

# OUTSTANDING GOVERNMENT SERVICE

## NC COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM

### Department of Health and Human Services

Since March 2020, COVID-19 has increased the workload of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) tenfold. Working in a vast scope of roles, 164 individuals are recognized for being vital to the success of DHHS' response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These individuals were responsible for creating the state's system for COVID-19 testing; public reporting on millions of data points; responding to thousands of press and public requests; partnering with hundreds of stakeholder organizations; distributing millions of vaccine doses; creating dozens of communications campaigns; supporting hospitals and long term care facilities in surge preparations; providing help buying groceries to more than one million North Carolina children; implementing emergency child care support for essential workers; supporting county Departments of Social Services and Local Health Departments in their pandemic response; creating Medicaid policy changes to support clinical needs; expediting procurement of many resources and vendors; drafting of executive orders; and other actions taken to inform and protect North Carolinians.

The need for comprehensive data led to the creation of North Carolina's online COVID-19 dashboards. There are eight public-facing dashboards and 17 downloadable datasets that are updated daily or weekly. These dashboards have been visited by more than 12.5 million users.

This team remained steadfast in monitoring and applying the evolving scientific knowledge about COVID-19, adapting and tailoring their response as new information came to light. With a focus on equity, they prioritized building trust and support for marginalized, high-risk communities across the state. Thanks to the tireless efforts of DHHS, North Carolina was nationally recognized as a leader in vaccination efforts for the 65 and over population as well as its efforts for equitable access to vaccines. They were also recognized as a national leader for their commitment to collecting, using and sharing data to increase vaccine equity. Additionally, North Carolina was one of the eight jurisdictions to first join the CDC's National Wastewater Surveillance System, a key indicator of community infection rates as more individuals shifted to confidential, at-home testing.



More than 65 million pieces of personal protective equipment have been distributed and more than 20 million tests have been administered statewide. The COVID-19 response team worked evenings, weekends and holidays to lead the charge for the safety of all North Carolinians. The State of North Carolina is grateful for the valiant service of these 164 individuals and the Department of Health and Human Services.