

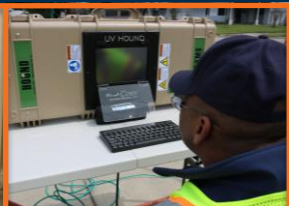


HOUSTON HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

Service Delivery Committee Presentation

Theresa Tran, MD, MBA, FACEP
Director

April 29, 2026



Mission



The Houston Health Department (HHD) is a full-service health department with 1,222 employees and a \$179.5 million budget. Our mission is to work in partnership with the community to promote and protect the health and well-being of Houstonians and the environment in which they live. We provide core public health and human services to fulfill our vision of self-sufficient individuals and families in safe and healthy communities. HHD is the first local health department in Texas and the second largest department in the nation to achieve public health accreditation. We are a national leader in public health best practices and policies.



Beyond City Limits



We serve the 2.3 million residents in the city of Houston. Our scope and impact reaches beyond the city limits and extends into Harris County's population of 4.7 million people through our Harris County Area Agency on Aging, immunization strategies and HIV-STD surveillance. In addition, our laboratory serves a 17-county region.



What is Public Health?

Public health promotes and protects the health of people and the communities where they live, learn, work and play.

Prevents illness and injury to shape health outcomes.

Prevent

Promotes the health and wellness of Houstonians.

Promote

Protects the community where they live, learn, work and play.

Protect



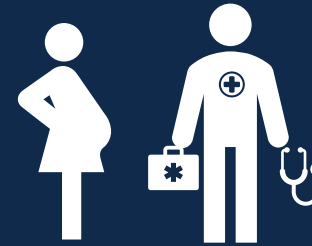
Collaborating Across Sectors for Improved Health Outcomes

Public Health



Population • Disease Prevention
Health Promotion • Interventions
(environmental, human behavior)
Government (some private)

Healthcare



Individual • Diagnosis • Treatment
Interventions (medical care)
Private (some public)





Local Public Health Core Services

Disease/Illness Prevention

Immunization, surveillance & treatment, reporting, regulatory services

Infrastructure

Maintain local offices, workforce, business functions, asset to the community

Health Promotion

Community benefit, chronic disease, women & children, seniors



Foundational Areas of Public Health Capabilities

Public Health Accreditation Board's (PHAB) Foundational Capabilities are the cross-cutting skills and capacities needed to support public health protection and services.

Capabilities include:

- Assessment & Surveillance
- Policy Development & Support
- Community Partnership and Development
- Accountability and Performance Management
- Equity
- Emerging Preparedness and Response
- Organizational Competencies
- Communications



About Us



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OUR STRENGTHS

Building collaborative relationships and engaging the community.

Organizing and implementing large scale events.

Connecting and developing trust with people face to face.

Innovative strategies/Leveraging resources.

Public health leadership at the local, state, and national level.

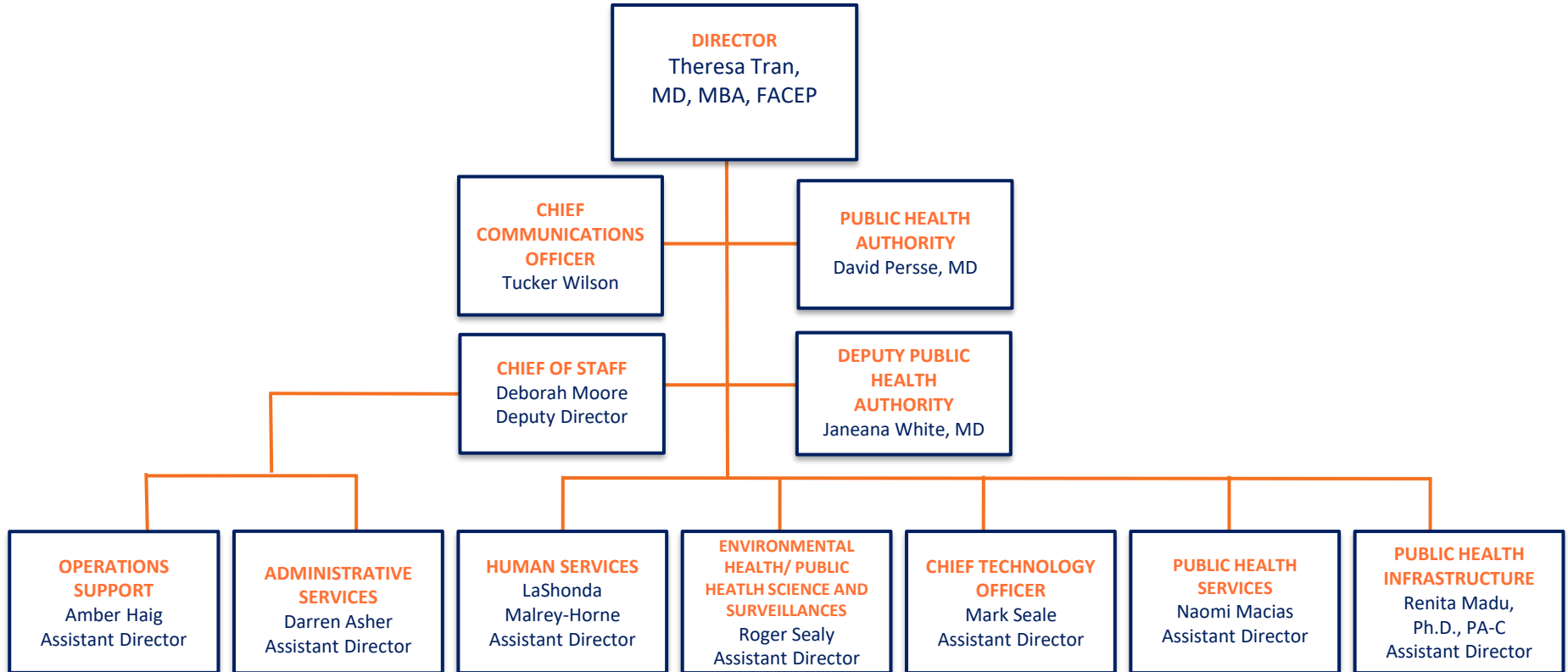
Public health role as safety net provider,
convener, facilitator, broker and connector.



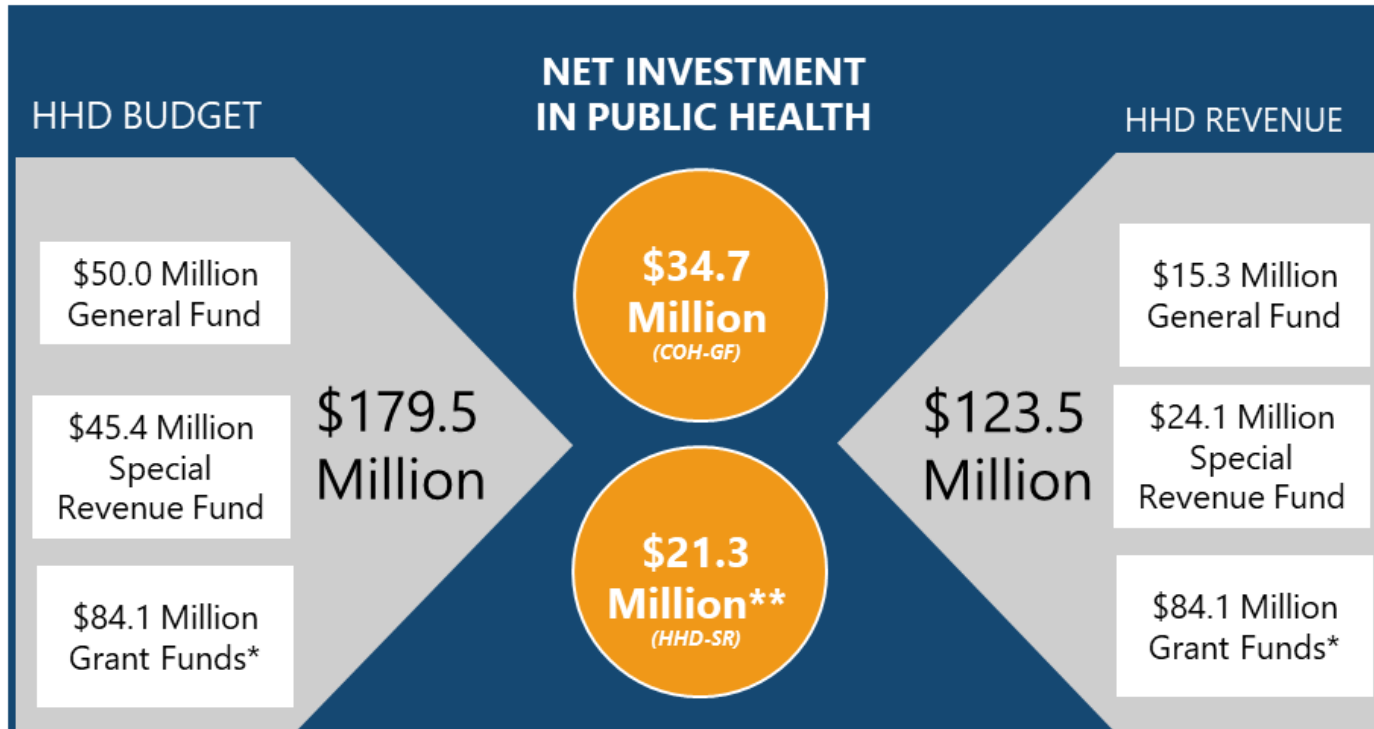
About Us



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HHD Budget



*Represents HHD General Fund investment in Public Health.

**Represents HHD contribution towards total budget from Special Fund to continue certain services.

Service by Focus Areas



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HUMAN SERVICES

Harris County Area
Agency on Aging (AAA)
Aging & Disability
Resource Center (ADRC)
Care Coordination
Behavioral Health
Adolescent Health
Community Reentry
Network Program
(CRNP)
My Brother's Keeper

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Food Safety
Air/Water Quality
Apartment Compliance
Lead Hazards
Ambulance Permits
Swimming Pools
Special Waste
Vital Statistics

DISEASE & PREVENTION CONTROL

HIV/STD
Tuberculosis
Informatics
Surveillance
Laboratory
Preparedness
Warming Centers
Chronic Disease/DAWN
Outbreak Management

MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

Immunizations
Women, Infants &
Children (WIC)
Nurse-Family
Partnership
Healthy Families
Houston
Family Planning

ACCESS TO CARE & LINKAGE TO CARE

Health Centers
Pharmacy
Client Access
Title X
Oral Health
Vision
Multi-Service Centers
Mobile Vaccination
Services

Red: grant funds
Blue: general fund
Green: HHD special funds



Department Accomplishments



- **Environmental Health**

- Established the Wastewater Center for Excellence
- Utilized cross-trained staff to perform 14,000 food facility site visits in 2025
- Habitability Program performed 4,000 complaint investigations in multi-family housing units

- **Disease Prevention Control**

- Expanded access to antiretroviral treatment in HHD public health clinics to ensure people newly diagnosed with HIV can start therapy quickly, improving health outcomes and reducing transmission.
- Houston led the nation in identifying and addressing the growing syphilis burden, issuing an early call to action that drew national attention and accelerated prevention, screening, and response efforts in the region.
- Measles Containment: Houston limited measles spread to just 3 cases, despite significant outbreaks across Texas and nationwide, demonstrating effective surveillance, rapid response, and vaccination efforts.
- Broke ground on \$13 million laboratory addition co-funded by CDC and
- City of Houston



Department Accomplishments



- **Immunizations – School Efforts**

- Assisted the Houston Independent School District with efforts to get students updated on immunizations. HHD spearheaded several vaccine on-campus clinics with direct services or partnering agencies resulting 95% of all HISD schools meeting 95% coverage rate for herd immunity.

- **Community Reentry Network & Credible Messenger Program**

- Operate a reentry program that maintains a low recidivism rate at 10.88% in 2022-2023 compared to the state average of 20.30%.
- Creating programs to address the non-medical drivers of health, in justice impacted youth, with a goal of helping them to reach their maximum potential.

- **Chronic Disease**

- In 2025, the Office of Chronic Disease: Diabetes Awareness and Wellness Network (DAWN) program was successfully reaccredited through 2029 under the ADCES Diabetes Education Accreditation Program (DEAP), reaffirming our commitment to delivering high-quality, evidence-based diabetes education and support for the community

- **Maternal and Child Health**

- Provided free eyeglasses and services to over 9,900 students last year and over 103,000 during the life of the See To Succeed vision program.





Access To Care

- Provided shelter to 1472 clients during the winter freeze
- Expanded chronic disease services, WIC, senior services at the new Alief Multi-Service Center
- Opened Bezos Academy at Denver Harbor

Culture of Excellence

- HHD was originally accredited on December 12, 2014
- HHD was re-accredited in May 2021 for five more years
- Established HHD as a designated Academic Health Department in collaboration with the 7 schools within the UT-Health System
- Collaborative model



Special Projects: SEE TO SUCCEED

The Challenge

- More than 25,000 Houston Area children have unresolved vision issues each year. *(data retrieved from DSHS Vision Screening Report)*
- Families face barriers to vision care (lack of insurance, transportation, work/school schedule, language barriers, etc.)

Our Solution

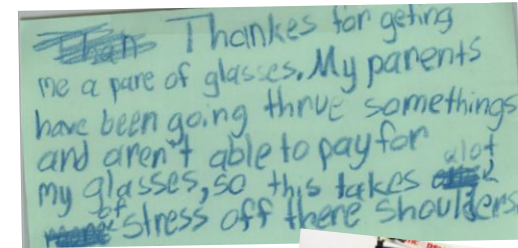
- Create a public/private partnership to provide comprehensive vision exams and eyeglasses at no cost for ~10,000 Houston Area children annually
- Utilize a school-based field trip-style model that helps eliminate barriers to vision care

Results

- More than 126,000 children have received vision exams through See to Succeed and over 116,000 pairs of glasses given since inception (2011).



see to
succeed™



Thankes for getting me a pair of glasses. My parents have been going thru somethings and aren't able to pay for my glasses, so this takes ~~off~~ a lot of stress off there shoulders.



Special Projects: Project Saving Smiles



- **The Challenge**

- 45.9% of second grade children had untreated decay
- Served over 5,000 students per year in the Project Saving Smiles school to school model.

- **Our Solution**

- Provide screening and sealants for at-risk 2nd graders as recommended by the CDC.
- Create partnership with independent school districts, Head Start programs, charter schools and UT Dental to provide access to dental screenings and treatment.



- **Results**

- 118,000 students served since inception (2008)
- Over 200,000 sealants placed on molars to prevent cavities



Special Projects: My Brother's Keeper - Houston



- **The Challenge**
 - President Obama issued a challenge to cities to become My Brother's Keeper Communities to address persistent opportunity and achievement gaps faced by boys and young men of color.
- **Our Solution**
 - Utilized a collective impact strategy to create an MBK Local Action Plan with over 200 participating agencies.
- **Results**
 - 26,000+ people reached with brain development campaign.
 - 700 school credit hours recovered.
 - 60% reduction in out-of-school suspensions at Bruce Elementary.
 - 10% increase in third graders passing STAAR reading exam at Bruce Elementary.
 - 5,300+ police personnel undergoing training to reduce distance with at-risk youth.



Special Projects: Social Justice Interventions



- **Credible Messengers**

The Credible Messenger Mentoring program is an effort to build the capacity of justice impacted communities by engaging natural leaders from those respective communities and providing them with the tools and resources to positively influence positive outcomes related to community safety and wellness.

- **Community Re-entry Network Program**

The Community Re-entry Network Program (CRNP) is designed to aid formerly incarcerated individuals with successful community reintegration including workforce development, mental and behavioral health resources and housing and other basic needs referrals and resources.



Special Projects: Safewatch Dashboard



- **Collaborative Entities**

- Governmental entities (HHD, HPD, HFD EMS, Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences)
- Level 1 Trauma Centers (Memorial Hermann Hospital, Ben Taub Hospital, Texas Children's Hospital)
- Academic Partners (Rice University Baker Institute for Public Policy, UTHealth Houston)

- **Purpose**

- Public-facing dashboard focusing on firearm injury patterns for stakeholders to develop tailored prevention and intervention strategies.
- Integrates various data sources to fill gaps inherent in each dataset and develop a comprehensive picture.

- **Operational Model**

- Quarterly data is collected from emergency departments, trauma centers, HPD, EMS, and death records and displayed on [Houston Firearm Injury Dashboard | Houston Health Department](#)
- Includes demographic, spatial, and temporal trends to identify populations bearing a disproportionate burden and geographic hotspots, and additional filters.



Special Projects: CATCH



- **Collaborative Entities**

- HHD, Ibn Sina Foundation, Houston Health Foundation, and UT School of Public Health



- **Purpose**

- Operates as a community care hub throughout Greater Houston to provide integrated medical and non-medical care to older adults and people with disabilities.

- **Key Points**

- HHD is a founding partner and supporter
- HHD benefits from CATCH's revenue generating efforts and creates a path for HHD to bolster its revenue generating opportunities by utilizing and working with Community Health Workers, Primary Care Partners, and Community-Based Organizations
- CATCH has received national recognition for its potential to scale locally and statewide to improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare expenditures



New Initiatives: ACADEMIC PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT



- **Collaborative Entities**

- MOU with UTHealth Schools: (Public Health, Dentistry, McGovern Medical, Nursing, Biomedical Informatics, Behavioral Health Sciences, MD Anderson Graduate School)
- Future partnerships with University of Houston, Rice University and Texas Southern University

- **Purpose**

- Strengthen collaboration between Houston Health Department and academic institutions to build a skilled workforce, advance research, and improve community health through education and innovation.

- **Key Points**

- Workforce pipeline: Prepare future public health professionals through internships, practicums, and real-world experience
- Bidirectional learning and educational opportunities: Faculty teach at HHD; HHD staff share practice-based knowledge.
- Joint grant writing and research initiatives to attract funding for community-focused projects



New Initiatives: HARRIS COLLABORATIVE



- **Collaborative Entities**

- Houston Health Department
- Harris County Public Health
- Harris Health
- Harris Center
- Community Health Choice

- **Purpose**

- Identify & take collaborative action to improve heart health in the neighborhoods around LBJ Hospital, addressing risk factors such as hypertension, diabetes, cholesterol, tobacco use, and obesity to improve heart health outcomes (heart attack, stroke, and life expectancy).

- **Operational Model**

- Using data analytics from PCIC to create collaborative implementations and track outcomes



New Initiatives: COMMUNITY HEALTH DATA HUB



- **Collaborative Entities**

- Houston Health Department
- Harris County Public Health

- **Purpose**

- Create a centralized, data platform for sharing and analyzing community health data across Houston and Harris County
- Enable real-time insights to identify health disparities, service gaps, and emerging public health trends
- Support evidence-based decision-making for programs, policies, and resource allocation

- **Operational Model**

- Integration of existing surveillance systems, environmental health data, and population health metrics
- Bi-directional data sharing agreements
- Collaborative analytics to produce dashboards, reports, and models for community health improvement

[Houston-Harris County Joint Public Health Data & Reporting Initiative | Houston Health Department](#)



New Initiatives: HOUSTON HRT HOUSING CENTER



- **Houston Health Respite and Transitional Center**

- Houston Health Department
- Harris County Public Health
- Harris Health System
- Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD
- Houston Police Department
- METRO

- **Purpose**

- Collaborative proposal to provide safe, short-term housing for patients leaving the hospital setting without stable housing, focused on those who are recovering from illness, mental health conditions, or substance use disorders
- The center will provide medical care, mental health support, and public health services under one roof, helping residents regain health, secure housing, and move toward independence

- **Operational Model**

- Central Facility: 80-room facility with 20 medical respite rooms and 60 transitional housing rooms
- Includes coordinated entry, medical care, case management, transition to permanent housing and assistance with benefits enrollment



Fifth Ward/Kashmere Gardens Union Pacific Railroad Site Contamination and Area Cancer Cluster

- Beginning in the early 1900s, UPRR, formally the Houston Wood Preserving Works Site, operations resulted in a contaminated **groundwater plume of creosote** (a toxic chemical mixture) under 110 largely residential parcels adjacent to the site.
- In November 2019, the Texas Department of Health and Human Services found elevated counts of multiple types of cancers in the area around the UPRR site. The cancers are known to be associated with the kinds of chemicals of concern found at the UPRR site.
- In July 2022, the Houston Health Department found **dioxin (a highly toxic pollutant) in the surface soil** in the community near the UPRR site. This triggered additional investigations of the community's soil overseen by EPA.
- Between April 2019 and present, the Houston Health Department has worked with EPA, UPRR, Texas Commission of Environmental Quality, Harris County and a Community Advisory Board to support timely remediation and mitigation of environmental health risks associated with UPRR contamination and identification and implementation of other initiatives to improve the overall health of the community.
 - Assessment of the risk, which will inform where and to what concentration residential parcels will need soil dioxin remediation is currently underway.
 - The creosote plume is being contained while waiting on the final approved remediation plan.

Contact Information: DIRECTOR AND COUNCIL LIAISON



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- Theresa Tran, Director
 - Theresa.TranCarapucci@houstontx.gov
 - Office: 832-393-5001
 - Cell: 346-868-4806
- Pascale Mondesir, City Council Liaison
 - Office: 832-393-5069
 - Cell: 832-840-5435



Thank you!

