



Summer 2019

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## Updated Community Health Assessment now available



From left: Michele Stephens, Lara Weiss, Jeremy Corrigan, Olivia Wilder, Dr. Donald Baird, Dana Murguia, Megan Blanchard, Georgianna Wood and Ron Largusa.

► The Community Health Assessment (CHA), a comprehensive overview of the health of the Humboldt County community, is now available.

The DHHS Public Health report looks at traditional public health measures of illness, mortality, nutrition and physical activity in the community. The CHA also includes data about income, housing status, community safety and access to care, as underlying social determinants of health.

DHHS Public Health Director Michele Stephens characterized the CHA as “the story of our community’s health,” adding that the study, which uses a health equity framework, demonstrates how factors from the beginning of a

person’s life impact health outcomes later.

The CHA summarizes data from a variety of sources, offering a snapshot of the community’s health and the factors that influence it. It looks at root causes as determinants of health. Some rates for leading causes of death in Humboldt County are two to three times that of the state. Other poor, rural communities experience health outcomes that are similar to Humboldt’s.

This is the second CHA the Public Health branch has completed since publishing the first in 2013, and Stephens said many community partners provided input and guidance in its development. “The data allows us to [“CHA” page 6](#) ►

# Director's Report

by Connie Beck



► We recently got word that the county and Danco Communities were granted a nearly \$5 million award through the No Place Like Home (NPLH) Program to provide long-term support and stability to help people exit homelessness.

The award is part of nearly \$180 million in NPLH funding the California Department of Housing and Community Development recently distributed to developers of affordable supportive housing in 37 communities across the state.

The 50-unit complex this funding will go toward is currently under construction on Fourth Street in Eureka and will include 25 units for veterans through North Coast Veterans Services (NCVS) and 25 units for our clients with serious mental illness who are experiencing homelessness. DHHS, NCVS and other community partners will have access to on-site meeting rooms where staff can sit down with clients.

And this is just one of many partnerships throughout the community work-

ing toward getting people into housing.

In April, nearly \$2.5 million in Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) funds were distributed to agencies, cities and county programs throughout Humboldt to offer short-term relief to people experiencing homelessness. HEAP funding went to the cities of Arcata and Eureka, the Housing Authority, Humboldt Senior Resource Center, Redwood Community Action Agency, Arcata Housing Partnership, Affordable Homeless Housing Alternatives, DHHS and the Public Defender's Office.

The HEAP-funded programs range from rental assistance, to portable showers, to money to pay for a social worker who will work with homeless clients at the Public Defender's Office to help connect them with needed services.

In addition to these partnerships, the Humboldt Housing and Homelessness Coalition, made up of housing advocates, businesses, funders, elected officials, services and housing providers, faith-based organizations and other community stakeholders,

continue to meet regularly to address and work toward solutions to homeless.

DHHS is also working with property management companies and private landlords throughout the county to get our most vulnerable clients into housing.

It doesn't stop at housing, though. Once housed, our clients continue to receive case management services and get connected to substance use disorder treatment, job training programs and medical and mental health services to help keep them in housing.

Each connection we make, each partnership we form helps us assist one more person into housing and one more person off the street. I appreciate this community, our staff and all of our partners who are working together toward this common goal. ◀



# Prepare for power shutoffs during wildfire season

► DHHS is encouraging residents to prepare for potential power outages after the Pacific Gas & Electric Co. (PG&E) began conducting preemptive power shutoffs in fire-prone areas.

Preemptive shutoffs have already taken place in Butte, El Dorado, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Solano, Yolo and Yuba counties, according to the utility, with officials stating that large swaths of the state could be impacted.

DHHS is encouraging residents to prepare. Build or restock emer-

gency supply kits. Ensure any backup generators are ready to operate safely. Keep a hard copy of emergency phone numbers, and—most importantly—plan for any medical needs.

“For a few residents, a power outage can be more than an inconvenience,” said DHHS Director Connie Beck. “Our biggest concern is for people with medical needs that could be exacerbated by power loss.” This includes heat-sensitive residents, those who rely on electronic medical

devices, and those who take medication that requires refrigeration.

Beck advised residents to have backup plans in place, including discussing options with a medical provider and making arrangements to stay with a friend or relative outside of the affected area.

Residents can quickly and easily sign up for outage alerts by phoning 866-743-6589, or sign up at [pge.com/wildfirealerts](http://pge.com/wildfirealerts). Outage updates, both planned and implemented, are posted at the website [prepareforpowerdown.com](http://prepareforpowerdown.com).

## Staff pitches in to keep Old Town clean

► DHHS Division of Environmental Health (DEH) Office Services Supervisor Andrea Arnold, Supervising Environmental Health Specialist Amanda Ruddy and DEH Director Melissa Martel recently adopted the block around their office at H and Waterfront streets in Eureka through the Northcoast Environmental Center’s (NEC) Adopt-a-Block program and are using their break time to pick up trash and cigarette butts. The self-named “The Butt Walkers” routinely collect 80 to 100 butts in a single 15-min-

ute break. Martel said, “Even if we go out weekly, we still pick up more than 50 cigarette butts a break.” The butts the group is collecting will be turned in to the NEC to be recycled. From May through June 19, the group has collected 600 butts and 34 pounds of trash. “When we

spot a butt dropped in a gutter, we know it’s a quick ride to the storm drain and Humboldt Bay,” Martel said. “It feels good to do our part to minimize polluters’ impact on our bay and sloughs.” To learn more about the NEC’s Adopt-a-Block program, visit [yournec.org/adoptablock](http://yournec.org/adoptablock).



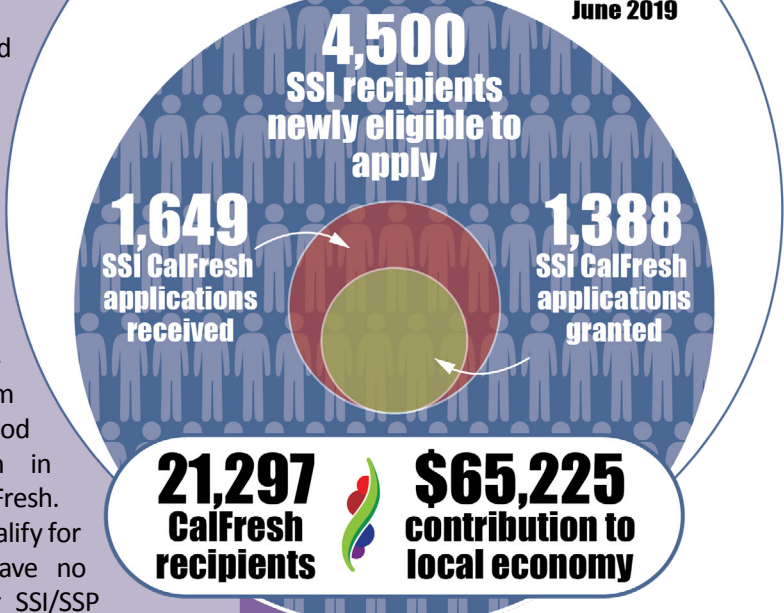
From left: Andrea Arnold, Melissa Martel and Amanda Ruddy.

# Some county SSI/SSP recipients now receiving CalFresh food benefits



## SSI Expansion BY THE NUMBERS

June 2019



► More Humboldt County residents are receiving CalFresh after the state recently expanded the nutritional benefits program to allow people on Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) to apply for the program.

DHHS Social Services Deputy Director Kelly Hampton said, “We have thousands of SSI/SSP recipients in Humboldt County who will really benefit from this expansion. This change will provide some of our most vulnerable community members with the ability to stretch their food dollars.”

She said so far 1,608 SSI/SSP recipients have applied and 1,200 have been granted benefits.

SSI is a federally-funded program administered by the Social Security Administration that provides income support to eligible individuals who are 65 years old or older, blind or disabled. SSI benefits are also available to qualified blind or

disabled children.

In 1974, the program opted to give recipients additional SSI benefits instead of providing them the option to apply for Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, or food stamps, known in California as CalFresh.

Those who qualify for CalFresh will have no change to their SSI/SSP benefits, Hampton said.

To see if you qualify for CalFresh, visit [getcalfresh.org](http://getcalfresh.org), phone the DHHS Call Center at 877-410-8809 or visit Social Services’ main office at 929 Koster St. in Eureka. ◀



From left: David Gauthier, Appolonia Coan, Jason Wiensz, Monique Upshaw-Smith and Director Connie Beck.

► The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors proclaimed May CalFresh Awareness Month. CalFresh contributes through more than the benefit assistance program by providing nutrition education through Public Health, funding local outreach programs, helping children access free and reduced priced school meals, supporting local farms through the Market Match farmers’ market program and supporting job placement through CalFresh Employment & Training which strives to increase the employment and earning capacity of recipients through programs like Helping Humboldt. ◀

# Protect yourself from ticks this season

► Tick season is here and DHHS is reminding people to protect themselves and their animals.

The tiny, spider-like bugs attach themselves onto the skin of people and animals and feed on their blood. While many ticks are not harmful, there are some that transmit disease.

DHHS Supervising Environmental Health Specialist Amanda Ruddy said, “The best way to avoid tick-borne diseases is to be aware and do what you can to prevent tick bites is to take simple protective measures like avoiding areas where ticks tend to live, applying appropriate insect repellents, and checking yourself and your pets when returning from the outdoors.”

Only one tick found locally can transmit the bacterium that causes Lyme disease—the Western blacklegged tick.

“If you do find an attached tick, remove it promptly and clean the bite location with soap and water,” Ruddy said. “Any unusual medical symptoms following a tick bite should be followed-up on with your medical provider.”

If you find a tick attached to your skin, use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the surface of the skin as possible. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Do not jerk or twist it. Make sure the entire tick has been removed, including the head. Once the tick has been removed, clean the area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub or soap and water.

The Public Health Lab offers free tick identification. After removing a tick, if you want to know what type it is, place it in a sealed container or zip-close bag with a paper towel moistened with water.

If the tick is identified by lab staff as a Western blacklegged tick, they can test it for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacterium that causes Lyme disease, for a \$45 fee. The Public Health Lab is located at 529 I St. in Eureka. For more about tick testing, call

707-268-2179.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers the following tips to stay tick-free this season:

- 🦋 Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Ticks are also common locally in our grass beach dunes.
- 🦋 When out on the trails, stick to the center of trails.
- 🦋 Use repellents that contains 20 percent or greater DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 directly on to exposed skin. Always follow product label instructions. Parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding hands, eyes and mouth. Do not use repellents on babies younger than 2 months old.
- 🦋 Use products that contain permethrin on clothing. Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents with products containing 0.5 percent permethrin. It remains protective through several washings. Pre-treated clothing is available and may be protective longer.
- 🦋 Remove ticks found on your body immediately.
- 🦋 Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within two hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.
- 🦋 Conduct a full-body tick check using a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body upon return from tick-infested areas. Parents should check their children for ticks under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist and especially in their hair.
- 🦋 Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats and day packs. ◀

# Travel vaccines available at Public Health Clinic

► Summer is officially here. If your plans include visiting another country, take steps to protect yourself from potential illness, and get your travel vaccines today.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently issued a travel advisory recommending that all eligible international travelers receive the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine, regardless of destination.

“Measles is still common in some parts of the world, and most measles cases seen in the U.S. result from international travel,” said Rachel Allen, RN, immunization coordinator for DHHS. “Travelers should check their immunization records to be sure they have the recommended doses of MMR vaccine prior to their departure.”

DHHS’s Public Health Clinic offers travel vaccines, including MMR. “It’s never too early to start planning for your travel immunization needs. Once you have an itinerary, make an appointment at the clinic or with your health care provider to discuss any recommended vaccines,” Allen said, adding that some vaccines should be received a few weeks or up to a month before potential exposure.

For those traveling to areas where malaria is present, the clinic also staffs a nurse practitioner to prescribe the appropriate medication and talk to travelers about preventing mosquito bites.

Travelers heading to Latin and Central America where the Zika virus is more common should take precautions to avoid bug bites. The CDC recommends

using EPA-registered insect repellents like DEET, Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus to protect against mosquito bites. Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants and using mosquito netting can also help prevent exposure. Zika cannot be prevented with medication or vaccinations.

Check the CDC’s website at [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) for more traveler safety recommendations and to check current travel advisories for your intended destination.

Vaccine prices are subject to change. Payment is due at the time of service. The clinic accepts cash, checks and credit cards.

For more information or to make an appointment, call the Public Health Clinic at 707-268-2108. The clinic is located at 529 I St. in Eureka. ◀

[Continued from “CHA” page 1](#) ►

make informed decisions, identify common goals and come up with better ideas and strategies to achieve them together.”

Connie Stewart, executive director of the California Center for Rural Policy said, “This Community Health Assessment gives us the data we need to drive changes to help people in Humboldt County

live healthier lives. I’m grateful to all those who helped create this document.”

Stephens said some of the data is discouraging, but the drivers of community health are complex and ongoing efforts by agencies and partners from across the county will continue to move the dial. “We believe that by identifying common

goals and having effective communication, together we can have more impact and better results,” she said.

To learn more about the Community Health Assessment, visit [humboldt.gov.org/publichealth](http://humboldt.gov.org/publichealth). ◀

## 2018 Humboldt County Community Health Assessment

Data for Planning and Policy Making



Produced by the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services, Public Health



## Behavioral Health Board welcomes new members; more positions available

► Do you or a family member have experience with the local mental health system? Consumers of mental health services, their family members and transition-age youth are encouraged to lend their insight by serving on the Humboldt County Behavioral Health Board. Members advocate for behavioral health services to the DHHS Mental Health branch in addition to advising on alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues.

Board members serve three-year terms and meet monthly with DHHS staff and county representatives. Subcommittees of the board include the AOD/Dual Recovery Committee and the Children and Families Committee.

Tim Ash, chair of the Humboldt County Behavioral Health Board, said membership offers a great opportunity to learn about services and policies around mental health and substance use in our community. "As board members it is our role to provide DHHS and the Board of Supervisors with input regarding those services and service gaps based on our personal experiences," he said. "We recruit a diverse group of members to ensure that



From left: Monica Rose, Brienna Zoellner, Allen Burnette, Kelsey Tippett and Steven Loreus.

all voices and perspectives are considered."

The Humboldt County Behavioral Health Board meets monthly to discuss and evaluate the community's behavioral health needs and priorities. Meetings take place on the third Thursday of every month from 12:15 to 2:15 p.m. at the Professional Building, 507 F St. in Eureka. Meetings are open to the public. For more information, email DHHS Executive Secretary Joe McManus at [jmcmanus@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:jmcmanus@co.humboldt.ca.us), or visit [humboldt.gov/BehavioralHealthBoard](http://humboldt.gov/BehavioralHealthBoard).

## Help Wanted

► DHHS is currently recruiting qualified applicants for a variety of positions. For a list of job opportunities, visit [humboldt.gov/hr](http://humboldt.gov/hr) and click **Job Opportunities**, or contact Employee Services at 707-441-5510.



# Elders honored during annual block party

► More than 100 seniors turned out for the second Honoring Our Elders Block Party hosted by DHHS and the Humboldt Senior Resource Center. The event was held in honor of Elder Abuse Awareness Month and included service providers with information about local resources, tai chi demonstration and free lunch. ◀



Seniors were treated to a free lunch during the event.



The Humboldt Accordionaires entertained the crowd.



Eureka resident Sarah Jager (left) spoke with an In-Home Supportive Services representative about signing up for emergency notifications.



Elders spoke with service providers about financial planning, in-home care and more at the 2019 Humboldt County Honoring Our Elders Neighborhood Block Party.

2019 HUMBOLDT COUNTY

# HONORING OUR ELDERS

## NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY

ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

June 17, 2019 | Monday | 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Humboldt Senior Resource Center

1910 California St., Eureka, CA

**LIVE MUSIC & COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

FREE LUNCH FOR ELDERS!



2019 SPONSORS



# This summer keep an eye out for algal blooms

► As the weather warms up, local Public and Environmental Health officials are reminding recreational users of all bodies of fresh water to avoid contact with cyanobacteria (also known as blue-green algae).

Although commonly referred to as blue-green algae, following the lead of the state, jurisdictions are using the term cyanobacteria as it is not algae, but bacteria.

Typically, cyanobacteria warnings come out between late July and early August, coinciding with low flows and sustained high temperatures in the inland areas which may contribute to cyanobacteria growth in the river.

Most cyanobacteria does not affect animals or people, however, a small number of cyanobacteria species are capable of producing toxins that can be harmful to animals and humans. Dogs and children are most likely to be affected because of their smaller body size and tendency to stay in the water for longer periods of time.

Most blooms in California contain harmless green algae, but it is important to stay safe and avoid contact. Officials recommend the

following guidelines for recreational users of freshwater areas:

- Keep children, pets and livestock from swimming in or drinking water containing algal scums or mats.
- Adults should also avoid wading and swimming in water containing algal blooms. Try not to swallow or inhale water spray in an algal bloom area.
- If no algal scums or mats are visible, you should still carefully watch young children and warn them not to swallow any water.
- Fish should be consumed only after removing the guts and liver and rinsing fillets in tap water.
- Never drink, cook with or wash dishes with water from rivers, streams or lakes.
- Get medical attention immediately if you think that you, your pet, or livestock might have been poisoned by cyanobacteria toxins. Be sure to tell the doctor or veterinarian about possible contact with cyanobacteria or algal blooms.
- Join or support one of the

many watershed and river organizations.

Cyanobacteria can be present in any fresh water body. It looks like dark green, blue-green, black, orange or brown scum, foam or mats on the riverbed or floating on the water. Warm water and abundant nutrients can cause cyanobacteria to grow more rapidly than usual causing “blooms.” These blooms are termed “harmful algal blooms.”

To learn more about cyanobacteria and harmful algal blooms, visit the state of California’s website at [mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs](http://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs).

To report a bloom, e-mail [CyanoHAB.Reports@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:CyanoHAB.Reports@waterboards.ca.gov) or call 844-729-6466 (toll free). Blooms can also be reported via the “bloomWatch” app which is available for free download on iTunes or Google play.

For information on conditions occurring within Humboldt County, contact the Division of Environmental Health at 707-445-6215 or 800-963-9241. Photos of suspected blooms can also be emailed to [envhealth@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:envhealth@co.humboldt.ca.us).



# Life jacket loan program expands

► Make water safety a priority as you enjoy Humboldt County’s local rivers, beaches and lagoons. DHHS’s Life Jacket Loan Program is making more than 100 life jackets available to borrow at 12 of the county’s most popular waterways.

Local waterways are very cold, have swift currents and can make it impossible to stay afloat without a life jacket. The United States Coast Guard says that, to work correctly, a life jacket must be the appropriate size for the intended user, be in good condition and, most importantly, be worn.

In addition to wearing a life jacket, other safety considerations include:

- Never leave a child unattended in or near water.
- Don’t drink alcohol before entering the water. Up to 70 percent of all recreational drowning incidents involve alcohol, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Be aware of hazards below the surface of river water. Trees, rocks and sunken objects can move after high flows. A location that was familiar and safe in the past could be dangerous during your next visit.
- At the ocean, choose flat beaches over those with steep slopes. Watch for sneaker waves and keep your distance from the water’s edge.

The Life Jacket Loan Program is made possible by a 2017 grant from the Sea Tow Foundation. Life jackets range from infant to adult sizes and are available at the locations listed below. Call ahead to confirm availability. ◀



Loaner life jackets on display at Woodley Island.

## Loan Stations in Humboldt County 2019

### A. W. Way County Park

36594 Mattole Road  
Petrolia, CA  
707-445-7652

### Big Lagoon Park

510 Big Lagoon Park Rd.  
Trinidad, CA  
707-445-7652

### Dream Quest

100 Country Club Drive  
Willow Creek, CA  
530-629-3564

### Early Bird Café

40640 Highway 299  
Willow Creek, CA  
530-629-4431

### Eureka National Weather Service Office

300 Startare Drive  
Eureka, CA  
707-443-6484

### Freshwater Park

3100 Freshwater Road  
Eureka, CA  
707-445-7652

### Grizzly Creek Redwoods State Park

16949 Highway 36  
Carlotta, CA  
707-777-3683

### Humboldt Redwoods State Park

Burlington Visitors Center  
Avenue of the Giants  
Weott, CA  
707-946-1811

### Richardson Grove State Park

1600 Highway 101  
Garberville, CA  
707-247-3318

### Tsewenaldin Inn

12400 Highway 96  
Hoopa, CA  
530-625-4294

### Tsunami Surf & Sport

445 Conger Street, Building B  
Garberville, CA  
707-923-1965

### Van Duzen County Park

Swimmer's Delight Park Drive  
Carlotta, CA  
707-445-7652

# Mental health and wellness celebrated at barbecue

► Hundreds of community residents turned out to celebrate the last day of May is Mental Health Matters Month at the Hope Center’s 11th Annual Wellness and Connection Barbecue at Eureka’s Carson Park. Representatives from more than a dozen service providers, including nonprofit organizations, faith-based recovery groups and DHHS programs spoke with attendees about local mental health resources and the importance of mental wellness year-round. If you want to know how you can support mental wellness every month of the year, check out [eachmindmatters.org](http://eachmindmatters.org). ◀



Angela Winogradov, President of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Humboldt County, talks with attendees about the nonprofit’s community classes and support groups.



Hope Center staff member Cynthia Shelton (right) serves community resident Carl Sperduto at the 11th Annual Wellness and Connection Barbecue.

## TAY Barbecue

► Young people ages 16 to 26 turned out at Eureka’s Sequoia Park for the Transition-Age Youth (TAY) Division’s annual barbecue on June 21. Staff spoke with youth about the importance of wellness and staying active as they played games and enjoyed a barbecue lunch. ◀



Program Coordinator Vanessa Vrtaik shares information about the Redwood Community Action Agency’s Raven Project, a youth-led street outreach program based in Eureka.



TAY staff members Yolanda Bowdoin and Sheri Daily-Comeaux prepare lunch for youth.



Raven Smith (upper left) plays games with staff at the annual TAY barbecue.