



# OC HEALTH CARE AGENCY

## FUTURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH OVERVIEW

Through the 2022 Budget Act, California took a transformational step toward rebuilding our state and local public health workforce and infrastructure that was devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic and decades of disinvestment. The \$276 million ongoing General Fund investment (roughly \$188 million for local health departments, \$98 million for CDPH), referred to as the Future of Public Health, is a critical investment in our state's public health readiness and response to protect local communities from existing and emerging public health threats.

## FUTURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTMENTS REBUILD OUR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Funded essential public health positions to strengthen services to help protect and promote health with an emphasis on equity.
- Supported its Surveillance and Epidemiology unit, which conducts communicable disease surveillance across the entire county. This team supported disease surveillance and outbreak investigations, including in areas related to Vaccine-Preventable and Vector-Borne diseases, Enterics, Health Care Associated Infection, and Informatics & Syndromic Surveillance. This team has partnered with health care providers to provide clinical and epidemiological guidance to control disease transmission.
  - The Surveillance and Epidemiology team played a crucial role in disease surveillance and outbreak investigations by analyzing trends in data. Funds supported new positions on the team to focus on four main disease surveillance branches: Vaccine-preventable & Vector-borne, Enterics, Health Care Associated Infection, Informatics & Syndromic. Funds also allowed for the team to provide clinical and epidemiological guidance to healthcare providers and assist with diagnosis, treatment, and preventative services such as vaccination and prophylactic treatment as needed to control disease transmission.
- FoPH funding has been critical in supporting the local health department's response to recent communicable disease outbreaks, including Legionnaire's Disease and measles, by supporting key staff members involved in the disease investigation, coordination with other local and state officials, and timely and actionable communications to county residents.

- ▶▶▶ Funds supported Orange County Public Health Lab, which is certified by CLIA and approved by the State to perform high complexity testing in the areas of bacteriology, mycobacteriology, mycology, parasitology, virology, immunology, and molecular biology. Additionally, the lab has a Water Quality laboratory that is certified by the California Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP) that primarily monitors the ocean and bay recreational waters.
- ▶▶▶ The creation of a Public Health Nurse Educator helped support education and training of public health nurses in the county. This included the development and implementation of an Agency-wide Clinical Skills Workshops focused on hands-on training sessions on a variety of topics including venipunctures, overdose prevention, CPR, and AEDs to improve their clinical skills and confidence to perform essential procedures in public health and clinic practice.
- ▶▶▶ Funded the Public Health Messaging Team to partner with local community-based organizations to optimize outreach and health education on timely public health topics. The team conducted over 400 outreach events and education sessions in eight different languages.
- ▶▶▶ Positions that were dedicated to the Public Health Accreditation, Community Health Assessment (CHA), and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). This work included implementation of an Orange County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Steering Committee and workgroups to coordinate work across six priority health areas (mental health, substance use, diabetes/obesity, housing/homelessness, care navigation, and economic disparities) with community organizations, county-operated programs, and community stakeholders.
- ▶▶▶ The partnership between public health and the community is an important step in addressing goals of the CHIP and establishing a sustainable infrastructure to address ongoing public health concerns.
- ▶▶▶ Public health nurse positions supported clinical operations around immunizations, pulmonary disease services, and STD clinics, as well as a position focused on vulnerable populations such as persons experiencing homelessness and older adults with unmet health and social needs.
- ▶▶▶ FoPH-funded initiatives enhanced public health messaging and outreach efforts in the county. With the flexibility of FoPH, new staff were involved in promoting public health across multiple programs. FoPH-funded staff created an events calendar to promote various public health activities occurring in the community. The staff also coordinated public communications to highlight public health messages around public health and safety.
- ▶▶▶ To better understand significant gaps in essential health services in terms of unmet care among the LGBTQ+, older adult, marginalized communities, and the uninsured, FoPH funded additional staff to support the county's community health assessment (CHA). Priority areas have included maternal and child health and older adults with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. These activities involved staff engaging and collaborating with various community stakeholders to provide input, prioritize health needs, and create plans for implementing strategies.
- ▶▶▶ Expanded access to learning opportunities for Public Health workforce participation in trainings centered around transferable skills such as project management, grant management, and grant writing to ensure staff have the skills to successfully implement new or changing public health projects.