survey results and analyzed performance measure data completing and submitting our initial Cal-CSA this past August. Humboldt partnered with Imperial and Mendocino counties on a peer review process providing and receiving feedback on program practices and technical insight and has begun working on the Cal-SIP report due in January 2024.

Humboldt is addressing two performance measures in our Cal-SIP, Wage Progression, the increase in participants' wages over four quarters, and Post-CalWORKs Employment Rate, participants' rate of maintaining employment over four quarters, with additional equity goals around gender and racial equity in service delivery and participant outcomes. This focus aligns with WTW's programmatic goal of supporting families in becoming self-sufficient and the DHHS Racial Equity Strategic Plan to actively work to advance equity. So how do we think we can do better? By focusing on sustainable strategies to put money in CalWORKs families' pockets across all demographics while in WTW and after exit.

The Cal-OAR CQI process has been challenging and exciting providing an

opportunity for WTW to review services using a standardized data set including collaboration with other counties and feedback from participants and other partners. I am proud of the support WTW staff provide to our participants and the dedication to the community they show in their work every day and am eager to see how we can build on this to do even better over these next years.

[Cal-OAR CQI Overview \(PDF\)](#).

The Center at McKinleyville focus of recent tour

► In mid-October, members of the California Legislative Staff Education Institute (CLSEI) Health and Education cohorts came from Sacramento to visit The Center at McKinleyville to learn about health and education in Humboldt County.

The CLSEI offers people who work in the state Capitol an opportunity to see how bills passed in the state legislature impact people and communities on the ground.

DHHS Policy and Legislative Manager Nancy Starck, who helped facilitate CLSEI's visit, said the organization chose to come to Humboldt to learn from esteemed Tribal leaders, visit local schools and The Center, and of course, visit the beautiful natural landscape. "Humboldt has a reputation for big trees and rural hospitality, and we're often asked to showcase some of our unique traits, challenges and rural innovation," she added.

Staff at The Center showed the visitors what they do and what they need to reduce poverty and connect people and communities to opportunities for health and wellness.

At The Center, CLSEI participants attended presentations from directors and staff and were divided into groups before being taken on interactive guided tours of the facility. The tours gave each visitor an opportunity to receive a firsthand

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look at the work being done with clients in the Guaranteed Income program, the 0-8 Mental Health Collaborative, the English Learners Advisory Committee and the Youth Leadership and Young Adult Work-

force Development programs.

Throughout the visit, participants were able to ask questions and learn about many of the services located within The Center including the Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

program, Child Welfare Services, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal and Children’s Behavioral Health.

“We’re planting seeds in the legislature for good things ahead,” Starck said. ◀



From left, Capitol Impact Vice President Robynne Rose-Haymer, The Center Co-director Hillarie Beyer, The Center Co-director Robin Baker, The Center Co-director Aristeia Saulsbury, The Center Mental Health 0-8 Coordinator Beth Heavilin, California Legislature Staff Education Staff Institute Co-director Jay Scheinrer, Capitol Impact Program Manager Dr. Josephine Appiah and DHHS Legislative and Policy Manager Nancy Starck.

At least 1 in 10 Americans aged 60 and older have experienced some form of elder abuse.

Elder abuse comes in different forms:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Abandonment
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Financial abuse
- Self-neglect.



If you are worried that you or someone you know is experiencing elder abuse,

call the Humboldt County Adult Protective Services 24/7 reporting hotline at 707-476-2100.



Elder Abuse Reporting Hotline available 24/7

▶ Following the Humboldt County Grand Jury’s recommendations to its report, “Silver Tsunami Warning: Safeguarding Our Seniors,” DHHS launched a marketing campaign to educate community residents about the signs of elder abuse and how to report it.

If you suspect that you or someone you know is the victim of elder abuse, call Humboldt County Adult Protective Services 24/7 reporting hotline at 707-476-2100. ◀

Behavioral Health Director's Report

by Emi Botzler-Rodgers, LMFT

► It can be challenging some days working for a government agency. While there are many advantages for sure, there are also places where seemingly unnecessary barriers, red tape and other “requirements” make it feel difficult to get the work done. There are rules about sharing information, rules about getting documents signed, rules about notifications required, communication, and policies and procedures that must be followed, among other things. And these are good in that they ensure legal, ethical and compliant behavior, but it also sometimes feels like it makes the connection, access, response, feel not so human, and not so kind.



I do believe there are ways to follow

the rules and still be kind. I do believe that there are ways to be compliant, legal and ethical and still lean into conversations with vulnerability, presence and kindness. I do believe that good customer service isn't about always having the right answer, or the easy answer, or even about being able to say yes. It isn't about being entirely on the same page, or seeing things the same way or agreeing about what is right or wrong. It is about engaging with the other person, with kindness. It is about seeing their experience, saying that you see the challenges, empathizing and supporting and sharing as much information as you can to help them understand, and making sure you also understand.

Some days and weeks feel harder

than others. Behavioral Health is committed to doing this work in a way that is kind. We have a vision statement that is meant to support and embody this kindness. Our vision is



as follows, “We are committed to engaging in relationships that are authentic, caring, respectful and inclusive so as to be responsive to the needs of the staff and community we serve.” This is meant to guide how we work with clients, the community, system partners, stakeholders and one another.

All relationships are important and should be treated with respect and kindness. Kindness doesn't always come easy, but it makes things easier when it is present. It takes effort for sure, but the payoff is profound. Kindness matters! ◀



Equity Update

by Neftali Miller-Rubio, Racial & Cultural Equity Manager

► This fall, two new trainings have kicked off and a team of DHHS staff took our equity work on the road!

In early October, two of our Racial Equity Steering Committee Members: Monique Upshaw-Smith and Eric Kanaga, both Program Manager IIs at our Social Services Branch, Ryan Bishop, Deputy Branch Director of Social Services and I presented at the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) Conference in Anaheim. We received resounding support from audience members and realized that the work we are doing is powerful and groundbreaking. Huge kudos to everyone who is helping us move this work forward!

Our presentation, “Creating a Racial Equity Strategy in Humboldt County,”

was presented as a Breakout Session to peer organizations from across state, local government and other public agencies in the human services field.

We shared our journey as a department to become an anti-racist organization, focusing on four key areas:

- Sharing the strategies, tools, wins and woes experienced as we've built a Racial Equity Strategy from the ground up.
- How we got started, achieved buy-in at the department and countywide level, and how we are working to bring staff, branch leaders and community partners into the conversation.
- Specific examples from the Social Services Branch included how they are leading with leadership and setting a strong foundation for the state-level Racial Equity and Implicit Bias (REIB) program and an example of taking a hyperlocal approach



From left, Monique Upshaw-Smith, Ryan Bishop, Eric Kanaga and Neftali Miller-Rubio at the County Welfare Directors Association Conference.

to onboarding by emphasizing staff understanding of local history, building relationships with Tribal partners and the impacts of settler-colonialism on the local community in partnership with the Rraninou'Waduk | The Center at McKinleyville.

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The attendance at our presentation reached maximum capacity, with some even being turned away. Feedback from those in the room was overwhelmingly positive and acted to truly emphasize that the work we are doing, at the department, branch and program levels, is impactful, unique and significant among peer organizations. Comments and questions underscored that the work we are doing matters and, though it may not always be easy or happen in a straight line, we are on the right track.

Here in Humboldt, staff have begun taking two new trainings, “Implicit Bias – An introduction” is a one-hour recorded training that has already

been completed by nearly 80% of staff, and “Foundations of Racial Equity” is a four-hour live, facilitated session on Zoom, with nearly all available sessions at capacity. There are also two optional affinity sessions of the Foundations



DHHS staff presents at this year’s County Welfare Directors Association Conference.

course offered for BIPOC-identifying staff, Nov. 6 and Dec. 7. If you did not secure a seat yet for the Foundations training, more sessions will be coming in 2024. Stay tuned!!

Office hours continue for supervisor-level staff who would like coaching or resources, reach out if you need the Zoom link. Sessions happen the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 10 to 11 a.m. and the second and fourth Wednesdays from 3 to 4 p.m.

To contact the Racial & Cultural Equity Manager and Steering Committee, you can reach out via email: DHHSRacialEquity@co.humboldt.ca.us.

TAY Wellness Week

► The Humboldt County Transition-Age Youth Coalition held its annual Wellness Week in August which included free workshops for transition-age youth (ages 16-26). Each workshop focused on one or more of the eight Dimensions of Wellness and included topics like spiritual development and upcycling fashion. The week-long festivities concluded with a closing barbecue and prize raffle.



TAY participant Izzie Davalos-Gomez.



From left, Social Worker II Rosemary Schultz and TAY participants Dorothy Scott and Lucius Arnold.



From left, TAY participant Jess W., Youth Advisory Board member Venus Moyers and TAY participant Genavieve Scott.



TAY participant Dakota Huey.

Help Wanted

► DHHS is currently recruiting qualified applicants for a variety of positions. For a list of job opportunities, visit humboldt.gov/org/jobs and click Job Opportunities, or contact Employee Services at 707-441-5510. ◀



Humboldt County
Department of
Health & Human
Services





Public Health Director's Report

by Sofia Pereira

► You've probably heard the terms "performance management" or "quality improvement" in your work. What does it mean to do performance management and quality improvement? What does it look like in our day-to-day work and how does it drive decision-making? In Public Health we've been tackling those very questions. Every field or discipline may have their own definition of performance management. The Public Health Foundation describes performance management as the "practice of actively using performance data to improve the public's health," which connects to our mission in Public Health.

Quality improvement activities at Public Health are a continuous and ongoing effort to achieve measurable improvements in the efficiency, effectiveness, performance, accountability, outcomes and other indicators of qual-

ity services or processes which achieve equity and improve the health of the community. The goal is to continuously improve the execution and design of processes across the 10 Essential Public Health Services. In short, we want good data to drive our work so we can best serve our community.

In June 2022, we published our first ever Performance Management and Quality Improvement (PMQI) Plan for 2022-2024. We are halfway through the timeline of the plan and thought we'd share where we're at in the "middle" so to speak. Our programs work with our Office of Performance Improvement and Accreditation (OPIA) staff to identify performance measures. We've been adding performance data into our performance management system ClearPoint and using "scorecards" to see our impact. Our programs evaluate which measures show the impact of our work and opportunities for growth. This includes tracking of health outcomes along with program outcomes. Ultimately, this is a continued work in progress and it's exciting to see more and more of our staff onboarding to this process.

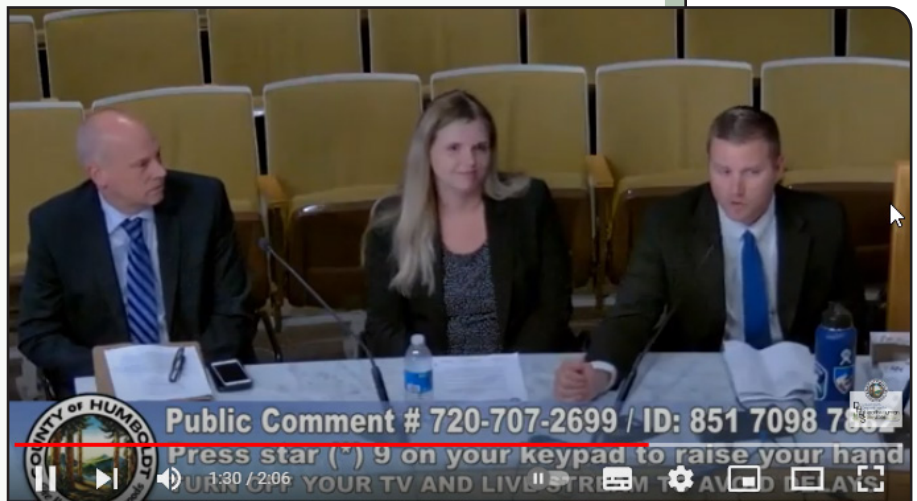
On the quality improvement side, we started a major QI project to update our annual budget processes. Early on OPIA staff met with our Public Health leadership to identify root causes for communication and timing gaps. From that process, our manager team along with fiscal staff worked to move up our timeline so our programs have more time to plan their budgets and programming for the upcoming fiscal year. We updated our budget questionnaires with input from program and fiscal staff to ensure everyone's getting the information they need. With the launching of Microsoft 365 across the county, we are using Microsoft 365 tools to share files and track progress. With these tools we have a clearer understanding of roles and deadlines.

We are just now starting our process for fiscal year 2024-25 and I get the sense that our teams are feeling more informed and empowered on how we implement our budget planning in Public Health. I know I feel excited to tackle budget season this year! A big thank you to our staff who worked to update our processes, it really was a great team effort. ◀

County applies to become Approved Local Merit System

► At its Aug. 22 meeting, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution to initiate the conversion process to become an Approved Local Merit System or ALMS county. Just over a month later, the county submitted the request and documentation to CalHR for conversion to an ALMS county.

If CalHR approves this transition, Humboldt County Human Resources will take over recruiting for all county positions, a move staff says will make the hiring process more effective and shorten the time between when an individual applies and is hired. ◀



From left, Child Support Services Director Bennett Hoffmann, DHHS Employee Services Deputy Director Paige Plummer and County Human Resources Director Zach O'Hanen give a joint presentation to the Board of Supervisors. To learn more, visit youtu.be/834EHu4ArdM.

Suicide Awareness proclamation

► At its Sept. 12 meeting, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors declared September as National Suicide Prevention Month while also honoring Sept. 10 through 16, as Suicide Prevention Week and Sept. 10, as World Suicide Prevention Day. From left, community member Linda Stansberry, DHHS Health Education Specialist II Jonathan Abidari, Tri-County Independent Living Youth Coordinator Andy Padilla, Veterans Affairs Community Engagement & Partnerships Coordinator Elizabeth Rose-Marini, DHHS Health Education Specialist II Allie Knoll, DHHS Health Education Specialist I Melissa Reed and Fifth District Supervisor Steve Madrone. ◀



DHHS at the North Country Fair

► DHHS staff were all smiles while tabling at this year's North Country Fair in Arcata. From left, Adult Protective Services Social Worker Carissa Gardner and In-Home Supportive Services Social Worker Valerie Spiers provided information to potential care providers for IHSS and helped spread awareness for the prevention of elder abuse. ◀



Nurse-Family Partnership celebrates recent graduates

► In August, DHHS's Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program held its annual graduation today honoring 15 families for completing the program. This year's event, held at the Jefferson Family Resource Center, was attended by more than 20 additional program participants including newly enrolled families, families that are partway through the program and recent graduates. From left, NFP participants Zariah and Lamiya Larsen and Public Health Nurse Andrea Armin. ◀