Montgomery County, PA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

true partnership
diversity, equity, inclusion
trauma-informed
Throughout 2021, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) was challenged to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic while still working together with people and organizations across our County to make a positive difference in the lives of those we serve.

Accomplishments covered in the report include the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and efforts by 9 program offices and 5 strategic offices to carry out the vision of residents living healthy, safe, and connected lives.

Penny Lafferty
INTERIM DIRECTOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Increased the number of kinship care providers.

Despite the pandemic, the Office of Children and Youth continued foster care recruitment efforts.

Created a specialized investigative unit in Norristown, increasing our capacity to meet work demands.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Expanded access to Navicates via the “TeleNavicate” service. This service was more broadly promoted as an additional method of contacting and receiving “in-person” assistance from a Navicate.

Partnered with Legal Aide of SE PA to conduct a virtual ID Clinic where residents were able to obtain a free replacement photo ID, birth certificates, or Social Security cards and receive Navicate assistance with other resources. This virtual event increased access for those who were working, lacked transportation, or were caring for their family.

Partnered with HHS offices to streamline referrals using the County’s intake database. This improved residents’ customer service experience by expediting connection to additional HHS services and having a platform through which HHS services and staff can collaborate more efficiently.
COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Implemented a fruit and vegetable prescription program at Lansdale Children’s Health Clinic where health care providers wrote a prescription voucher for food insecure eligible individuals to receive fruits and vegetables from Living Hope Farm.

Increased the number of participants in the Montco Trail Challenge by 640 individuals and 137 dogs in 2021.

Created the Norristown Sprouts Community Garden at Eisenhower Science and Technology Leadership Academy to primarily serve Norristown residents to bring access to nutritious foods.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL

Effectively partnered with the Office of Mental Health to collect data to report the progress made towards the goals in the integrated strategic prevention plan.

Made great strides in offering opportunities for public school districts to expand their data-driven decision-making processes around youth mental health and substance use prevention by creating an infographics web page that individuals and providers can access.

Increased the funding for Case Management Services to include the continued work with Adult Probation Office and the prison.
EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

Implemented the Health & Safety Regional Task Force to support early learning providers during COVID and beyond. The Task Force coordinated a direct line of communication between early learning providers and the Office of Public Health.

Provided more than $1,000,000.00 worth of Personal Protective Equipment for early learning providers in Montgomery County in 2021 to help providers and families control and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Assisted early learning programs in Montgomery County improve the quality of their programs to increase their Keystone STAR level. Twenty-one (21) early learning programs increased their STAR levels in 2021.

The Montgomery County Court Child Care Center maintains the highest rating of a STAR 4 program in the Keystone STARS Quality Rating and Improvement System.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Involved in the release of a new County-wide financial system on May 10, 2021. This system allows for a more comprehensive management of tracking and reporting grants. The new app will improve compliance of the grants received. There is a component within the financial system to support the execution and tracking of contracts related to grants.

Upon completion of the State’s audit of the HHS personnel records, the records were found to be in impeccable order. The transition from paper files to electronic files allowed for a smooth and seamless process.

The HHS Contracting team is executing contracts through DocuSign in conjunction with Purchasing and the Solicitor’s Office. The expectation is to improve the turnaround time for contracts while maintaining records in electronic form.
From 2014 to mid-2021, under the partnership of Your Way Home, exited 3,755 households from homelessness to permanent housing (6,826 people).

Under the partnership of Your Way Home, oversaw the distribution of over $40 million in the Emergency Rent & Utility Coalition (ERUC) program to over 4,000 households. Assistance was provided in the form of emergency rent or utility to people economically impacted by COVID-19.

In partnership with Montgomery County Commerce Department and Montgomery County Planning Department, launched the Homes For All initiative, a collaborative & multi-purpose project to ensure that everyone who lives, works, learns and invests in Montgomery County has equal opportunity to live in an affordable home and a thriving community.

Facilitated three Multi-Faith Coalition member conferences in June, October, and November 2021. The Office of Integrative Services was also key in helping develop the coalition leadership team in partnership with tbdNOW LLC.
MANAGED CARE SOLUTIONS

Launched a new initiative, Community Based Care Management Program, to increase focus on integrated, whole-person care through assessment of social determinants of health (finances, food, clothing, housing, childcare, transportation, employment, utilities) and connection to resources to meet the identified needs. The core of the program is creating new partnerships between community-based organizations and behavioral health programs that link social needs with treatment.

Was awarded $134,820 in 2021 for meeting performance standards (improvement in rate of inpatient readmissions and reduced the use of Emergency Rooms) under the Integrative Care Program. Goal: Create and improve integration and coordination of care between behavioral and physical health services.

Earned reinvestment funds to support gaps in the service system, test new innovative treatment approaches, address social determinants of health, and develop cost-effective alternatives to traditional services that may create cost offsets for higher levels of service.

MENTAL HEALTH/DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES/EARLY INTERVENTION

Worked to divert individuals with Developmental Disabilities from the Criminal Justice system by participating in a statewide workgroup, providing information to law enforcement through the Police School at Montgomery County Emergency Service increasing knowledge and connection with the Public Defender and Criminal Justice partners.

In collaboration with Drug and Alcohol, the offices were awarded a federal grant for school violence prevention from the Bureau of Justice Administration (BJA STOP School Violence Prevention and Mental Health Training Program) for $1,000,000.

Awarded $1,000,000 for fiscal year 2021/2022 to support the development of a Wellness Center at Montgomery County Community College.
**PERFORMANCE AND PLANNING**

Increased capacity for oversight of Health and Human Services contracted entities to include the monitoring of 140 agencies across program offices while simultaneously adopting new strategies to complete provider reviews virtually as COVID protocols were adopted.

Data analytics provided real-time information regarding COVID to the County, School Districts, and other entities to enable decision-making based on case counts, positivity rates and community spread.

Continued to build a framework for monitoring that reaches beyond compliance and service verification to provide a more holistic view of provider performance.

**PUBLIC HEALTH**

Through a collaboration with the school districts, OPH, and CHOP, over 17 districts implemented “Project ACE-IT”, which uses rapid COVID-19 antigen tests to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 within schools through “Assurance Testing” and “Symptomatic Testing”.

In collaboration with the Montgomery County Immunization Coalition and its network of over 71 community organizations worked to increase vaccine confidence resulted in:

- # Inspections and/or investigations at 3,947 licensed food facilities: 6,740
- # COVID-19 vaccine doses administered: 215,000
- # Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers: 476
- # Hours provided by MRC volunteers: 9,826
SENIOR SERVICES

3,000+

# of seniors who successfully registered through the new program where volunteers register and schedule COVID-19 vaccinations for seniors without internet access. Partnerships were established with several non-profits and volunteers trained to address this need.

In collaboration with the Office of Drug and Alcohol, provided education on alternatives for pain management to combat opioid addiction.

Implemented an internal volunteer program to assist in providing services that are difficult to obtain or costly to low-income seniors, as well as to supplement ongoing grant-funded programming. Collaborating with partners who focus on volunteer recruitment and placement. This program creates a meaningful experience for seniors as they enter retirement, continuing to utilize their skills.

VETERAN AFFAIRS

# of veteran community members in critical need who were assisted by the multi-disciplinary team, commonly referred to as Tough Customer Talk. This team consists of over 25 county, state, and federal agencies as well as non-governmental organizations such as veteran organizations.

100+

Attained a record 1,379 new clients and processed a record 1,091 veterans benefits claims that yielded $1,094,000.00 to residents this past year.

100+

# of veteran community members in critical need who were assisted by the multi-disciplinary team, commonly referred to as Tough Customer Talk. This team consists of over 25 county, state, and federal agencies as well as non-governmental organizations such as veteran organizations.

798

# shuttle van trips

350

# customers

Despite the use of telemedicine for routine medical appointments, there was an increase in demand and many new clients needing life-supporting care physical and mental health care that could not be accomplished with telehealth.