



# ANNUAL REPORT

NCHD52.org



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## **Who We Are**

North Central Health District (NCHD) is part of the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) and serves a population of 530,945 individuals residing in 13 Central Georgia counties: Baldwin, Bibb, Crawford, Hancock, Houston, Jasper, Jones, Monroe, Peach, Putnam, Twiggs, Washington and Wilkinson.

Each county has a health department (HD) and an associated Board of Health. The district office is an administrative hub for all 13 counties and houses public health programs that serve all counties. The district health director (DHD) is the lead administrator for the NCHD.

## **Vision**

Leaders in innovative and effective public health practices that advance the health and well-being of all the communities we serve.

## **Mission**

NCHD is dedicated to preventing disease, promoting health, and protecting Central Georgia communities against health threats through education, service, advocacy, and collaboration.

## **Values**

- **Quality:** We apply evidence-based practices that deliver excellent programs and services.
- **Service:** We are responsive to the health needs of our communities and to the provision of services by a dedicated workforce.
- **Diversity:** We value diversity in our workforce and in the communities we serve and respect the role it plays in providing culturally appropriate services that address health disparities.
- **Integrity:** We act with integrity, provide credible information based in science, and are accountable for our actions.
- **Collaboration:** We initiate and foster partnerships by sharing information, resources, and ideas to improve health outcomes.



## **REFLECTION**

In fiscal year 2019 North Central Health District (NCHD) was able to accomplish great progress secondary to the hard work of its employees, boards of health, communities and community partners. In October of 2018, all 13 of our county health departments offered pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to reduce the risk of HIV transmission amongst high-risk individuals. We were the first multi-county district in Georgia to accomplish this feat. In addition, it was a highly innovative move. NCHD had put into practice what the Georgia legislature would months later pass a bill to create. This was one crucial step forward in the battle to reduce the rates of new HIV infections.

Another step forward in HIV prevention was the use of data metrics to identify at-risk communities and to perform targeted outreach and marketing. This innovative work leads to the NCHD Infectious Disease team being recognized by the state Office of HIV/AIDS with the Excellence in Social and Digital Media Work Award at the annual provider meeting in May 2019. Also in May, our Ryan White Clinic, the Hope Center, celebrated the grand opening of their Community Pharmacy & Health Innovation center and their completed administration and case management building.

In FY19, our generous community partner, the Department of Juvenile Justice, donated 5.6 acres of land to Baldwin County. The property is located right across from the local hospital and will be used as the construction site for a brand-new health department for residents.

A major fiscal feat of FY19 was ensuring none of our employees were underpaid. It required a review of over three hundred salaries. With the use of the compensation methodology provided by the state, we were able to ensure that all employees received compensation within 80-120% of the market average for their job position. This was a substantial financial investment in our public health workforce.

In February 2019 we implemented an employee of the quarter recognition program as part of our workforce development strategy. This program allowed coworkers to acknowledge the consistent, high-quality contributions that their team members were making to public health.

We accomplished our strategic goal of providing access to wireless internet at all of our health departments. We also took it a step further and provided clear and easy to understand messaging notifying clients of the service.

The Quality Improvement Council was revitalized in March 2019 with the addition of several new members. Our Human Resource department was interested in how to make the onboarding process better for both new employees and their supervisors. This led to the launch of an Onboarding Quality Improvement Project whose recommendations have helped improve the way applicants become new employees.

A major public health threat during FY19 was Hepatitis A. There were over four hundred confirmed cases in the state during the fiscal year. Our district took a proactive stance and administered over two hundred vaccines, over a hundred of which were given to at-risk groups in our local jails.

Overall FY19 was a very progressive year for the North Central Health District. We will continue to make significant strides in accomplishing our public health mission in Central Georgia in the upcoming years.

## **LEADERSHIP**

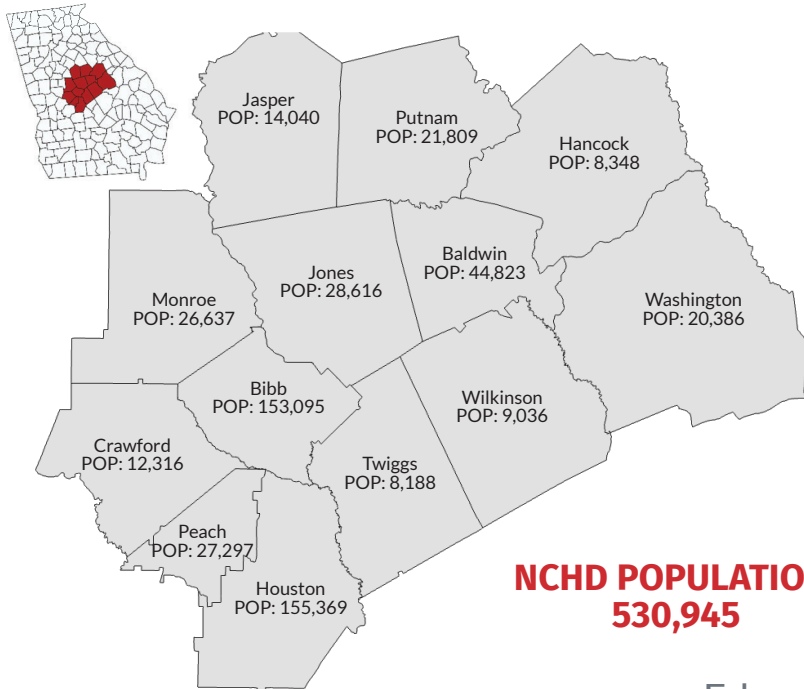
### **DISTRICT EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM**

- District Health Director : Renee Haynes, MD, MPH
- District Clinical Director: Anita Barkin, DrPH, MSN, NP-C (Retired May 2019), Judy McChargue, BSN (current)
- District Financial Administrator: Sylvia Woodford, BAA, MBA
- Director of Human Resources: Marilyn Middlebrooks
- Director of Development & Special Projects: Morris Hutcheson, CPA
- Director of Epidemiology, Community Assessment & Research Initiatives: Amber Erickson, MPH
- District Environmental Health Director: Carla Coley, REHS
- Nutrition Services Director: Nancy Jeffery, MPH
- Program Improvement and Community Outreach Manager: Karen Ebey-Tessendorf, MPH
- Emergency Preparedness Director: A. Laurice Bentley
- DHD Administrative Assistant and Board of Health Liaison: Tiffany Borel

### **COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP**

- **Baldwin County**
  - Carey Dyer, RN, Nurse Manager
  - Colin Duke, REHS GA-PCEM, Environmental Health Manager
  - Dr. Janet Harrison, Board of Health Chairperson
- **Crawford County**
  - Melissa Smith, RN, Nurse Manager
  - Tim LaCoe, Environmental Health Lead
  - Dr. Freddy Gaton, Board of Health Chairperson
- **Hancock County**
  - Shirley Tucker, RN, Nurse Manager
  - Neal Modi, Environmental Health Lead
  - Williams Evans, Jr (Resigned), Currently Vacant, Board of Health Chairperson
- **Houston County**
  - Christina Sikes, RN, Nurse Manager
  - Christine Buffington, Environmental Health Manager
  - Archie Thompson, Board of Health Chairperson
- **Jasper County**
  - Christa McMillian, RN, Nurse Manager
  - David Mercer, Environmental Health Lead
  - Mike Benton (Resigned), Don Jernigan (Current), Board of Health Chairperson
- **Jones County**
  - Sherry Bryant, RN, Nurse Manager
  - Floyd Comer (Retired 2019), Claire Edmonds (Resigned), Margaret (Maggie) Graham (current), Environmental Health Lead
  - Jennifer Goldsberry, Board of Health Chairperson
- **Macon-Bibb County**
  - Veronica Dumas-Dewberry, Assistant Clinical Nurse Manager
  - Donna Cadwell, Environmental Health Manager (Retired 2019), Felicia Pearson-Powell (current)
  - David Gowan, Board of Health Chairperson
- **Monroe County**
  - Whitney Lovett, RN, Nurse Manager
  - Gina Smith, Environmental Health Manager
  - Dr. Jeremy Goodwin, Board of Health Chairperson
- **Peach County**
  - Bertha Ashley, RN, Nurse Manager
  - Tiffany Bland, Environmental Health Lead
  - Dr. Curtis E. Waites, DDS, Board of Health Chairperson
- **Putnam County**
  - Peggy Petitt, RN, Nurse Manager
  - Kathryn Hill, Environmental Health Manager
  - Glenda Ridley, Board of Health Chairperson
- **Twiggs County**
  - Rhonda Howell, RN, Nurse Manager
  - Brandon Thornton, Environmental Health Lead
  - Shannon Hart, Board of Health Chairperson
- **Washington County**
  - Raven Smith, RN, BSN, Nurse Manager
  - Jason Smith, Environmental Health Manager
  - Dr. Jennifer Tarbutton, Board of Health Chairperson
- **Wilkinson County**
  - Juliette Williams, RN, Nurse Manager
  - Tina Davis, Environmental Health Lead
  - Dr. Dennis Smith, DDS, Board of Health Chairperson

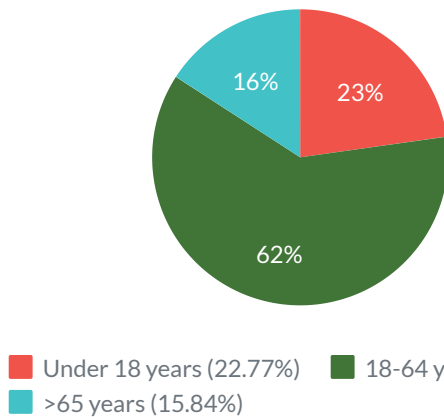
## DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS



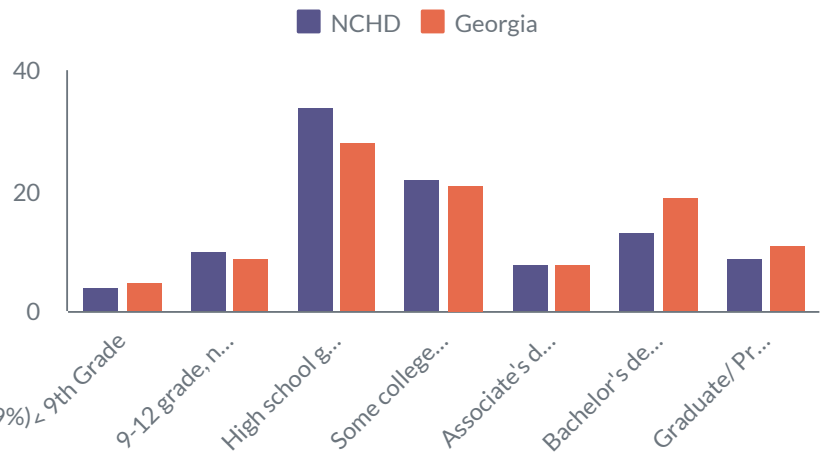
### NCHD Race/Ethnicity



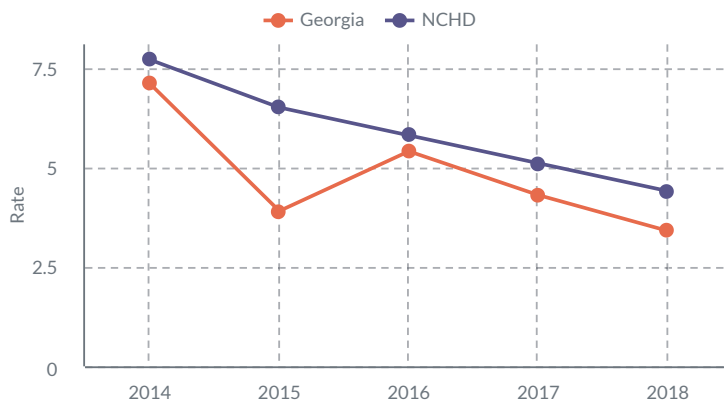
### NCHD Age Distribution



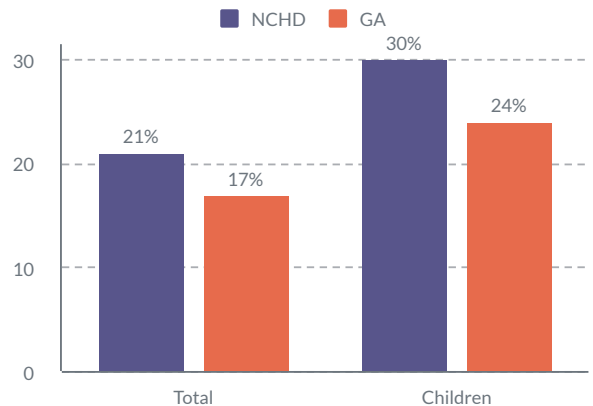
### Educational Attainment, 2019



### Unemployment Rate, 2014-2018



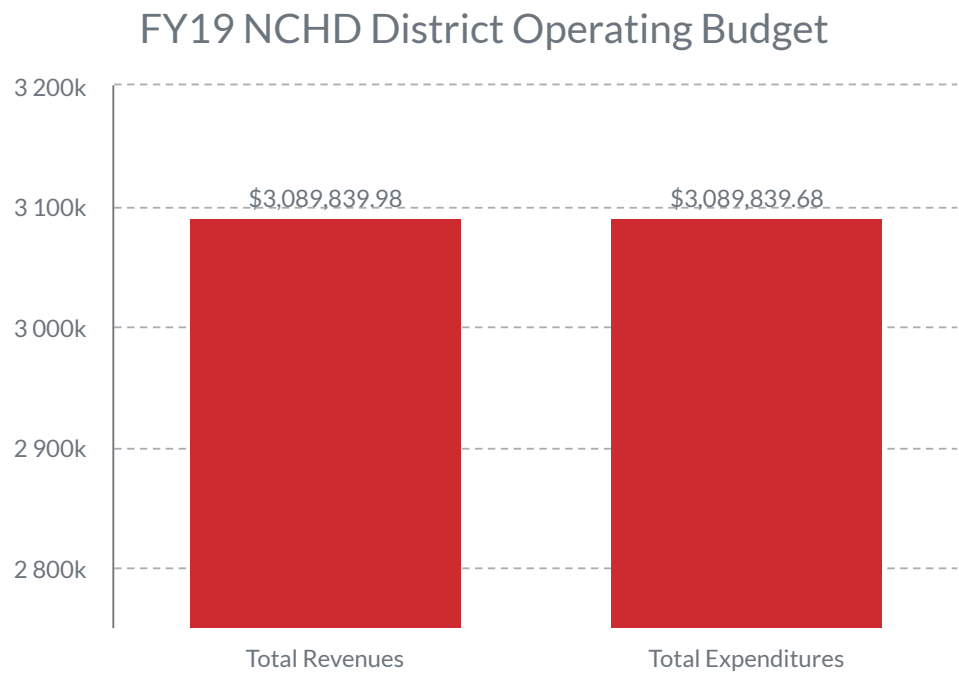
### % Living Below Poverty



ADMINISTRATION

Finance

NCHD's business office acts as a liaison between the Department of Public Health and its 13 local Boards of Health. In addition, the business office provides administrative support and fiscal analysis to 50+ district programs which include WIC clinics and a Ryan White clinic. Daily accounting transactions are performed such as paying invoices, entering and reconciling receivables, budget development, payroll processing, purchasing and fixed assets, billing, grant management, contract management, marketing, audit preparation, and fleet management.



In FY19, the total approved District Operations budget was \$3,089,850.00. When comparing FY19 to FY18, the District's Operating budget increased by 1% Year Over Year.

The financial statements and records of the North Central Health District was prepared using a cash basis of accounting. The budget was prepared using the modified accrual basis of accounting.

1%

Budget Increase

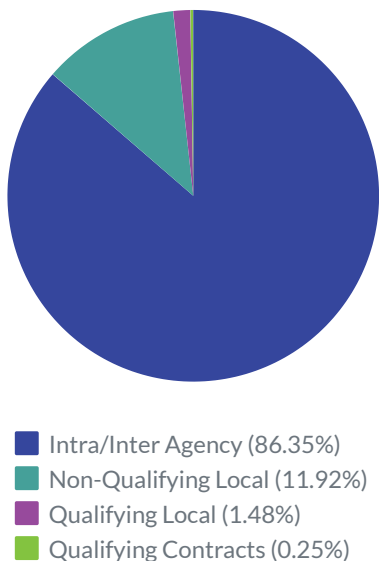


This year's Operating budget was funded by four different Revenue sources totaling \$3,089,839.98: Intra/Inter-Agency Revenue, Non-Qualifying Local Revenue, Qualifying Local Revenue, and Qualifying Contracts.

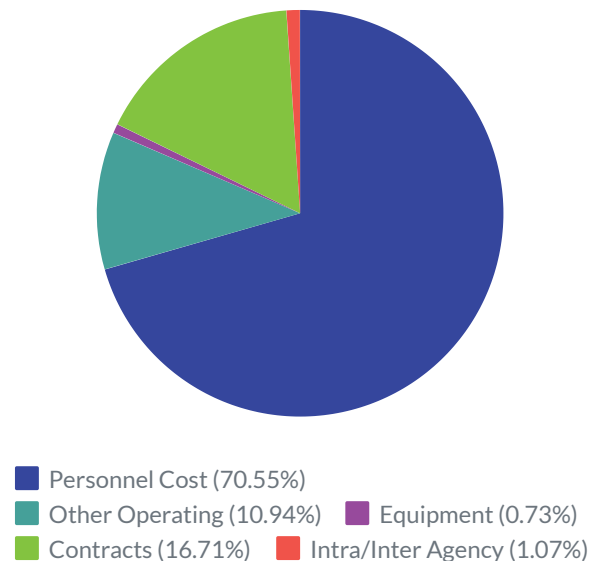
Intra/Inter-Agency Revenue is generated primarily from indirect costs received based on an approved cost allocation plan which was approved by the Georgia Department of Public Health at a rate of 9.07% for FY19. Other Intra/Inter-Agency Revenue includes Revenues exchanged between County Health Departments within NCHD and the District itself, or other Public Health programs within the North Central Health District.

The budget also included Expenditures in five expense categories totaling \$3,089,839.68: Personnel Cost, Other Operating, Equipment, Contracts, and Intra/Inter-Agency. Personnel Cost is generated as remuneration payable to employees during a referenced period of time to include, salary, retirement, health benefits, annual leave, supplements, Medicare, and social security expenses. Several new positions were added such as an Admin Support Supervisor, a Resource Development Coordinator, a shared Admin Assistant, and a shared IT Support Specialist 3.

FY19 NCHD Revenue Sources



FY18 NCHD Expenditures



## Human Resources



**Number of Employees**

**314**



**Turnover Rate**

**19%**



**Number of Retirements**

**12**

## **AWARDS & RECOGNITION**

NCHD is able to accomplish its mission and vision because of the outstanding work our staff are able to do each day. Below are the recognitions and awards that our staff received during FY19.

### **Program and Individual Awards**

#### **Personal Responsibility and Education Program Appreciation Award**

- The *Adolescent Health and Youth Development Program* received recognition from the Department of Public Health for continued services and contribution for teaching, counseling, and implementation of comprehensive sexual health education programs to youth in the community and school district.



#### **Upward Bound Youth Program Commitment Award**

- *Peach County Health Department and Adolescent Health and Youth Development Program* received recognition from Ft. Valley State University's Upward Bound Summer Program.



#### **Excellence in Social and Digital Media Work**

- The *HIV Prevention Program and District Marketing Team* received recognition for work using dating apps and other social media tools. NCHD was the first in the state to utilize dating apps to market HIV testing and PrEP and the first non-metro district to use any type of social media to push out information regarding HIV and PrEP.



#### **Ashley Sutton, RN**

- *Outstanding FNP Student Award* from GA College and State University

#### **Heather Holloway, RN**

- *Lillian B. Wald Nursing Section Award* at GPHA Annual Conference.



#### **Sylvia Woodford, BAA, MBA**

- *Administration Outstanding Service Award* at GPHA Annual Conference.

#### **Ronald Boone**

- *STD District Manager of the Year* by the Georgia Department of Public Health.

#### **Mark Morgan**

- *Certificate of Appreciation* for his work doing contact tracing in Rural areas of Georgia by the Georgia Department of Public Health.



### **County Awards**

#### **Jones County Excellence Award**

- Given to employees of Jones County Health Department for a positive attitude and stand out performance.
- 2019 Recipients: Chassidy Harper, Shametrics Gibbs, Kim Jones, Sherry Bryant.ity and school district.





## District Awards

### Administrative

- Amy Sims, Crawford County Health Department
- Sheila Jacobs, Houston County Health Department
- Gina Smith, Monroe County Health Department

### Clerical - District Office

- Markesha Ray, Children's Medical Services
- Michael Johnson, Epidemiology
- Vicki Huff, Emergency Preparedness

### Clerical - Health Department

- Pearl Broadnax, Houston County Health Department
- Lynn Shaw, Wilkinson County Health Department
- Kelly Hughes, Macon-Bibb County Health Department

### Teamwork

- Tonya Mathis, Macon-Bibb County Health Department
- Melissa Smith, Crawford County Health Department
- Lacey Foreman, WIC

### Worksite Wellness

- Julia Vinton, Health Education and Hancock Health Improvement Program
- Alysia Johnson, Maternal Child Health
- Chandra Blasingame, WIC

### Programmatic

- Tiffany Bland, Peach County Health Department
- Paula Upshaw, HOPE Center
- Felicia Pearson-Powell, Macon-Bibb County Health Department

### Clinical

- Chris Sikes, Houston County Health Department
- Maria "Lupita" Trejo Lazano, Houston County Health Department
- Raven Smith, Washington County Health Department

### Leadership

- Antonia Fields, WIC
- Sharon Pettit, Houston County Health Department
- Regina King, Maternal Child Health

### Public Health Representative

- Kelli Murray, Houston County Health Department
- Judy McChargue, District Clinical Services
- Cyrus Shirley, Epidemiology

### Annual Health Equity Award

- Dale Wrigley, HOPE Center

### Annual Rural Health Award

- Morris Hutcheson, Development and Special Projects

## Years of Service Awards

### 5 years of Service

- Morris Hutcheson
- Sylvia Woodford
- Shelly Stancil

### 15 years of Service

- David Mercer
- Jennifer Bush

### 20 years of Service

- Wendy Harris
- Mary Hart

### 25 years of Service

- Sal Magluilo
- Debbie Gatliff

### 30 years of Service Award

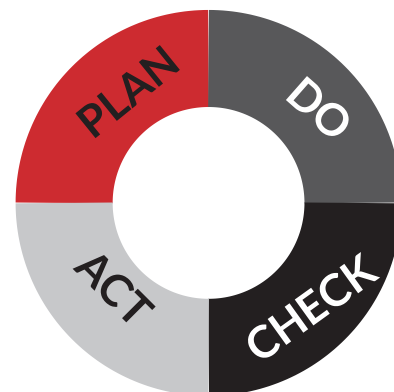
- Ronald Boone
- Jason Smith
- Janice Horne





## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

NCHD adopted a Quality Improvement plan in 2014 based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle. This plan promotes continuous quality improvement projects to be initiated and completed at all levels of the agency.



### Quality Improvement Project

#### Human Resources Onboarding

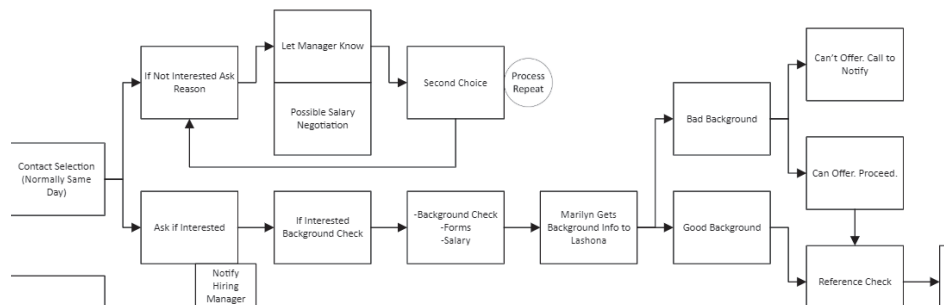
**Problem Statement:** In fall 2018, NCHD's Human Resources (HR) program experienced 100% change of staff within a 2 month period. This led to an onboarding process for new hires that was cumbersome and confusing for HR staff, managers, and new hires.

**Project Goal:** Implement an improved onboarding process for new hires.

**Project Methodology:** A multi-discipline workgroup was created that reviewed the current process and identified areas that could be updated and improved.

A checklist was created to assist the managers and HR staff in the onboarding process and training needs were identified.

**Outcome:** The new process is set to be fully implemented in spring 2020.



#### Increase in Syphilis Testing at HOPE Center

**Problem Statement:** GA is ranked fourth in the nation for the number of Syphilis cases. The district has seen a 34% increase between 2015 and 2018.

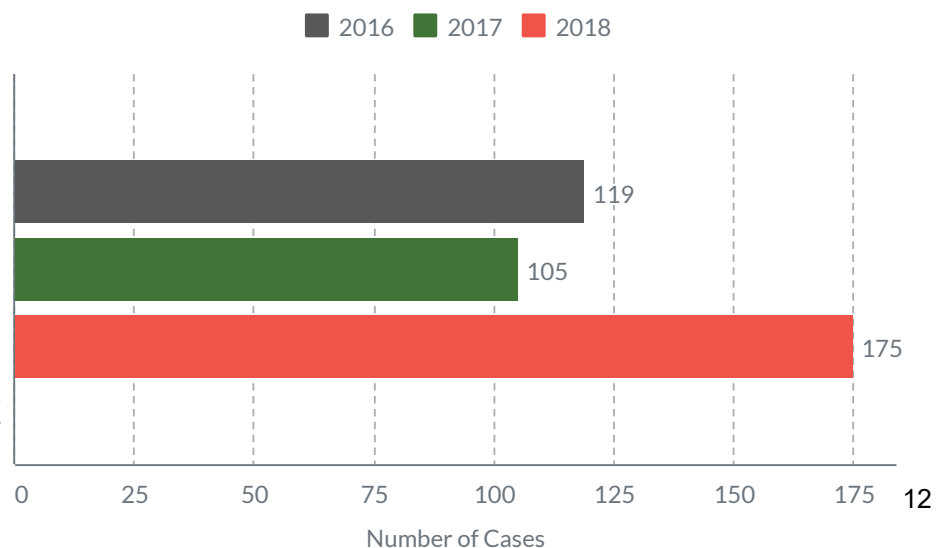
**Project Goal:** Increase STI testing for all clients of the HOPE Center, NO less than 90% of clients will be tested annually for Syphilis.

**Project**

**Methodology:** Developed written policy and clinical check to increase testing rates. Provided staff education on Syphilis and HRSA quality measures.

**Outcome:** 88% tested of HOPE Center patients recieved an annual Syphilis test.

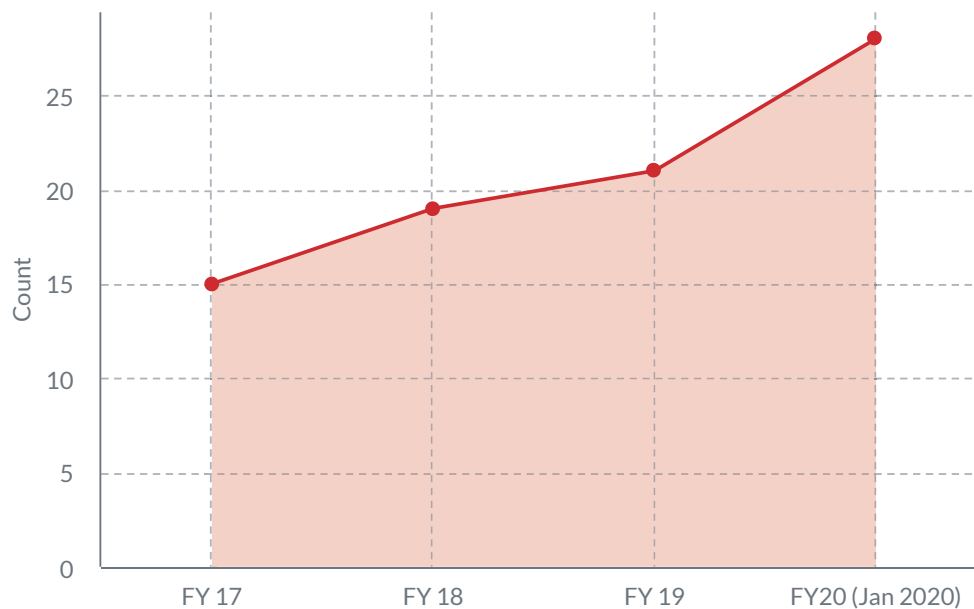
Syphilis Cases, 2016-2018



## "Just Did It" Projects

Not every problem/area of improvement requires a full-blown Quality Improvement (QI) project to improve it and/or a process. Sometimes problems arise and areas of improvement are identified and individuals are able to come up with a solution or process improvement. In 2017, NCHD implemented a process to recognize staff and track these types of small improvements throughout the district.

Just Did It Project Submissions



### FY19 Highlighted Projects

- *District Business Office:* Implementation of Uber Health Services to solve client transportation problems across multiple district and county programs.
- *Washington County Health Department:* Purchase equipment that will be used to streamline and improve patient electronic health records.
- *Houston County Health Department:* Installed equipment that will ensure privacy and adherence to HIPAA requirements for patients.
- *Wilkinson County Health Department:* Responding to identified barriers to obtaining condoms, installed a free condom dispensing box for the public.
- *WIC:* To gather information that can be used for program improvement, developed an excel spreadsheet to track peer counselor referrals.
- *Emergency Preparedness:* During Hurricane Dorian, a large gap was identified surrounding inventory management with the easy solution of reorganizing the storage room.
- *IT:* Improved process for new employee user account creation through the development of an account request form.
- *Jasper County Health Department and the WIC Program:* Customer Service Satisfaction Survey data identified the need and guided the implementation of a new check-in system that utilizes tablets.

## PUBLIC HEALTH 3.0

NCHD has developed a strategic plan to create thoughtful interrelationships between the organization's mandates, priorities and opportunities, and to maximize resources. The four priority areas of NCHD's plan are 1. Increase Access to Care, 2. Chronic Disease - Obesity, 3. Maternal, Infant, Child Health, and 4. Workforce Development. The activities within these goals align with Public Health 3.0, which refers to a new era of enhanced and broadened public health practice that goes beyond traditional public department functions and programs.

### Workforce Development

In order to meet our mission and vision our workforce must acquire and strengthen its knowledge base, skills, and tools to meet the evolving challenges to population health, to be skilled at building strategic partnerships to bring about collective impact, to harness the power of new types of data, and to think and act in a systems perspective.

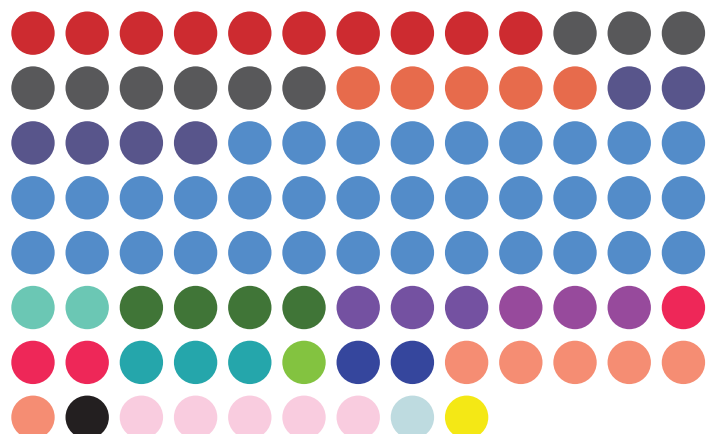
In FY19, NCHD's workforce were provided a variety of training and development opportunities.



**4,429 Individual enrollments in an online self-paced or in-person instructor led courses**

Completed by 286 NCHD Employees

Number of Employees that Have Completed Training During FY19



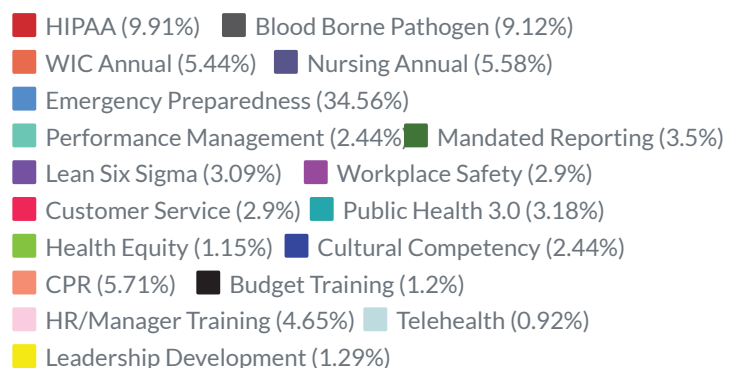
### Accomplishments

The Nursing Annual Training and the WIC Annual Training format NCHD developed has become the state standard.



### New Initiatives

- Employee Recognition is a key part of our workforce development program. To recognize our staff either from supervisor to employee or peer to peer, we offer a variety of recognition challenge coins. They are provided to employees or peers as Excellence is noticed. Coins can be exchanged for a chance at raffle prizes during our annual appreciation day or to keep as a memento.



## Strategic Partnerships

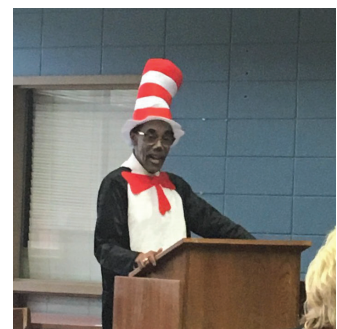
NCHD engages with many community stakeholders — from both the public and private sectors — to form vibrant, structured, cross-sector partnerships designed to develop and guide Public Health 3.0-style initiatives and to foster shared funding, services, governance, and collective action.

### Hancock Health Improvement Partnership (HHIP)

North Central Health District received \$100,000 in grant funding from Healthcare Georgia Foundation in FY19 for the continuation of the Two Georgias Initiative work with Hancock Health Improvement Partnership. This was the first year of implementing the Hancock Community Health Improvement Plan (Hancock CHIP). The three priority areas identified in the Hancock CHIP are Economic Development, Literacy, and Healthy Environments & Housing.



- Ten HHIP monthly electronic newsletters published and read by 130 to 150 individuals.
- Grant writing workshop hosted by HHIP attended by 25 county residents in February 2019.
- HHIP Economic Development workgroup completed a community survey about wants and needs related to economic development in the county. 171 surveys were completed.
- HHIP supported the building of a playground at M.E. Lewis Elementary School. In addition to financial support, HHIP provided a forum for HHIP member and M.E. Lewis P.E. teacher, Patrick Graney, to champion this effort through spreading the word about the need, conducting fundraising efforts, and hosting community workdays. As a result, 369 elementary school students are benefitting from the playground which was dedicated in May 2019.
- HHIP supported the Hancock County Senior Center in revitalizing their community garden to provide the opportunity for senior citizens to be active while caring for the garden beds.
- Six Free Little Libraries were started – 2 at churches, 3 at beauty shops, and one at a low-income housing area.



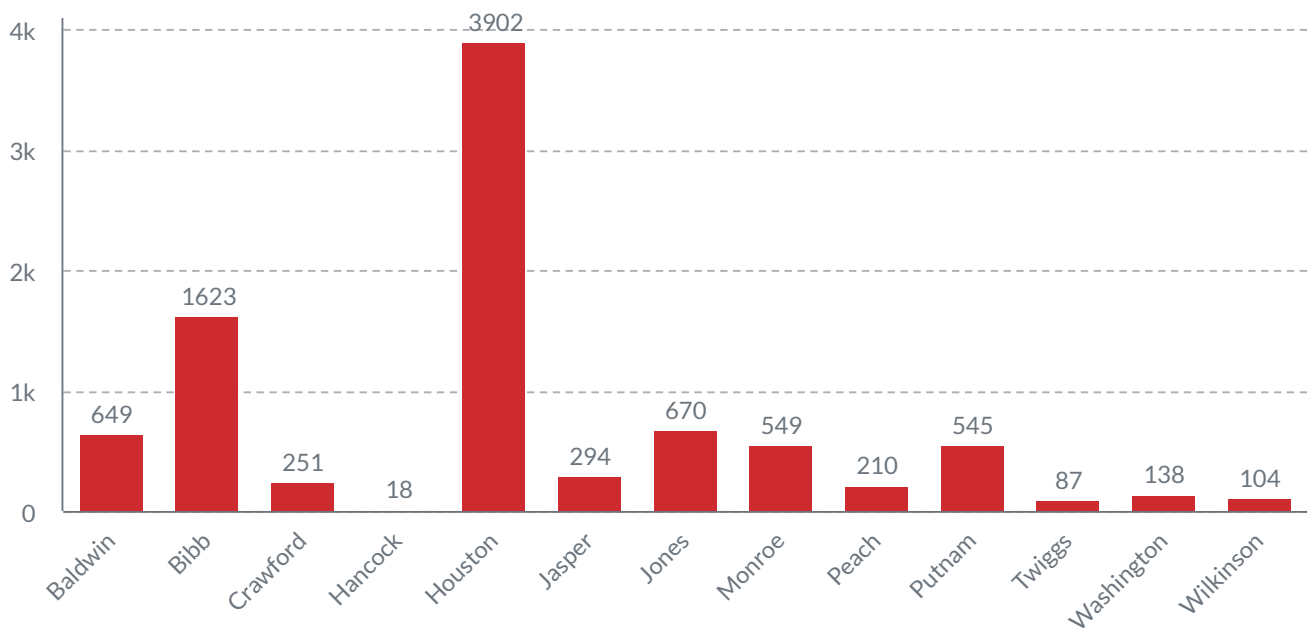
## **Crawford County Health Improvement Partnership**

Several years ago, the grocery store in Crawford County closed, leaving the county with no retail outlet that sells fresh fruits and vegetables on a daily basis. In partnership with Mercer University Department of Public Health, NCHD initiated a health improvement partnership in FY19 in Crawford County to focus on the lack of access to healthy foods, especially fruits and vegetables. The partnership has plans to conduct a food security and food access assessment within FY20.

## **School-Based Influenza**

All 13 of NCHD county health departments have partnerships with the local school districts and some private schools to provide influenza vaccinations and other needed immunizations to both students and teachers.

**Total Doses of School Based Influenza Vaccine Given 2018-2019**



## **Macon-Bibb County Parks and Recreation**

Children Medical Services developed a partnership with Macon-Bibb County Parks and Recreation to host an Equipment, Therapy, and Vendor Fair.



## **Macon-Bibb County School Anti-Bullying Campaign**

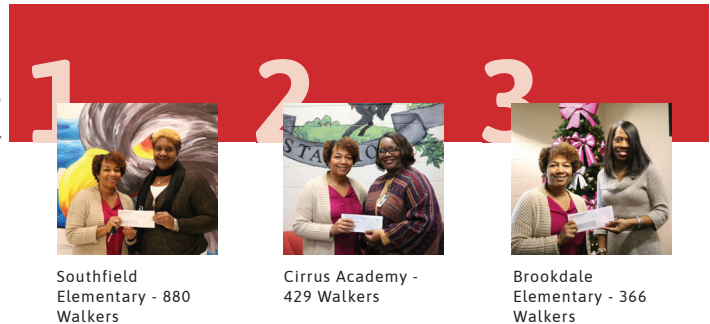
Adolescent Health and Youth Development received funding from the state office to implement an anti-sexual bullying campaign in two schools to promote awareness of sexual bullying and harassment. This included collaborative efforts with the state School/Health District Coordinator and the North Central Health District to ensure this implementation and partnership was a success and educational for the students.



## **Macon-Bibb County Walk to School Day**

Macon-Bibb County Health Department challenged all elementary schools in Macon-Bibb County to participate in Walk to School Day on Oct. 24. On that day, students were encouraged to walk to school to learn about the health benefits of walking. Parents were encouraged to walk with their children to school to show that everyone needs exercise throughout the day.

The first, second and third-place schools that reported the most students and parents walking to school on Oct. 24 won \$300, \$200 and \$100, respectively. This year's winners were: Southfield Elementary - 880 walkers, Cirrus Academy - 429 walkers, and Brookdale Elementary - 366 Walkers.



## **HIV Community Advisory Board**

Redesigned and implemented a new Community Advisory Board that meets to engage community partners in working activities around prevention and care for HIV/AIDS. During FY19, they held over 12 community events, implemented a women's support group and Women's Wellness Day, and held a client focus group and satisfaction survey.

## **Community, Outreach, Mentoring, Pharmacy, Assessment, and Supportive Service Center (COMPASS)**

COMPASS is the NCHD Community Health Innovation Site and Pharmacy. The site is created as a safe space focused on health and wellness that reaches all populations with a special focus on reaching out to the LGBTQ+ community. Through outreach and educational events, community grant application coordination and research activities the site is intended to bring people together while addressing some of the social determinants that impact HIV. A food pantry, clothing pantry, and housing services are being established within the site to again address some of the many social determinants that impact those living with or impacted by HIV/AIDS. COMPASS Pharmacy is a specialty pharmacy for HIV and Hepatitis and also serves the entire community.



## Environmental Health (EH) Partnerships

- From food service to animal bites, EH personnel across the district utilize strategic partnerships for each of their programs to conduct business on a daily basis.
- Due to staff turnover during FY19, the District EH program relied heavily on the internal partnerships of each of the county environmental health programs. *Crawford, Macon-Bibb, Peach, and Jones* counties each received much-needed support in training and staffing from *Baldwin, Houston, Monroe, and District Environmental Health Staff*. This additional support ensured continuity of operations and that education and inspections were not lacking in any program.
- *Baldwin County EH* was an invited guest lecturer and panel member for *Georgia College and State University* to educate students on public health programs and general environmental health.
- *Houston County EH* was able to work with the *City of Perry Code Enforcement* to bring a public swimming pool into compliance. Perry Code Enforcement was able to assist in the collection of annual fees that had been due to for several years.
- *Macon-Bibb EH* partnered with the *Georgia Restaurant Association* to present educational classes to area restaurants.
- *Monroe County EH* is working with the new *Code Enforcement Officer* for the county to help streamline animal bite reporting and animal quarantine in the absence of an animal control officer. In addition, they are working more closely on complaint reporting and investigation, and the lines of communication are more open than in the past.
- *Peach County EH* partnered with the *Department of Agriculture* to permit a non-compliant bakery/deli that had been in operation for an extended period of time.



822

Public Swimming Pool Inspections



3,687

Routine Food Facility Inspections completed.

287

Complaint Inspections of Food Facilities completed.

344

Routine Tourist Accomodation Inspections

35

Complaint Inspections of Tourist Accommodations Completed.

105

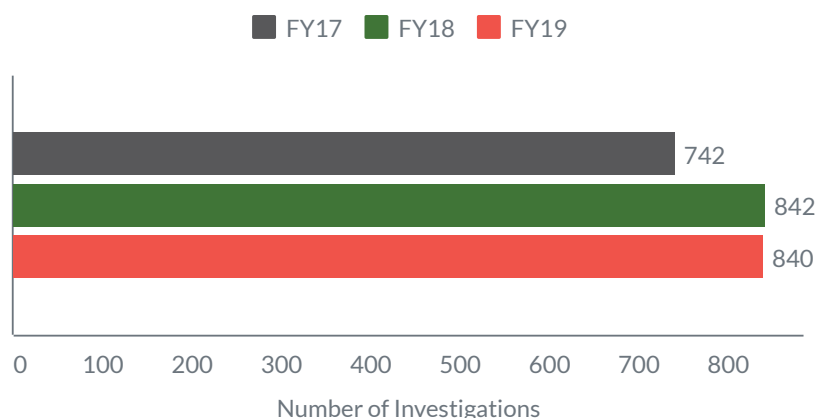
Food Service Training Completed.



## Environmental Health (EH) Partnerships (continued)

- *Putnam County EH* worked alongside the district *Environmental Protection Division* office out of Athens over a several month period to ensure compliance of a failing community water system in a gated community operated by a third party.
- *Putnam EH* partnered with the *Georgia Department of Agriculture* to halt the illegal sale of food by temporary food booths on the weekends in the parking lot of a local convenience store.
- *Twiggs County EH* worked extensively with the *Georgia Environmental Protection Division* to gain compliance and clean-up regarding a sewer manhole overflowing for months in a remote, undetected area within the City Limits. In addition, *Twiggs County EH* strengthened its relationship with the *Sheriff's Department* while assisting with a case involving a squatter.
- *District Healthy Homes* collaborated with the *Macon-Bibb Housing Authority* and created a plan to ensure that kids living in federally funded housing do not fall through the cracks when identified with elevated blood lead levels.
- *District EH and the District Healthy Homes Program* began work with a *Georgia Initiatives in Community Housing Program* to ensure that lead hazards in older housing stock are a consideration when renovating homes chosen by the grant. The District's Regional Healthy Homes Coordinator also reached an agreement with the State office that will allow her to perform lead-based paint inspections in the chosen homes for no charge to the local GICH program thereby freeing-up more funds to be used toward the renovations.

## Rabies Control Investigations



1,626

Onsite sewage permits issued.

1,291

Onsite sewage inspections completed.



132

Onsite sewage complaints inspected.

256

Well water permits issued.

352

Existing wells inspected.

17%

of the 368 wells tested were positive for bacteria.

## Health Department Clinic Partnerships

- Houston County Health Department partnered with Houston Healthcare to provide education and immunizations through collaborative work in soup kitchens and food banks within Houston County. They have also worked with several community partners (i.e. first responders, businesses, etc.) to provide vaccinations for new hires in each of the workplaces.
- Washington County Health Department established a partnership with the local public-school system to provide Special Olympic Physicals for children.
- Wilkinson County Health Department provides a nurse practitioner to the county jail once a week to deliver health care to inmates.
- Baldwin County Health Department partners with Navicent Baldwin's Emergency Department to follow up on patients seeking STD treatments through the hospital.
- Twiggs County Health Department partnered with Community Health Care Systems (CHCS) in Jeffersonville to provide the best care to the citizens of Twiggs County. They refer patients to our programs and we refer patients to them for services that we do not cover.

**30**

Community Partner Immunization  
Events held within Houston County.

**75**

Special Olympics Physicals  
completed in Washington County.

**224**

Inmate Healthcare Services  
provided in Wilkinson County.

**480**

STD Referrals from the ED in  
Baldwin County.

**10%**

of Twiggs County Patients are  
referred from CHCS.

## Oral Health

- NCHD's Oral Health Program partners with 4 county school districts (Peach, Jasper, Houston, and Crawford) and local Head Start Programs to provide oral health care and education to children.
- Houston County Dental Clinic (HCDC) increased the number of dental services that are available for patients by improving efficiency, extending community outreach, and partnering with the school system to provide extended education to students and faculty regarding dental care.

**1,745**

students across 11 schools received  
school based oral health education.

**665**

students across 10 Head Starts and 2 Primary  
Schools received preventive oral health services.



**Sept 2017 -  
Sept 2019**

HCDC Patients:  
**1,767**

### **WIC Community Breastfeeding**

- NCHD's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program is currently collaborating throughout the district. The district's breastfeeding coordinator, peer counselor supervisors, and peer counselors provide breastfeeding education and support.

205

participants received breastfeeding education and support over 6 community events.

### **WIC Headstart**

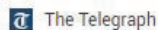
- The WIC program collaborates with Headstart in Jasper County, Putnam County, Baldwin ELC, Washington County, MGCCA/Houston county, Fort Valley State University, Macon-Bibb EOC, and Hancock County to increase the knowledge about breastfeeding and where to locate breastfeeding resources within the community.

682

participants provided WIC services in collaboration with Headstart.

### **Media Coverage**

While not public health partners in the traditional sense, traditional news outlets like newspapers, television and radio stations are an essential relationship. Working with our local reporters, NCHD provides relevant and timely information about emerging public health issues, whether they affect the nation, state or our district's individual communities. Here's a small snapshot of some of the most popular events and stories of the fiscal year:



#### **Hepatitis A is rising in some states. Here's what you should do, public health officials say**

The North Central Health District issued an advisory Monday ... January 2017 and April 2018, 68 percent of those infected reported either drug use, ... Though Georgia is not experiencing an outbreak, the health district has ... Jul 17, 2018



#### **In Houston County, nurses visit some new parents in the comfort of their homes – for free**

The free program sends nurses from the North Central Health District into the homes of first-time parents throughout pregnancy and the first two ... Jan 16, 2019



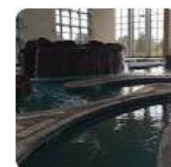
#### **Health district confirms norovirus outbreak in Milledgeville**

MILLEDGEVILLE, Ga. — The North Central Health District has confirmed that norovirus is to blame for an outbreak in Milledgeville that affected ... Feb 12, 2019



#### **More cases of sickness from 'Crypto' parasite in pools**

Published: 11:19 PM EDT August 31, 2018. Updated: 12:52 AM EDT September 1, 2018. The Georgia Department of Public Health says more people are getting sick from ... those cases jumped from 4 to 60 in the North Aug 31, 2018



## Social Media

NCHD uses social media for a wide variety of purposes, but all actions across our social media platforms focus on delivering information to our clients in a timely and appropriate manner. As our audience grows on each channel, we can better reach a wider group of district residents with health information, event notices, emergency communications and more. Between July 2018 and June 2019, NCHD's social media presence grew significantly across Facebook (our primary platform), Twitter and Instagram:

## FY19 vs FY18





## **Infrastructure**

To enhance our existing organizational infrastructure and foster all Public Health 3.0 principles, NCHD and each of its 13 county health departments received national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) in 2017.



Improvements to our physical facilities have also been a priority. The following facility updates were made during FY19.

- **Hancock County Health Department** completed its federally funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) renovation of its existing facility in July 2019. The renovated facility includes new finishes, expanded exam rooms, WIC area, and training room, an education kitchen, signage, and a new parking lot. NCHD applied for and was awarded \$ 96,000 in USDA WIC funds to assist in the project.
- Jasper County Development Authority in April acquired a new building to house the **Jasper County Health Department**. The new facility includes expanded exam rooms, waiting room, education, room, break area, WIC offices, and Environmental Health suite. In addition, it adjoins a new mental health non-profit serving Jasper County residents.
- In 2019, NCHD partnered with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice to acquire 5.6 acres across from Navicent Baldwin Hospital in Baldwin County. On the land will be built a new 13000 square foot **Baldwin County Health Department** in 2020. The new facility will house a modern public health facility for Baldwin County residents as well as a community garden.
- **Monroe County Health Department and Jasper County Health Department** applied for and the counties received CDBG funding to renovate their existing facilities in the amounts of \$750,000 each. Renovations will begin in 2020.
- **Peach County** in 2019, received \$750,000 in funding for a CDBG grant renovation to its health department. Renovations are expected to begin in 2020.
- **Hope Center HIV Clinic** held its grand opening of its completed administration and case management building as well as the new pharmacy and resource center named "Compass".
- Macon-Bibb County Board of Health and Macon-Bibb County with the Macon-Bibb United Development Authority purchased an existing medical facility at 1600 Forsyth Street for renovation to house a new **Macon-Bibb County Health Department**. Renovations will begin in 2020.
- During FY19, **WIC** worked with several of NCHD's sites to increase the number of facilities that offer space for breastfeeding. Currently the spaces are **Bibb Health Department, Hancock Health Department, Jasper Health Department, Twiggs Health Department, Wilkinson Health Department, Washington Health Department, Monroe Health Department and the district office**.



## **Data Informed Decision Making**

During FY19, NCHD leadership implemented new protocols and policies that allow for a coordinated research process. Several research projects are ongoing with partners in the oral health program, HIV treatment, maternal functioning, health equity, and program evaluation. The goal for the research program is to add to the general knowledge of public health outcomes to inform decision making at the program and policy levels.

Customer service is a key value for NCHD and to ensure we are offering positive experiences, customer satisfaction surveys are conducted continuously, data reviewed and implemented improvements based on feedback. The following are the ongoing surveys conducted.

- Partner Satisfaction Survey - sent to all partners each fall.
- Clinic Customer Satisfaction Survey - offered to all clinic patients at each visit
- Environmental Health Satisfaction Survey - offered to all EH partners after each service.
- Internal Communication Survey - offered to all staff each spring.

### **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS**



#### **Partner Satisfaction Survey**

Educate the public about what public health does.

Outcome: Increased social media and marketing efforts for all programs and public health topics.



#### **Internal Communication Survey**

Improve employee recognition.

Outcome: New quarterly and yearly recognition program implemented.



#### **Clinic Satisfaction Survey**

Improve HIPAA protections for patients at clinic check-in.

Outcome: Installed equipment that will ensure privacy for patients.

## **Funding Increases**

NCHD actively seeks out grant funding to increase our ability to provide services to the communities we serve.

In 2018, NCHD applied for and received funding for the CDC Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) Grant for Hancock County. This five-year project will focus on making an impact on health outcomes for the African-American population through implementing nutrition, physical activity, and clinical-community linkage strategies. The goal is to support the Hancock Health Improvement Partnership and implement policy, systems, and environmental changes around active living, healthy eating, and connecting residents with chronic diseases to community-based programs to help them better manage their chronic disease.

- In the first year of the grant, an office was opened in Sparta, grant staff was hired, initial community assessments were completed, CDC staff came for a three-day site visit, and implementation plans were made for Year 2. As part of the community assessments, three Community-Based Participatory Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis Workshops were held and facilitated by the Center for Public Health Practice and Research at Georgia Southern University. Each workshop was attended by approximately 40 community members. Findings from the workshops informed the planning for implementation of the strategies.

## EMERGING AREAS OF PUBLIC HEALTH

### Health Equity

NCHD provides a multitude of services to eliminate health inequalities.

- **Late Night Clinic:** To meet the needs of those clients who cannot get off work during normal business hours or for those students who need to come after they get out of school.
- **Low Cost:** All NCHD clinics offer a sliding scale fee for service based on income so that the services received are affordable. Also, payment plans are available to anyone and patients are not turned away due to the inability to pay. We offer free services to patients 19 y/o and under.
- **Language Barriers:** All NCHD staff have access to Language Line Solutions for translation services for patients that don't use English as their primary language. Several sites and programs also have bilingual staff and offer multi-language educational materials.
- **High-Risk Groups:** Macon-Bibb County Health Department Environmental Health Program prioritizes inspections for food-service facilities that serve high-risk populations or that serve the same persons generally in an institutional setting.
- **High-Risk Groups:** Emergency Preparedness aims to improve preparedness and response information for vulnerable populations including the homeless, economically disadvantaged, those with chronic health conditions or disabilities, the blind, and others with functional and access needs. The program maintains a contact list of gatekeepers for these communities and pushes out emergency preparedness and response information through these channels. In addition, the program seeks to establish agreements for Closed Point of Distribution for medications in a medical-countermeasure event so that these populations have a quick and familiar route to receive necessary medications and supplies.
- **Inclusive Curriculum:** The Adolescent and Youth Development Program work to ensure that all curriculum is inclusive for youth that identifies as LGBTQ+ and to support teachers and counselors by providing training and supportive data to inform the implementation of policy changes within school districts and programs that service youth.
- **Transportation Assistance:** Clinics and programs maintain options for transportation assistance that include pre-paid bus passes and Uber Health transport.
- **Location of Services:** Examination of where services are provided and the gaps in access is regularly completed and alternative sites offered when necessary.
- **Training:** Through a partnership with Mercer University Department of Public Health, health equity workshops are offered to staff with the goal to advance health equity in public health decision making and practices.
- **Training:** Round table discussions with LGBTQ+ community members and partners on emerging issues within the LGBTQ+ community with the goal to encourage the inclusion of the identified issues into public health practices.



## **Emergency Preparedness and Response**

Emergency Preparedness (EP) works at integrating public health and healthcare through their many partnerships that include: Regional Trauma Advisory Council, Region F Healthcare Coalition, Robins Air Force Base, Opioid response, and Defense Support to Civil Authorities planning.

In FY19, the EP program expanded partnerships with Robins Air Force Base and county EMA directors through the planning process for the statewide Strategic National Stockpile/Medical Countermeasure (SNS/MCM) tabletop exercise and fullscale exercise planning process.

The EP program also increased partnership activities with United Way and improved our communication capabilities with our internal programs, specifically WIC, CMS, and BCW, through our District SNS/MCM tabletop exercise in which we sought to expand our vulnerable population's contacts by targeting our internal subject matter experts.

### **Georgia Hurricane Response Hub**

The Georgia Hurricane Response Hub is one of five technical assistance centers funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to enhance disaster-related surveillance, environmental, and occupational health recovery efforts in areas impacted by the 2017 Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. The Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University serves as the coordinating body of the Georgia Hurricane Response Hub and leads related public health workforce capacity building activities in Georgia. The training and resources developed through this initiative help health departments, public health institutes, emergency management, law enforcement, health care providers, government entities, and other organizations build workforce capacity and institutional knowledge that improves disaster-related recovery in the future.

For additional information: [georgiahrh.org](http://georgiahrh.org)

Every year since 2016, NCHD staff have responded to an evacuation and sheltering event due to a Hurricane. Due to this response, several of our staff were asked to participate in the Georgia Hurricane Response Hub.

- Laurice Bentley: Incident Management Workgroup
- Amber Erickson: Disaster Epidemiology Workgroup
- Heather Holloway: Surge Management Workgroup



## Emerging Infectious Diseases

In FY19, the Epidemiology program responded to 1,830 reportable diseases, 18 confirmed outbreaks, and several emerging threats (i.e. vaping related illness, opioid overdoses, etc.). For each disease reported the epidemiology program conducted provider and patient interviews to track the source, prevent or reduce the spread, and provide medical referrals. Outbreaks ranged from Norovirus and respiratory illness in long term care facilities to respond to large scale protracted events like the Cryptosporidium waterpark outbreak and Hepatitis A statewide outbreak that are described over the next two pages.

The Infectious Disease (ID) program, part of the Epidemiology program, is responsible for contact tracing, partner notification, counseling, health education, case management, referral services, and collaboration with healthcare providers. The ID program also aims to reduce the spread of HIV by identifying newly diagnosed HIV positive clients and those that have been previously diagnosed or identified as lost to care and link them to medical care and other supportive services.

The Tuberculosis Program has the legal responsibility for all Tuberculosis (TB) clients in middle Georgia regardless of who provides the direct services. TB services are available to all who fall within the service criteria without regard to the client's ability to pay. This is accomplished by identifying and treating persons who have active TB disease, finding, screening and treating contacts, and screening high-risk populations.

**6,427**

Reported Diseases

**18**

Confirmed Outbreaks

**325**

Reported STD Cases provided partners services.

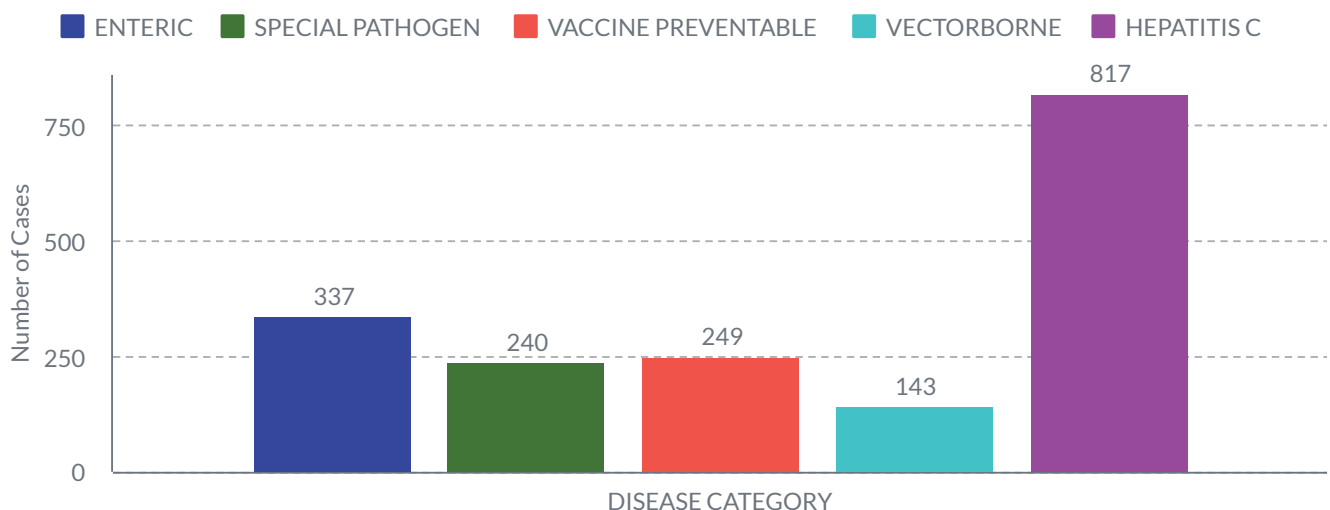
**94**

HIV Patients linked to support services

**11**

Active TB Patients provided Directly Observed Therapy

## Confirmed General Notifiable Diseases Investigated



\*Only confirmed, probable or suspect non-STD related disease reports are included in the chart above.

\*\*Hepatitis C cases include both active and chronic conditions.

## Cryptosporidium- Water Park Outbreak

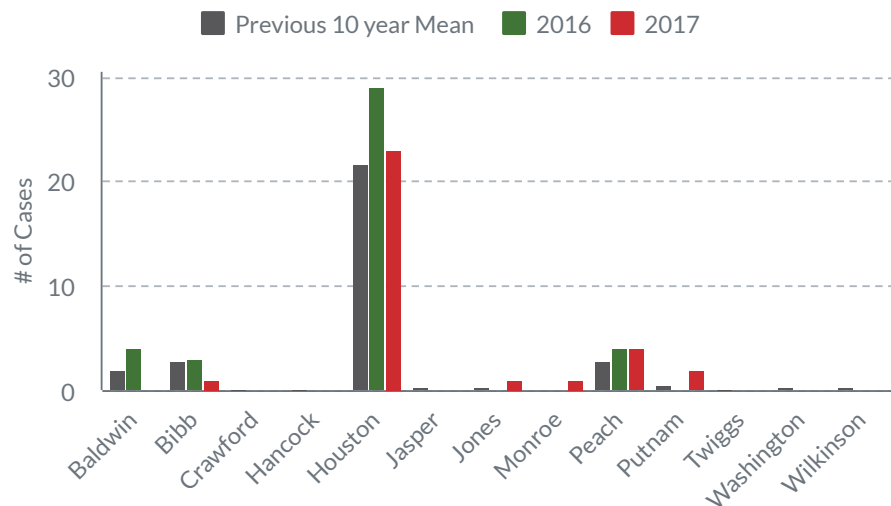
NCHD Epidemiology Program has identified Cryptosporidium to be an organism of concern within Houston county over the past decade. This information has been shared with Environmental Health (EH) due to potential concerns regarding illnesses spread through the environment.

The EH program often educates its partners regarding this concern, as was the case with a new waterpark being developed in 2018.

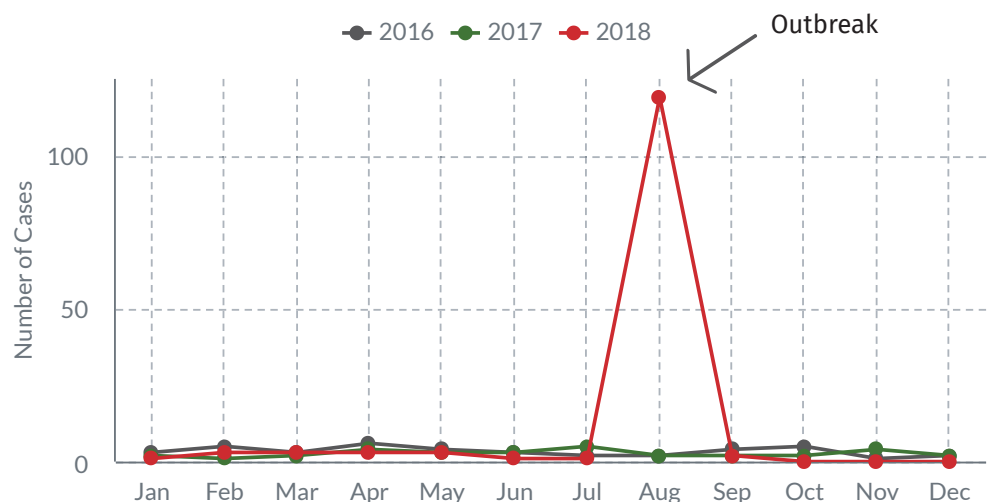
In July of 2018, after 2 years of planning, a new waterpark opened and within 1 month of the opening date complaints of gastrointestinal illness began to be reported to the NCHD Epidemiology program. Lab testing confirmed the presence of Cryptosporidium as the causal agent. Using the Syndromic Surveillance system, Epidemiology was able to quickly identify new cases associated with the water park and led to a large public health response. Environmental Health staff worked with the owner and staff to close the park until proper remediation through hyper-chlorination had occurred. Epidemiology worked to establish a case definition and release an electronic survey to those identified with possible exposure. The survey was also made available to the public at large.

As the outbreak drew to a close, 20 cases were laboratory confirmed and an additional 99 cases were epidemiologically linked through case contacts and survey response. The outbreak resulted in 47 cases seeking medical attention and 4 hospitalizations.

## Cryptosporidium Incidence by County



## Cryptosporidium Incidence



Park attendance was reported by at least 1 case between the dates of July 6 and August 5. As more cases were identified, additional public pools outside the park were closed and treated due to the prolonged parasitic shedding that occurs after resolution of symptoms. All additional sites worked enthusiastically with public health to ensure hyper chlorination and received education on Cryptosporidium. No secondary outbreaks were reported in relation to these facilities.

## Hepatitis A Response

In June of 2018, the Georgia Department of Public Health identified a statewide increase of Hepatitis A virus disease. This came on the coattails of an outbreak identified in Bibb county among HIV positive individuals. The state Hepatitis team, at the behest of the CDC, would go on to declare a statewide outbreak of Hepatitis A. While majority of the cases are contained to northwest Georgia, metro Atlanta and its surrounding counties, and Augusta,

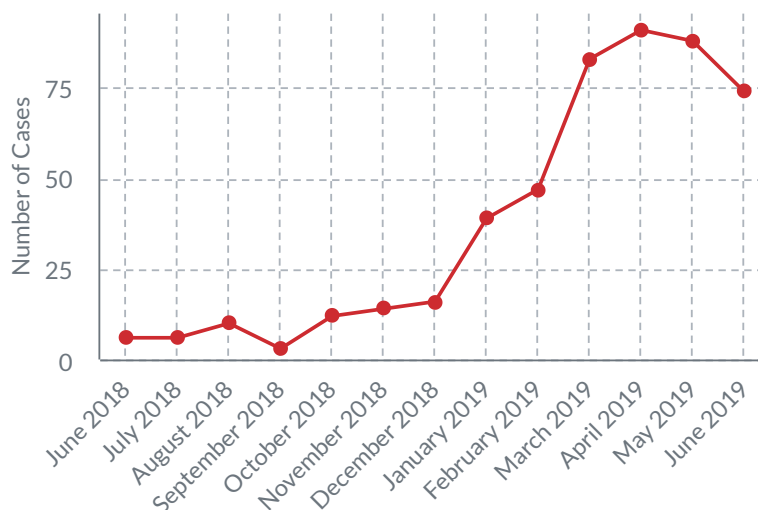
NCHD continues to receive lab reports of Hepatitis A. While the vast majority of these are ruled out by the case definition, North Central Health district continues to see an increase in true cases against the 10-year average.

In response to this outbreak, NCHD Epidemiology has been working closely with internal and external partners to keep new cases to a minimum. NCHD over the years has maintained a robust immunization program and with the support of nursing and immunization staff, have encouraged the public at large to be vaccinated against Hepatitis A. A number of county health departments have launched programs to immunize at risk groups identified by epidemiologists at the state. These at risk groups include but are not limited to: first responders, medical and hospital staff, food service workers, HIV positive individuals, sewage and sanitation workers, and drug users of any route. To highlight a county, Houston has initiated campaigns to immunize all first responders and prison and jail populations within their bounds. In conjunction with vaccination efforts, Epidemiology, Environmental Health, and Nursing has used conference and training opportunities to educate target populations about Hepatitis A.

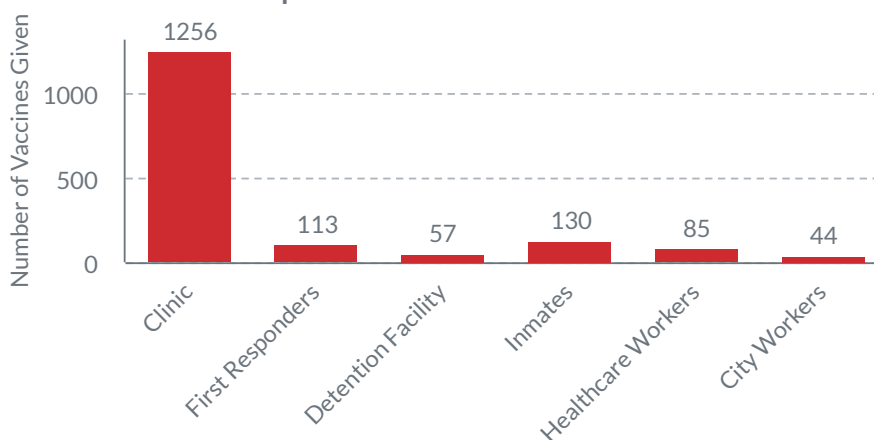
While NCHD has not experienced the truly dramatic increase in cases experienced in other regions of Georgia, the potential remains. Weekly, epidemiologists at NCHD investigate new labs and reports of potential cases. While most continue to be ruled out, true cases still do arise.

In order to limit potential new cases with true exposures, epidemiology attempts to interview and solicit close contacts of infected individuals in order to do prophylactic vaccination. Certain characteristics of at-risk populations can make this difficult.

## Confirmed Hepatitis A Virus Infections in Georgia



## Hepatitis A Vaccinations



## Climate Change

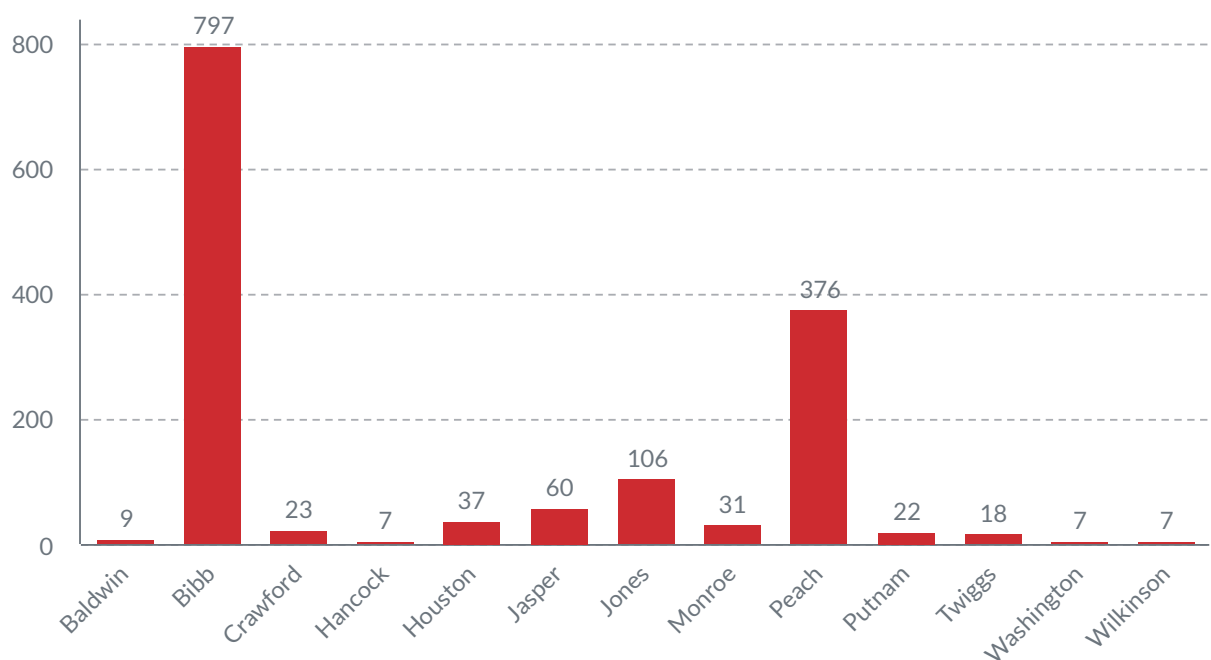
NCHD Worksite Wellness Committee updated the Healthy Meetings Policy to include rules and recommendations that support the use of reusable items. Programs and individuals are encouraged to supply or use reusable dishes and containers and limit the use of 1-use items such as paper plates, plastic silverware, and plastic cups.



## Environmental Bio-Monitoring

With the onset of Zika in 2017, five Regional Vector Surveillance Coordinators (VSC) positions were developed in order to rebuild Georgia's capacity to detect and respond to existing and newly introduced vector-borne diseases. Eleven of 18 Health Districts have been assigned a VSC, whose responsibility is to conduct and improve mosquito surveillance for arboviral diseases such as West Nile Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, Lacrosse Encephalitis, Zika and other exotic mosquito-borne diseases. Duties include establishing surveillance locations throughout the PH Districts, setting up traps and collecting mosquitoes, mosquito identification, complaint response, community assessments, and community education programs. When necessary, the VSC will coordinate mosquito control activities with existing city/county/contracted mosquito control agencies and assist with localized control efforts. Besides mosquito surveillance, the VSCs are also involved in collecting mosquito eggs for statewide pesticide resistance testing. In addition, the VSC supports the Environmental Health Team by assisting with surveillance for other public health pests of concern, including ticks and tick-borne diseases, rabies, and bedbugs.

Vector Surveillance, 2019





## **Behavioral Health**

### **Motivational Interview Program**

Through grants obtained with AIDS United, the HOPE Center implemented a Peer Motivational Interview program focused on Black gay and bisexual men between the ages of 17 and 30. The goals of this project are to increase engagement in care and increase viral suppression. In addition, the clinic expansion of services to include social and emotional support are ongoing. Partnerships with EBM counseling and Ft. Valley State University are being utilized to create other engagement points for client care, education, and engagement.

### **Jones County Suicide Prevention Coalition**

Jones County has the 10th highest age adjusted suicide death rate in Georgia, with suicide being the leading cause of death for ages 15-19 years old. In partnership with Augusta University Medical College, a suicide prevention coalition was formed. The partnership includes members from public health, education, law enforcement, emergency management, mental health, and the faith based community. The goals of the partnership is to provide training and resources to the community to reduce the rate of suicide within the county.

### **Peach County Local Interagency Planning Team (LIPT)**

The LIPT in Peach County is comprised of school, Division of Family and Children Services, public health, and mental health partners. The team provides children/families resources for mental health throughout Peach County. As patients and clients are seen by each agency and partner, appropriate referrals are made regarding services the individual needs.

### **Mercer University School of Medicine**

NCHD partnered with Mercer University School of Medicine to establish an Academic Health Department serves as an academic-practice collaboration where staff, resources, research, and other assets are shared between the participants. The mutually-beneficial partnership was created to improve public health education, practice and workforce development. The overall goal of NCHD and Mercer's Academic health department is to improve community health across the district though its primary focus will be women's health and tracking health outcomes. Working with Dr. Jennifer Barkin of Mercer University, projects have been established and training provided that discuss maternal functioning and post-partum in a variety of healthcare settings.



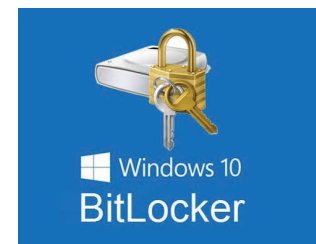
## **Emerging Technology**

NCHD relies heavily on the use of technology throughout all programs. From basic computer use to assist with the incorporation of our electronic health record system, the Information Technology (IT) team is a key component to the success of the district. During FY19, the IT program was able to accomplish the following:

- Introduced a new ticketing system ATERA, which will allow for increased updates, remote maintenance, reporting, and much more.
- Prioritized cybersecurity by adding Bit-locker for added security on mobile devices and requiring security training for all staff.
- Worked with the WIC program to incorporate increase efficiency during intake and provide client protection by automating the secure deletion of files at the end of each day.
- Increased capability of the local Electronic Health Record System by developing an automated interface with a third-party laboratory and participate in a state-wide workgroup to establish a state-wide system.
- Ensured that all systems are as up to date as possible and incorporate efficient technologies. This included updating all switches throughout the district, upgrading expired equipment, and moving from stand-alone servers to a cloud network.



**ATERA**



In addition to the work IT has done to ensure the district has access to technology, several programs and staff have worked towards the use of emerging technologies during FY19.

- The Epidemiology program has utilized Geospatial Information Systems for analysis of data for several years, however, NCHD has increased this capacity by Bibb County Environmental Health Staff receiving training for the use of this technology.
- Mobile Technology with secure internet capability during offsite vaccination clinics to ensure that individuals are provided with their GRITS record which helps the individual and public health worker decide on what vaccinations are needed.
- To bring organizational visibility on program performance and to focus on strategic planning and quality improvements throughout the organization, NCHD has started implementing a performance management tool that is cloud-based and real-time called Vision, Mission, Services, and Goals (VMSG).



**ArcGIS**







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