



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ROY COOPER  
GOVERNOR

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH  
SECRETARY

September 28, 2021

Since 2017, NCDHHS has focused on “buying health” for the residents of North Carolina. In 2021, we continue this focus as we respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, build an optimal Medicaid program, improve early childhood health, safety, and education, combat the opioid crisis and ensure equitable access to health resources. Key to our success across these interconnected challenges involves collecting and utilizing high-quality integrated data to drive decision making.

In 2019, we created the DHHS Data Office, under the leadership of Chief Data Officer Jessie Tenenbaum. As outlined in and the [NCDHHS Data Strategy](#), their work has focused on building strong data governance, improving data quality, and working in tandem with data infrastructure improvements to improve data access and use across NCDHHS and with our strategic partners.

The [NCDHHS Data Sharing Guidebook](#) is now available to support data sharing among NCDHHS Divisions and Offices as well as with Strategic Partners of DHHS.

This Guidebook:

- Establishes clear pathways for data sharing and integration, for requestors and data owners
- Establishes a common legal framework for data sharing and integration across NCDHHS
- Supports data use that leads to improved data quality, insights, and improvements
- Clarifies processes to reduce burden on staff requesting and granting access to data, increase efficiencies, and ensure privacy and security safeguards

I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the Guidebook, discuss among your teams, follow the processes outlined, and contact the Data Office with any questions or feedback. This is a process document, not a policy, and with your support the Data Office will be making process improvements as we facilitate data sharing that allows NCDHHS to more effectively serve our residents.

Data can only be used as a strategic asset if it is shared legally and ethically, and we are confident that the NCDHHS Data Sharing Guidebook provides needed clarity to ensure that data access and use best serves the operations of NCDHHS and the residents of NC.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mandy K. Cohen".

Mandy K. Cohen, MD, MPH  
Secretary