



2020 North Carolina
GlaxoSmithKline Foundation
Child Health Recognition
Award Nominations
and Award Recipients

2020 Child Health Recognition Award Recipients

Gayle Bridges Harris

Durham County Department of Public Health

Adonna Simpson Lewis

Wake County Human Services

Tara Blackley, MA, MPH, MBA

Durham County Department of Public Health

Cabarrus Health Alliance

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program

Cleveland County Public Health Center Dental Clinic

Stanly County Health Department

Dental Clinic

Thank you to our 2020 Selection Committee Members!

Gayle B Harris

2020 Award Recipient

Durham County Department of Public Health

Gayle Harris' career began in 1972 as the 2nd African American student to graduate from Duke University School of Nursing. She began working at Durham County Health Department as a public health nurse and recently retired as the Public Health Director. She is lauded as a skilled and resourceful community builder, a leader, a strategic thinker while working directly with patients, or in a leadership role. She has helped bring health care to a county where some of the finest medical expertise and resources are located in the world, but county residents struggle with socioeconomic inequities, poverty, and high rates of chronic disease. She has played an instrumental role in advancing the culture of health in Durham County and across North Carolina.

Tara Blackley, MA, MPHS, MBA@ 2020 Award Recipient

Durham County Department of Public Health

Public Health Staff Nominee

Tara Blackley took on the task to ensure Durham county's strategies for COVID-19 prevention and mitigation were data driven and included the youngest residents. She led the health department's efforts to develop a strong surveillance team for case investigation and daily calls of close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases. She led efforts to work with the myriad of community partners to create a comprehensive data hub available to all community stakeholders, and an on-going free community COVID-19 testing site. Ensuring testing sites were prepared to test infants, small children and their parents with a short wait time to secure an appointment was a priority. At the time of the nomination submission, 815 of the 5568 (15%) cases of COVID in Durham County were under the age of 18 years. Her dedication under pressure is admired by her colleagues.

Adonna Simpson Lewis

2020 Award Recipient

Public Health Educator, Wake County Human Services

Individual Recognition Nominee

The North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women presently has the largest female incarcerated population of women in NC. In 2018, over 256 pregnant women were admitted to the prison, and Adonna had programs in place to work with them. Her efforts provide pregnant incarcerated women with appropriate nutrition while incarcerated. In 1989 Adonna developed and began providing Prenatal, Childbirth and Parenting Education for the expectant moms. She developed educational materials for these women supporting labor, breathing patterns, medications used during birth, and other material. She places a strong emphasis on infant development so the mothers will have a better understanding of what to expect at each crucial milestone when they communicate with their child's guardian - if allowed. Adonna has truly impacted this population, working over 30 years to advocate for these women and their babies.

Cabarrus Health Alliance (The Public Health Authority of Cabarrus County)

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program

Local Health Department Nomination

Retaining children that need nutrition support in the WIC program as they age can be crucial to their healthy development. The WIC program is considered the nation's premier public health nutrition program for low-income women and children. Common barriers to WIC participation include long wait times, cumbersome scheduling processes, and overall customer satisfaction. These are no longer concerns at Cabarrus Health Alliance's WIC offices. A collaborative effort led to the creation of an online appointment scheduling (OAS)/queue management tool specifically adapted to the WIC content. Using this new tool the participants have been retained and the program has grown, meeting the nutritional needs of an average of 300 new mothers and their children – this program is changing the lives of Cabarrus County citizens.

Cleveland County Public Health Center Dental Clinic

2020 Award Recipient

Local Health Department Nomination

For some individuals, seeking dental care over other essential needs such as groceries, health care and transportation is too great a challenge to overcome. Concern for area residents led a group of stakeholders to come together, identify issues and brainstorm solutions. Poor access to dental care, and students needing assistance with accessing dental care were areas of need. The health department made it happen, as they partnered with the school system and Graham's social worker to ensure that all students with emergent dental care receive the care they need. This assisted parents to as well as the students. The Dental Clinic staff is a group of caring professionals who strongly believe in the importance of dental health and its ability to positively or negatively impact the life of a child.

Stanly County Health Department Dental Clinic

2020 Award Recipient

Local Health Department Nomination

The Dental Clinic was established at the Stanly County Health Department in 2002 to serve children, ages 0-19 years old. The program's primary focus was to serve low income and special needs children in a clinical setting. In 2017, the program expanded to include children covered by private dental insurance. In 2005 the operating room (OR) program was started. The OR program was established to provide services for children with extensive dental needs who were unable to tolerate in-office dental treatment. The focus of the dental program has expanded to provide a school-based dental sealants program. The Stanly County Dental Clinic also serves as a training location for students in dental profession programs (dentists, dental hygienists and dental assistants).

Alexander County Health Department Behavioral Health Program

Local Health Department Nomination

Securing a Behavioral Health Program that meets the needs of the community isn't easy but it is possible and will make a difference. A plan was implemented and funding for an in-house behavioral health program became a reality in Alexander County. Working to combine their health clinic with mental health services allowed for a more comprehensive health approach. Program policies and protocols were established and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker has been recruited. Treatment for numerous patients has been established, and two patients reported that this program helped save their lives. This Behavioral Health Program is changing lives in Alexander County.

Lindsay Gates, BSN, RN

Craven County Public Health Department

Public Health Staff Nominee

Lindsay Gates is known as a valuable team member of the Craven County Community Health Center. She shows great compassion and initiative in helping the patients meet and improve their health care goals. She is busy promoting preventative health care, disease screenings for clients and even provided first aid teaching to local Boy Scout troops. She encourages clients and family of all ages to invest in their health with vaccination reminders, preventative screening programs, and disease management. She has initiated the clinic's expansion of meningitis vaccines to reach more of the qualifying community. Results show an increase of clients who meet North Carolina's benchmark criteria to 99% (7/1/2020) from 67% (07/01/2015). Her colleagues applaud her efforts.

Duplin County Health Department Dental Care

Local Health Department Nomination

Duplin County is a great place to live in many ways, but it is one of North Carolina's health care shortage areas. When Tracey Simmons-Kornegay became the Health Director, she worked to find ways to provide services to decrease this shortage. Dental care became one priority and working to collaborate with other agencies; the NC Oral Health Section programs in the county, additional local dentists and the ECU School of Dentistry, the health department is providing some new routes for dental care to Duplin County residents. A collaborative partnership was established to get a mobile dental unit to come to the health department on a regular rotation. This service has provided dental care to residents who otherwise would have never seen a dentist.

Tracey Simmons-Kornegay

Duplin County Health Department

Health director Tracey Simmons-Kornegay has been described as a “fireball” by her colleagues for trying to find ways to combat health care issues in the county. She has been extremely supportive of the NC Oral Health Section programs in the county, and she has brainstormed with local dentists and the ECU School of Dentistry on ways to get more dental care for Duplin County residents. She partnered with agencies to get their mobile dental unit to come to the health department on a regular rotation. She is reaching and building relationships to provide needed services for children in the county. Duplin County is a great place to live and is fortunate to have Tracey working for its citizens.

Foothills Health District

Foothills Health District serves Rutherford and McDowell counties in Western North Carolina. Offering a long list of services to the underserved and under-insured families in these rural communities, they support child health in a variety of ways. Parent education, nutrition, well child checks, school health, newborn screening, developmental screening, early intervention, and other programs are provided by staff. Working to build healthy communities by preventing disease, promoting health behaviors, and protecting their most vulnerable residents from unsafe conditions is at the heart of their work. They are proud that the overall life expectancy at birth is lower in both counties than the average expectancy in Western North Carolina and in North Carolina.

Guilford County DHHS Public Health Division Child Care Health Consultants

Local Health Department Nomination

Child Care Health Consultants have the critical responsibility of ensuring the health and safety of children in childcare settings. Guilford County has the oldest program in the state and employs Registered Nurses to work closely with all licensed childcare facilities. Guilford County CCHC program has prided itself to be an example to other programs in the state and continues to be proactive in advancing their program to meet the needs of childcare staff, parents, and children. In the last year, the CCHC program focused on developing an electronic records management system to improve internal and external efficiency. It was necessary to create a system to provide accurate and complete information about all CCHC activities and enables quick access to data when needed.

Haywood County HHS, Public Health Car Seat Program & Pack and Play Program

Two programs are at the heart of Haywood County promoting prenatal care and ensuring healthier beginnings for infants. The staff at the Family Planning, Prenatal, OBCM, and CC4C programs wrote and received a grant to incentivize prenatal care with professionally installed, free, 3-in-1 car seats. Pregnant women receiving Medicaid participate and receive care. After attending eight prenatal appointments and at least one after 32 weeks, as well as a postpartum appointment, the mom-to-be is “awarded” a car seat. By incentivizing prenatal care the program ensures healthy beginnings for infants. An infant death related to co-sleeping occurred, and in an effort to reduce the number of co-sleeping deaths the department applied for and received a grant to purchase 90 Pack-and-Plays to provide safe infant sleep spaces to any family in need.

Marianna Daly, MD

Madison County Health Department

Individual Recognition Nominee

As a primary care physician for the past 32 years, Dr. Marianna Daly, has strived to meet the needs of Madison County. She came to the small rural county in 1988 and fell in love with the people and the culture. Her innovative initiatives have repeatedly benefited our county residents and their communities. She has a unique ability to connect with patients on a personal level. She has been a mentor to dozens of new residents, other physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses and others teaching them the issues involved with providing healthcare in a rural region. Dr. Daly's colleagues know she is an extraordinary person and truly epitomizes public health at its best.

Mecklenburg County Health Department Big Shots & Exclusion Clinics

Lowering the risk of vaccine preventable diseases (VPD) is best achieved through children receiving the required childhood and adolescent vaccines. The department provides immunization services, as well as education, support and consultation to families, programs, and schools to achieve childhood and adolescent immunization compliance. To improve access to immunization services, during the late summer or early fall of each year, MCPH holds special mass clinic opportunities well known as “Big Shots and Exclusion Clinics”, for Mecklenburg County school-aged children to receive the necessary vaccinations to prevent the risk of VPD and enable students to continue attending school without a break in attendance due to failure to obtain the required school vaccinations.

New Hanover County Health and Human Services Child Care Program

The Child Care program staff is assisting with the COVID-19 outbreak and is offering necessary trainings for child care educators and promoting activities for children, such as Yoga/Movement and hand washing. In addition, flu shots and child lead testing were performed on site, at some centers. These activities are assisting centers remaining open during COVID-19, help teachers receive necessary education, improve hand washing and sanitation practices, promote child health, and meet the needs of their community. The Child Care Program works to reduce the risk of illness and harm to children, promote optimal health in child care centers, and to increase the capacity of community child care facilities to provide a safe and healthy environment. Services are provided to regulated child care centers/homes in New Hanover County.

New Hanover County Health and Human Services Mobile Dental Unit

Local Health Department Nomination

The New Hanover County Mobile Dental Unit was established in 2006 after research and collaboration among community partners identified a significant number of children without dental homes or reliable access to consistent dental services. The need for dental care persists as many children often lack realistic access to care due to transportation challenges and/or their family's inability to secure care in a private provider setting. They serve children with Medicaid, NC Health Choice, or no insurance. Although the area has dental providers, they have limited providers in New Hanover and Brunswick Counties that accept adequate numbers of patients in these programs. The best way to reach these children was with a mobile dental unit at their schools. The Mobile Dental Unit is serving the children with Medicaid, Health Choice or no insurance in New Hanover and Brunswick Counties.

Onslow County Health Department Communicable Disease Division - Immunization Clinic Staff

Local Health Department Nomination

The Saturday Back to School Immunization Outreach Initiative was born out of necessity. During the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and the uncertainty around how and when school would be re-starting the issue of how to administer vaccines to students was a concern. The staff offered Saturday clinics for Tdap, Meningococcal, and HPV; from 10AM to 2PM each month. This program is decreasing suspension rates, increasing vaccination rates, preventing cancer and bringing down barriers for at-risk, underserved and vulnerable children! The program benefits parents, who could not take time off during the week, the students, local schools and the community.

Richmond County Health Department

REACH (Redefining and Empowering Adolescent and Community Health)

Local Health Department Nomination

Richmond County Health Department celebrates an eight percent reduction in the latest statistics for teen pregnancy due to the REACH program (Redefining and Empowering Adolescent and Community Health). Parenting can be difficult at any age, but it can be particularly challenging for teen parents. Children of teen parents often face risks such as challenges in education, behavior, and health outcomes over the course of their lives. The Richmond County Health Department, in response to the historical high teen pregnancy rates and the high rates of children born in poverty, initiated the REACH program in collaboration with the Richmond County School system began teaching teen reproductive health to ninth and eighth-grade classes in the 2016-2017 school year. Richmond County is busy at work educating teens about reproductive health.

Transylvania Public Health Healthy Smiles Dental Project

Local Health Department Nomination

The dental program is designed for early childhood and elementary-aged children in Transylvania County. They provide dental education, dental screenings and access to dental care for uninsured and Medicaid-eligible children from birth to twelve years of age. Staff visits the children while they are at school eliminating many challenges that parents may have to accessing dental care for their children (i.e. cost, transportation, understanding of existing dental practices, etc.) Healthy Smiles is coordinated by a public health dental hygienist employed by Transylvania Public Health. This program offers a unique, comprehensive approach to oral hygiene care through prevention and treatment. It is the only dental program currently offered in Transylvania County Schools/childcare centers. Last year, approximately 2200 children received a free dental screening and dental education with take-home brushing supplies. During the 2019-20 school year, 75% of the county's first-fifth graders rinsed weekly.