The Health Care Agency provides a system which ensures access to quality, cost-effective, culturally-sensitive health care for all, especially the most vulnerable members of our community. This access is provided by over 3,000 extraordinarily talented and caring people who embody the mission of the Health Care Agency.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Michael Powers

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As the Director of the Health Care Agency I believe one of our greatest assets is our employees. With a workforce of over 3,000 people, they work to provide excellent service and compassionate health care to everyone who walks through our door.

Tending to the complex needs of our community, be it our hospitals, clinics, Public Health Department, Behavioral Health Department, Animal Services and Medical Examiner, we touch virtually everyone in our beautiful county.

The pages that follow will give you a snapshot of some of the accomplishments we’ve made in a twelve month period. But these things offer only a small glimpse at the work that’s done each day by our caring staff. I hope you will enjoy learning how the Health Care Agency has been working to ensure all in our county have access to health care and education in our beautiful and diverse community.

Johnson K. Gill
Director
Ventura County Medical Center/Santa Paula Hospital

Ventura County Medical Center (VCMC) is a 180-bed hospital providing high-quality, compassionate health care to residents throughout Ventura County. Santa Paula Hospital has 49 beds and is located in the beautiful Santa Clara Valley.

The North Tower at VCMC replaced buildings constructed in 1919 and 1954, and provides a state-of-the-art health care facility for the residents of Ventura County.

The North Tower features 128 acute care hospital beds. In late August 2017, renovations began in the Fainer Tower of VCMC. Once completed the 52 acute care beds will return to service and bring VCMC back to its original 180-patient occupancy capacity. Within the North Tower are eight expansive operating rooms, ranging in size from 650 square feet to 1,200 square feet each. Two Interventional Radiology suites are housed within the Surgery Department. The availability of such high-tech care was the focus of the many physicians, clinical staff, engineers and architects that were involved in the design and selection process for the new facility.

Critical care was the focus of the North Tower which houses 28 Adult Critical Care beds, 24 Neo-natal ICU beds, and eight Pediatric ICU beds.

The North Tower houses advanced Imaging equipment including a 3-Tesla MRI, a 128-slice CT Scanner, strategically located within the Emergency Department to enhance rapid diagnostic abilities within the Level 2 Trauma center. Critical care was the focus of the North Tower which houses 28 Adult Critical Care beds, 24 Neo-natal ICU beds, and eight Pediatric ICU beds. The Labor and Delivery (L&D) department has seven rooms licensed for Labor-Delivery-Recovery-Post Partum, allowing mom’s to have their entire birthing experience in one location. Within the L&D unit is a dedicated surgical suite ready for use when a caesarean section is needed. The emergency department has dedicated trauma and cardiac bays for the care of west county trauma patients.

In keeping the whole patient in mind, gardens and scenic pathways were integrated into the design of the new facility for the enjoyment of patients, visitors and staff alike. Nature and beach elements and colors are integrated within the interior and exterior of the new wing created specifically for the coastal community of Ventura.
In the 2016/2017 fiscal year, both Ventura County Medical Center and Santa Paula Hospital Emergency Departments experienced significant growth. In partnership with Seaside Emergency Associates, the ED has met this increased demand by expanding into the North Tower, hiring more clinicians and improving efficiency in the care we provide.

Several new initiatives have been designed to ensure the highest level of care. Among these include full-time, department-based case management, a patient call back system that reaches over 2,000 patients per month and a technological solution to ensure a warm hand off to primary care providers when urgent care follow-up is needed.

Ventura County Medical Center’s daVinci® Robotic Program began on September 11th, 2017. Since inception the surgeons have performed over 100 robotic procedures. Specialties include Bariatric, Colorectal, Urology, & General Surgery. Benefits of robotic surgery include reduced hospital stay, lower transfusions, less infections, fewer complications, less pain, and faster recovery.

The daVinci Surgical System features a magnified 3D high-definition vision system and tiny wristed instruments that bend and rotate far greater than the human hand. The daVinci Surgical System allows surgeons to operate through a few small incisions. It features a magnified 3D high-definition vision system and tiny wristed instruments that bend and rotate far greater than the human hand. As a result, daVinci enables the surgeon to operate with enhanced vision, precision and control. Ventura County Medical Center is the only hospital in Ventura County with this particular piece of equipment, providing another benefit to surgical patients.
Ambulatory Care is a network of primary care and specialty care medical practices located throughout nine cities in Ventura County.

Outpatient care is provided by a fully integrated system of primary and specialty care clinics in Ventura County. There are currently 43 clinic sites that provide primary care, specialty care, urgent care, outpatient rehabilitation services, and employee health services. Additional outpatient services include an outreach and education mobile unit, as well as clinical services at Oxnard College Health Center, California State University Channel Islands Student Health Center, Moorpark College Health Center and Ventura College Health Center. The clinic network is spread throughout nine communities in Ventura County, bringing healthcare to the residents of the County, providing greater than 500,000 patient visits annually. Outpatient care is provided at 43 clinic sites as follows: 22 primary care sites (including 19 Federally Qualified Health Care Centers), 11 specialty care sites, 8 urgent care sites, and 2 outpatient rehabilitation sites. Twenty-four of our clinics offer specialty care services.

Ambulatory care operates two mobile units that provide care to hard to reach populations.

In Fall 2017, Ambulatory Care participated in a Public Hospital Re-design and Incentives in Medi-Cal (PRIME) Program Report to the California Department of Health Care Services.

Ambulatory Care focused on areas in need, resulting in significant improvement. To address poor performance in controlling blood pressure, the team created interdisciplinary working groups, from administration to front-end staff, to come up with innovative solutions.

With more complete information available about our community, the team identified a significant health inequity in controlling blood pressure for Hispanic/Latino men without diabetes. Las Islas Family Medical Clinic received grant funding to open a hypertension clinic for outreach and care coordination to these identified members of our community, many of whom live in the Oxnard area. The clinic, which is tailored to the target population’s cultural and linguistic needs, is now open to patients.

Since the beginning of the calendar year, the PRIME Disparity Reduction team worked to increase the collection of demographic data for race, ethnicity, age, language, sexual orientation and gender identity (REAL/SOGI). Data completeness increased from 43.66% to 94.49% (REAL) and 10.78% to 26.84% (SOGI).
In April 2017, the Ventura County Pediatric Oral Health Project launched dental services at the Pediatric Diagnostic Center (PDC), one of Ventura County Health Care Agency’s 19 Federally Qualified Health Center clinics.

The program started as an expansion grant to the Health Services and Resources Administration’s (HRSA) grant, awarded annually to the County of Ventura. PDC provides comprehensive pediatric services and recognizes the impact that poor oral health has on overall health. Services are offered to qualified low-income and homeless pediatric patients on Mondays and Fridays. Delayed care may further impact oral and overall health among county children by age five. The youngest and most vulnerable of the county’s residents are the ones who are most affected by this gap in services.

Oral health services provided at PDC clinic include:
1) preventive services: basic dental screenings, recommendations for preventive intervention, oral health hygiene instruction and education, oral prophylaxis, the application of fluorides, and the placement of dental sealants; and
2) other dental services to diagnose and treat disease, injury, or impairment: diagnostic X-rays, fillings, single unit crowns, non-surgical endodontics, extractions, and periodontal therapies.
Just five years ago the treatment for Hepatitis C, a viral infection that affects the liver, had few modalities to treat. With side-effects from these treatments ranging from thyroid dysfunction to cardiac complications, worsening depression and psychosis, combined with a very low success rate, not too many patients were signing up to be treated until it was often too late.

In 2016, patients with severe liver disease due to Hepatitis C, began to have new hope as medications with higher rates of cure than ever before became available. But navigating these waters of getting access to these medications appeared daunting to most clinicians.

The VCHCA had a number of challenges to address in order to successfully treat these patients. First was getting the word out, which wasn’t so difficult with the flood of commercials and information on social media and the internet. Getting the correct information though proved a bit difficult. Who could be treated, what the treatment was like, how long the therapy was, and how likely it was it would work, were but a few of the questions that came to many of the primary care clinicians seeing these patients in clinic. A flood of interest came, and with it even longer wait times to be seen for consultation. The only problem – there were only two clinics available, and wait times were even to nine months just for the consultation. And for some of those patients with very severe disease, that wait would mean a matter of survival.

In 2017 a program to improve this was launched and spearheaded by Drs. Tipu Khan and Kip Lyche. The plan was to take a look at the current system, evaluate for inefficiencies, and find ways to streamline the process, from screening to referral, from initial visit to treatment.

A team approach, including medical assistants, nurse case managers and pharmacists was implemented. Once perfected the second step was to replicate the process and put it into the hands of clinicians across the county.

Dr. Underwood found a perfect partner with Dr. Khan and the Ventura County Family Medicine Program. With a willingness to affect change and empower their residents, the faculty spent the time to adapt the program to their clinics and began treating patients.

Several clinics throughout the county of Ventura utilized these same algorithms and a team approach to care. With this tact, in little less than a year, the wait time for new consultations has gone from seven months to within three to four weeks with over a hundred patients having successfully been treated.

The second phase of this project is to improve screening modalities. With one in 30 baby-boomers infected with Hep C, and most not even knowing it, the focus needed to shift to detecting this highly prevalent disease. Through a collaboration with Ventura County Public Health Department, a robust screening plan is being developed to help detect and treat patients throughout Ventura County.
INSIGHTS: Juvenile Justice Collaborative Program. To better address the high acuity needs of Ventura County Probation youth with mental health issues, Behavioral Health partnered with the Probation Department, Juvenile Courts (Judges), District Attorney’s Office, Public Defenders Office, Office of Education and Public Health to develop an intensive collaborative services program that serves up to 30 youth per year. The program commenced operations in July 2017, with the primary objective of addressing the various issues that contributed to incarceration so as to prevent recidivism. Central to the program is ongoing inter-agency collaboration for each youth and their caregiver(s) to ensure a wraparound approach to service provision. The program is structured with phases and graduation incentives to promote participation and an ongoing sense of accomplishment and success. Progress reports are made to the Court on a routine basis with the presiding judge ultimately determining if the youth successfully completed the program. The program seeks to exemplify the powerful impact of agency inter-agency collaboration in serving high-needs youth.

Ventura County Behavioral Health in collaboration with Telecare opened the Horizon View Mental Health Rehabilitation Center (MHRC), a sub-acute inpatient facility located in Camarillo, CA. The new program is a 16-bed secure facility serving adults aged 18 and older. Comprehensive mental health and psychiatric treatment services are provided in a safe, welcoming inpatient environment for adults with serious mental illness. There is a fully staffed multi-disciplinary team of nurses, a psychiatrist, clinicians, peer specialists, and recovery specialists providing support 24 hours a day. The new facility is a recovery-oriented space that provides residents with a living room, an open café, an outdoor environment, and an inspiration studio for the program’s various activities. Residents also have access to their own private bedrooms and bathrooms.
To strengthen the continuum of crisis services to youth in Ventura County, VCBH partnered with the Seneca Family of Agencies to develop and launch a 4-bed youth Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) The David Holmboe Center, in December of 2016. The CSU is a licensed 23-hour, 59-minute residential facility designed to provide crisis observation, evaluation and stabilization services for youth who are at risk of psychiatric hospitalization due to high risk behaviors. The primary objective is address the acute symptoms and behaviors with short-term interventions to avoid hospitalization and return to the youth to home with community services and support. Within its first year of operation, the CSU has provided crisis stabilization services to over 400 youth. Of those youth, 60% avoided admission to a hospital.

Adjacent to the CSU is the VCBH COMPASS program, a licensed 6-bed (currently operating at 2 beds) short-term crisis stabilization unit, also operated by the Seneca Family of Agencies, that provides an opportunity to extend residential services to avoid psychiatric hospitalization. COMPASS began operations in March of 2017. The program is designed to provide voluntary treatment for youth who are not able to be stabilized within the ‘24-hour’ model. Services in this program can be provided up to 30 days, although the average length of stay is typically far less. The program provides intensive services for the youth and caregiver(s) including safety planning, therapeutic and psychiatric interventions, community linkages, and aftercare treatment, thus reducing the likelihood of recurring crisis situations and potential psychiatric hospitalization.
To thrive, everyone in our community needs to be given the opportunity to live a long, healthy life, regardless of background or socioeconomic status. Ventura County Public Health (VCPH) is committed to supporting environments that protect and promote the health and well-being of everyone in our county.

To learn more about how to improve the health of our community, VCPH began working with the 501c3 hospitals in Ventura County to collaborate on the Community Health Assessment (CHA) process in May of 2016. VCPH is required to complete a CHA every 5 years as part of its accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB); 501c3 hospitals are required to complete a CHA every 3 years to maintain their non-profit status.

The goal of the CHA is to identify the priority health issues within a community and then develop a community health improvement plan that outlines strategies to address those health issues. By working with area hospitals to share data, best practices, and strategies for improvement, VCPH has been able to streamline its approach to assessing community health and identify opportunities to partner with the hospitals and other organizations to work toward system changes that will impact the health of Ventura County. VCPH has been meeting with the hospitals on a quarterly basis and published its CHA in April of 2017 which includes 15 priority health issues. The CHA and a myriad of health-related data can be found at www.healthmattersinvc.org.

Due in part to the collaborative efforts of VCPH, in June 2017, the Hospital Association of Southern California (HASC) and the Public Health Alliance of Southern California launched a Communities Lifting Communities (CLC) Initiative, a partnership intended to reduce health disparities and improve community health across southern California. CLC will support existing and future collaborative CHAs with regional clusters of hospitals, public health departments and other community partners. VCPH is currently working to align its existing priorities with the CLC initiatives of diabetes prevention, improved birth outcomes, and homelessness to capitalize on this momentum to improve health outcomes for residents across the region.

Creating Healthy Communities
Priority 1: Increase Early Learning and Educational Attainment
Priority 2: Reduce the Percentage of Population Growing up in Poverty
Priority 3: Increase Affordable Housing in Clean, Safe Communities

Healthy Beginnings: Laying the Foundation for a Healthy Life.
Priority 4: Improve Maternal Health Prior to Pregnancy
Priority 5: Improve Childhood Physical and Mental Wellness
Priority 6: Reduce Childhood Trauma

Living Well: Helping People Achieve Optimal Health
Priority 7: Improve Adult Physical Health
Priority 8: Reduce Adult Substance Use
Priority 9: Improve Adult Mental Health

Older Adults and Aging: Maintaining Dignity and Independence
Priority 10: Improve Cancer Screening Rates
Priority 11: Improve Health and Wellness for the Medicare Population
Priority 12: Decrease Hospitalization During the End of Life

Redesigning the Health System: Efficient, Safe and Patient-Centered Care
Priority 13: Increase the Percentage of Residents with Access to Health Insurance
Priority 14: Increase Access to Primary Care
Priority 15: Reduce Preventable Hospitalizations
Emergency Medical Services

Massive bleeding from any cause, but particularly from an active shooter or explosive event, where a response by emergency providers may be delayed, can quickly result in death. Similar to instruction to the general public in performing CPR, the public must learn proper bleeding control techniques, including how to use their hands, dressings, and tourniquets. Victims can quickly die from uncontrolled bleeding, within five to 10 minutes. However, anyone at the scene can act as immediate responder to save lives, if they know what to do. The national “Stop the Bleed” campaign is designed to build resilience by better preparing the public to save lives by teaching basic actions to stop life-threatening bleeding following everyday emergencies and man-made and natural disasters. Medical advances made by military medicine and research in hemorrhage control during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, have been adapted for use in the homeland to the benefit of the general public.

Building on the success of the Rescue Task Force (RTF) program that was launched in 2013, and understanding that victims of violent incidents need rapid access to life-saving measures, members of Ventura County Emergency Medical Services Agency and Ventura County Fire Department began working on a local “Stop the Bleed” program in late 2016. The first phase of the trainings began in January 2017, and focused on training employees working for the County of Ventura. In FY 16-17, over 80 county employees were trained from various agencies. In addition to the training programs, specific “Stop the Bleed” first aid and medical equipment was deployed. Departments participating in the trainings received trauma kits for placement in county employee areas and 18 Public Access “Stop the Bleed” kits were installed in various public locations in Ventura County government buildings.

Ventura County EMS and Ventura County Fire personnel are committed to expanding the program in the future, with plans for additional public access kits and expanded training classes for county staff and other local jurisdictions. The goal with this program is to get as many people trained as possible, similar to the highly successful sidewalk CPR initiative that has been in operation for several years.

Ventura County Health Care Coalition (VCHCC) humbly accepted the 2017 Innovations Solutions Award from the California Department of Public Health Emergency Preparedness Office (CDPH EPO) and the California Emergency Medical Services Authority for its Emergency Plan Template, a “Disaster Readiness for Vulnerable Populations” seminar, and trainings to educate our partners.

Following a visit from the Federal Project Officer with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, VCHCC was revered as “one of the higher functioning coalitions in the entire country.” FY16-17 was a successful year of growth for VCHCC, primarily as a result of the hard work of people and organizations that we serve. We are proud to be associated with this strong, caring community.
Ventura County Animal Services (VCAS) operates two shelters within the county. The main shelter in Camarillo houses over 400 pets and the administrative offices. Our smaller facility in Simi Valley houses nearly 40 pets at a time. Each year, Ventura County Animal Services cares for more than 10,000 animals. Our goal is to reunite lost pets with their owners and find life-long homes for as many animals as possible, while providing proper care during their stay.

Ventura County Animal Services provides contract services for eight cities within our community: Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Simi Valley and Ventura. VCAS enforces local ordinances and state laws within our service areas, including animal cruelty/neglect investigations, leash law compliance, rabies suppression efforts and providing medical care for sick and injured animals.

The Simi Valley Animal Shelter received new kennels in 2017. The project at the adoption center, run by Ventura County Animal Services, is the latest in a series of upgrades at the site in east county. The two week project replaced 26 older kennels at the shelter. The $96,000 project was paid for out of a $500,000 gift to Animal Services for fiscal year 2015/16.

A major effort by Animal Services was responding to an eviction order in the city of Fillmore. A resident had been hoarding 37 cats, and while the residence was cluttered, the cats were in relatively good health, according to VCAS veterinarian Heather Skogerson. Animal Services assisted the Sheriff’s Office with removing a majority of the cats.

A dog named Lucky was reunited with his owner of 10 years. Lucky had been microchipped by his original owner but when he went missing he was taken in by another family. For 10 years Lucky stayed with the new family, but when he got out again he ended up at Animal Services, where he was scanned for a microchip. Because his microchip was registered to his original owner, they were reunited. Never in the history of Ventura County Animal Services have an owner and pet been reunited after that length of time.
The Medical Examiner’s Office (MEO) onboarded a new Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Christopher Young in 2017. Dr. Young came to Ventura County from the Oregon State Medical Examiner’s Office where he served as Deputy State Medical Examiner providing forensic pathology services to the State of Oregon for 13 years. During this same period, he also provided services for the Alaska State Medical Examiner’s Office when the State of Alaska was without a forensic pathologist.

Dr. Young is certified in Anatomic and Forensic Pathology by the American Board of Pathology and has provided forensic training to medical students, physician residents, detectives and medicolegal death investigators.

The MEO collaborated with Behavioral Health to publish data concerning drug-related deaths from 2008 to 2014. This data will play a pivotal role in developing strategies to address the prescription drug and heroin epidemic.

The MEO categorized and processed unidentified human remains and entered the information on the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NAMUS) website. This website is a powerful tool used across the country by medical examiners, law enforcement and the general public to identify decedents and missing persons.

Three deputy medical examiner investigators, Mike Tellez, James Baroni and Brian Applegate, became ABMDI-certified. The American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) is a voluntary national, not-for-profit, independent professional certification board that has been established to promote the highest standards of practice for medicolegal death investigators.

YEAR 2017

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Annual County Deaths 5,663
County Population 860,467
Established in 1993, the Ventura County Health Care plan (VCHCP) was developed as a practical and cost-effective alternative to providing health care services to county employees and their dependents. In 1996, VCHCP was licensed as a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) under the Knox-Keane Act of 1975.

The Plan provides significant financial benefits to both the County of Ventura and participants of its many programs. By keeping its rates as low as possible, it ensures that county employees and contracted providers, will receive those services at a competitive rate.

By keeping administrative costs and costs not directly related to patient care low, the Plan offers quality health care services for subscribers and their dependents.

The Ventura County Health Care Plan received a Challenge Award from the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) in December of 2017. CSAC awards recognize the innovative and creative spirit of California county governments as they find new, effective and cost saving ways to provide program and services to their community.

The Ventura County Health Care Plan received the award for its Health Insurance and Eligibility application. This desktop eligibility tool allows for real time eligibility check for members. This year there were 288 entries for the challenge awards and VCHCP was one of 16 recipients.

In Pursuit of Better Health? We Can Help You Get There. The Plan has over 750 members enrolled in its Diabetes Disease Management Program. As a result of this robust health coaching program, members of the program have experienced decreased a1c results, decreased risk, and higher adherence to a1c testing.

Members can take advantage of our Diabetes disease management by contacting our Medical Services team at (805) 981-6600.

Expenditure Categories: FY 2013-2014

- Ancillary - 23%
- Administration - 14%
- Physicians - 23%
- Pharmaceuticals - 20%
- Hospital - 20%
HCFVC is the exclusive public benefit non-profit foundation benefitting the Ventura County Health Care Agency (HCA) and particularly its hospitals, Ventura County Medical Center and Santa Paula Hospital. Zero administration fee is taken from WeGive county employee tax deductible donations and 100% of the proceeds get reinvested locally in your HCA.

Last year, WeGive dollars funded the following:

**YOUTH/EDUCATION:** Summer Student Scholars Program – Six local undergraduate students exploring careers in healthcare shadowed physicians for eight weeks. Each student creates a deliverable with value-based research or with a Quality Improvement project.

**PEDIATRICS:** Pediatric Transilluminator Vein Finder – this portable medical equipment allows our medical professionals to locate hard-to-reach veins in a child.

**PEDIATRIC NEO-NATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT:** Breast Milk Warmers – Our tiniest patients have small stomachs and need only small amounts of breast milk. These quad warmers insure that the breast milk is thawed properly, and our babies get mothers milk even when she may not be able to nurse.

**OBSTETRICS:** Boppy Breast Feeding pillows – VCMC is designated a baby-friendly hospital and supports women by improving breastfeeding success. This ingenious pillow is designed to foster a positive breast feeding experience.

**OPIOID CRISIS:** Radio Frequency Ablation: Ablation treatment cauterizes nerves in the back, ultimately reducing the need for opioids in the treatment of pain.

**ONCOLOGY/BREAST CANCER:** Lymph Node Seeker - Ventura County Health Care Agency has the county’s only oncological surgeon, Dr. Shawn Steen. This medical device is effective in locating possible cancer-ridden nodes that may need to be removed.

**REHABILITATION:** ICU Chairs – These chairs elevate a person from a sitting to standing position after surgery to help the patient become mobile with less pain when standing.

**LABORATORY/THOMAS FIRE & FLU EPIDEMIC:** Two Cepheid modules were purchased in response to the poor air quality and flu outbreak to process lab test faster for our physician in Communicable Diseases. Rapid response is imperative when we have a natural disaster or an influenza.

To learn about giving or planned giving, please email Amy.Towner@ventura.org or visit www.hcfvc.org.