

NCPHA E-Newsletter

December 2021



Newsletter from the NC Public Health Association and the NCPHA Public Awareness Committee

Message from the President

– Leah Mayo



As we wind down 2021, I want to start by thanking each of you for your resilience and dedication to keeping our community safe as COVID-19 continues to impact us professionally and personally. Although it was another challenging year, North Carolina has the best public health workforce (current and future). Please take a moment to reflect on your accomplishments and acknowledge your hard work by [watching this short thank video](#) created by NCPHA's intern, Kennedy Houze.

NCPHA has much to be proud of. A few items include Executive Director Katye Griffin, who celebrated her first employment anniversary and assisted in advocating for millions of dollars for local public health. Kim Dittmann, Operations Officer, received the APHA Council of Affiliate's Outstanding Staff of the Year Award, and our 20-21 President, Mike Zelek, led NCPHA with grace and thoughtfulness to ensure NCPHA continued to thrive during uncertainty.

The newsletter includes other highlights and opportunities to connect and learn together in 2022. We look forward to safely gathering April 27-29, 2022, in Asheville for the rescheduled 2021 Fall Educational Conference, *Connectedness and Equity: Public Health Creates a Healthier North Carolina*.

It is an honor to follow Mike's term to serve as the 21-22 NCPHA President and work alongside a dedicated and passionate group of NCPHA members who have become friends. I welcome any ideas for initiatives NCPHA could support and feedback on how we can continue to improve the organization to serve you and North Carolina best. Thank you again – your work does not go unnoticed. Let's make 2022 the best year yet!

Leah Mayo, MPH
2021-2022 NCPHA President



INSIDE:

Message from the President
page 1

Public Health News
page 2

NCPHA Events
page 5

NCPHA Member
Introductions
page 6

NCPHA Section News
page 11



NCPHA 2021 Legislative Summary



The North Carolina General Assembly has not quite finished its work for 2021 and this has been one of the longest long sessions in history, but after three years North Carolina will have a new budget and it does contain many of the priorities that NCPHA and partners have been working on for the past year, the past three years or even longer in some cases.

The legislature passed the budget on November 18 and the Governor signed it a few hours later. It spends \$25.9 billion in fiscal year 21-22 and \$27 billion in fiscal year 22-23. The budget also leaves \$4.25 billion in the state's Rainy-Day Fund. While the budget has a few disappointments, it also includes a number of major wins and NCPHA and all its partners appreciate all of your hard work and support in making these wins happen.

At the beginning of 2021, the NCPHA Governing Council approved a list of priorities for the legislative session. You can view those here [Advocacy \(memberclicks.net\)](https://www.memberclicks.net)

At the top of that list was to work with our partners in the Association of Local Health Directors to obtain funding for local health department for communicable disease programs. We are pleased to report that this effort was successful and this year's budget did contain \$36 million dollars for these local programs.

According to Katye Griffin, Public Health Association's Executive Director, "COVID-19 is just one of more than 80 communicable diseases local health departments are required to control. This funding will help our public health professionals expand local communicable disease programs that will be used to address the impacts of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases in our communities."

NCPHA also partnered with the NC Alliance for Health (NCAH) on a number of tobacco and health food access related issues. Many of those priorities were contained in the budget.

continued



Continued...NCPHA 2021 Legislative Summary



The budget includes \$17 million over two years tobacco use prevention and cessation programs! Since 2011, NCAH has led efforts to restore funding for tobacco use prevention and cessation programs and services. The funding comes from the State's settlement the JUUL Labs, Inc., and will continue in smaller amounts past this two-year budget cycle. Clearly, funding for youth tobacco use prevention will stay on NCPHA's advocacy agenda in the future.

The budget also includes statutory changes to limit the amount of indirect costs district can charge School Nutrition Programs. For many, many years, School Nutrition Programs (SNPs) have paid significant rates of indirect costs to the districts, sometimes reaching as much as 18% of their unrestricted funds. Many times, these indirect costs have affected the fiscal solvency of the programs and required districts to pay funds back to the programs in order to balance their budgets. These changes will allow SNPs to keep more money in their programs to meet their goal: feeding children nutritious meals.

In addition, the budget includes \$40 million in nonrecurring funds for the North Carolina Feeding the Carolinas food banks, as well as providing \$10 million to support community organizations in partnership with food banks. Both of these appropriations are meant to address the issue of food insecurity across North Carolina that became very apparent during the pandemic.

The NC Alliance for Health has been a long-time partner and supporter of NCPHA and we congratulate them on their very successful legislative session.

Perhaps the biggest disappointment of this legislative long session was the failure to include a comprehensive coverage gap solution in this year's budget, despite billions of dollars in federal incentives and numerous public statements on the part of Senate leadership that it was time to expand Medicaid. However, there was some progress on the issue. The budget did contain language that does expand Medicaid up to one year (from two months) for post-partum women and does allow parents who have their children placed in foster care to continue on the Medicaid program if they continue to meet the low-income requirements.

We applaud our partners at Care4Carolina for their efforts this session (and over the past 7 years) and look forward to our continued partnership to ensure all North Carolinians have access to affordable health coverage.

The budget does create a Joint Legislative Committee on Access to Healthcare and Medicaid Expansion. The committee's members will consist of 9 members each from the House and Senate, appointed by the leaders of those respective chambers. Advocates will be watching to see who is appointed to the Committee—this could forecast whether or not a true expansion proposal will come before the legislature in 2022.

Finally, NCPHA was part of efforts to defeat several bills that could have been harmful or dangerous to the public and public health. NCPHA worked with Safe Kids NC and a larger coalition to oppose legislation that would have expanded the type and size of fireworks sold in North Carolina. We also worked with partners to defeat legislation that would have limited or possibly eliminated safe needle exchange programs and a variety of bills that would have rolled back childhood and other immunization requirements.

The current "long" legislative session should conclude prior to the end of the year—although it technically does not have to end at the close of the calendar year. 2022 is an election year and the early months of next year will be consumed by primary elections (election date is March 8) and study committee meetings. In past even numbered years, the General Assembly usually convenes for "short" session to adjust the budget in May. Of course, they would have to adjourn this long session before they can begin the short session! Whew!

OSHA Vaccine Requirement Announced by Biden Administration, Faces Legal Challenges



On November 4, 2021, the U.S. Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced details of a new vaccine mandate, published as an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS), which affects companies who employ over 100 workers.

This new OSHA rule will impact some 84 million private-sector workers across the country, including approximately 31 million persons whom the government believes to be unvaccinated.

The affected companies have until January 4, 2022 to ensure all workers are either fully vaccinated or that they submit to a weekly test and mandatory masking.

But this announcement, along with other various vaccine and/or testing mandates for certain healthcare providers and federal contractors announced by the Biden Administration, continues to face significant legal challenges.

Within hours after the Biden administration issued the mandate, states and employers had filed more than half a dozen lawsuits against it.

A few days later, a three-judge panel on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals permanently blocked OSHA from implementing and enforcing the standard.

On Nov. 23rd, the Biden administration filed a motion with the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals seeking to overturn the Fifth Circuit's decision. Most legal pundits believe the Sixth Circuit will reject the government's motion and strike down the ETS.

OSHA's ETS also received pushback from state officials.

"While the N.C. Department of Labor (NCDOL) adopted verbatim federal OSHA's June COVID-19 ETS for Healthcare, I am concerned about this new vaccine mandate and its potential consequences for North Carolina," said Josh Dobson, N.C. Department of Labor Commissioner.

"I believe the vaccine is the best way to get our country out of this pandemic. I also believe that employers have a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace for employees. However, the federal government's COVID-19 vaccine mandate is the wrong approach, as it will further strain existing resources within the OSH Division and exacerbate the state's workforce crisis," he said.

Regardless of what the Sixth Circuit or how states react, the fate of the ETS likely will be resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court.

SAVE THE DATES!

Re-Scheduled Fall Educational Conference

April 27-29, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Asheville, NC

Registration and Hotel Reservations opens on January 17

Public Health Social Work Conference

March 31, Colfax, NC

Go here to register:

ncpha.memberclicks.net/public-health-social-work-conference

Public Health Leaders' Conference

May 19-20, North Raleigh Hilton, Raleigh, NC

Registration will begin mid-February

NCPHA Young Professional's Conference

May 18, Hilton Garden Inn Crabtree, Raleigh, NC

Registration will begin mid-February

Case Management Certification Preparatory

Training Course

March 7-8 (Open) and March 10-11 (Full), NC Medical Society, Raleigh, NC

Go here to register:

ncpha.memberclicks.net/case-management-certification-preparatory-course

NCPHA

Member Introductions

This issue we meet ECU Associate Professor, Cheryl Kovar, Forsyth County Health Director, Joshua Swift, NCPHA Communications Director, Jason Tyson, and Guilford County Health Director, Iulia Vann.



NCPHA Member Introductions



Cheryl Kovar PhD, RN, CNS

Associate Professor

College of Nursing, Eastern Carolina University

Hometown: Raleigh, N.C.

Education: PhD in Nursing – The Ohio State University

MSN – Maternal-Child Clinical Nurse Specialist with focus in Adolescent Health – The Medical College of Ohio

BSN – The University of Toledo

How long have you worked in public health:

I worked at the local level at a very small, rural health department in Ohio for eight years. In 2007, I started working for the Women's Health Branch for NC DPH for 7 ½ years as the State FP Nurse Consultant...so total years directly working in public health would be over 15 years.

What do you like most about your job:

I am currently an Associate Professor in the College of Nursing at ECU and I love teaching population health to graduate and doctoral nursing students and sharing my passion for public health. I also just completed a pilot study with two local health departments in North Carolina and look forward to extending that research in the years to come.

If you could have dinner with three people, who would they be:

Michelle Obama (and she could bring Barack along too), Dr. Jill Biden, and Dr. Michelle Walensky

If you could change one thing about public health, what would it be? (money is no object)

The salary of every public health employee as what we do is so important and undervalued by our current society.

FAVORITES:

Hobby: Anything outdoors

Food: Lobster

Movie: The Greatest Showman and Momma Mia (both a tie)

Song/Artist: Follow me – John Denver

Sport/Team: The Ohio State Buckeyes!

Color: Red

Book: *Becoming* by Michelle Obama

NCPHA Member Introductions



Joshua Swift, MPH

Health Director

Forsyth County Department of
Public Health

Hometown: Mountain Park, NC

Education: BS in Health Promotion – Appalachian State University

MPH – Arnold School of Public Health at the University of South Carolina

How long have you worked in public health:
16 years.

What do you like most about your job:
I love how Public Health affects the entire community and all of us have the opportunity to improve the lives of those in the communities we serve.

If you could have dinner with three people, who would they be:

Lottie Swift (my mom – she passed 14 years ago)
Theodore Roosevelt
Steph Curry
Tom Brady

If you could change one thing about public health, what would it be? (money is no object)
Better pay for the great people who work in Public Health.

FAVORITES:

Hobby: Working out, hiking

Food: Chick-Fil-A

Movie: Rocky IV

Song/Artist: Imagine Dragons

Sport/Team: Carolina Panthers

Color: Royal Blue

Book: *The Obstacle is the Way* by Ryan Holiday

NCPHA Member Introductions



Jason Tyson, BA

Communications Director
NC Public Health Association

Hometown: Eastover, NC

Education: BA in English, BA in History, UNC-Wilmington, 2000

How long have you worked in public health:
Two months.

What do you like most about your job:
Working on strategies and finding to solutions to communicating news and information to the public that is accurate and timely.

If you could have dinner with three people, who would they be:
Robert Frost, Princess Diana, Jimmy Stewart

If you could change one thing about public health, what would it be? (money is no object)
The public would better appreciate and respect the impact public health has on people's lives.

FAVORITES:

Hobby: Tennis, Soccer, Gardening, Chess, Running

Food: Japanese

Movie: Cast Away

Song/Artist: Bob Dylan

Sport/Team: Duke Blue Devils

Color: Dark Green

Book: John le Carre



NCPHA Member Introductions



Iulia Vann, MD, MPH

Health Director

Guilford County Division of Public Health

Hometown: Greensboro, NC (born in Bucharest, Romania)

Education: MD– University of Medicine and Pharmacy Carol Davila, Bucharest

MPH – East Carolina University

How long have you worked in public health:
Seven years.

What do you like most about your job:

I love that every day brings new and diverse challenges, that I get to problem-solve and brainstorm on so many different areas from data analysis, to clinical services, to quality improvement to leadership and management. I also value my ability to drive the vision of the Health Department and make an impact at the population level.

If you could have dinner with three people, who would they be:

My paternal grandmother who lost the fight with breast cancer almost eight years ago and whom I greatly miss, Barack Obama, and Beyonce.

If you could change one thing about public health, what would it be? (money is no object)

Since we have so many areas that we need to focus on, if I had a magic wand, I would give all Health Departments all the funds they need (that will be magically recurring every year) to hire staff and fully support current and future activities.

FAVORITES:

Hobby: Reading and binge-watching TV Shows on Netflix

Food: Pasta and Bread

Movie: Not a movie, but a TV Show – Game of Thrones

Song/Artist: Felicita – Al Bano and Romina Power

Sport/Team: Tar Heels Basket Ball

Color: Navy Blue

Book: *One Hundred Years of Solitude* – Gabriel Garcia Marquez



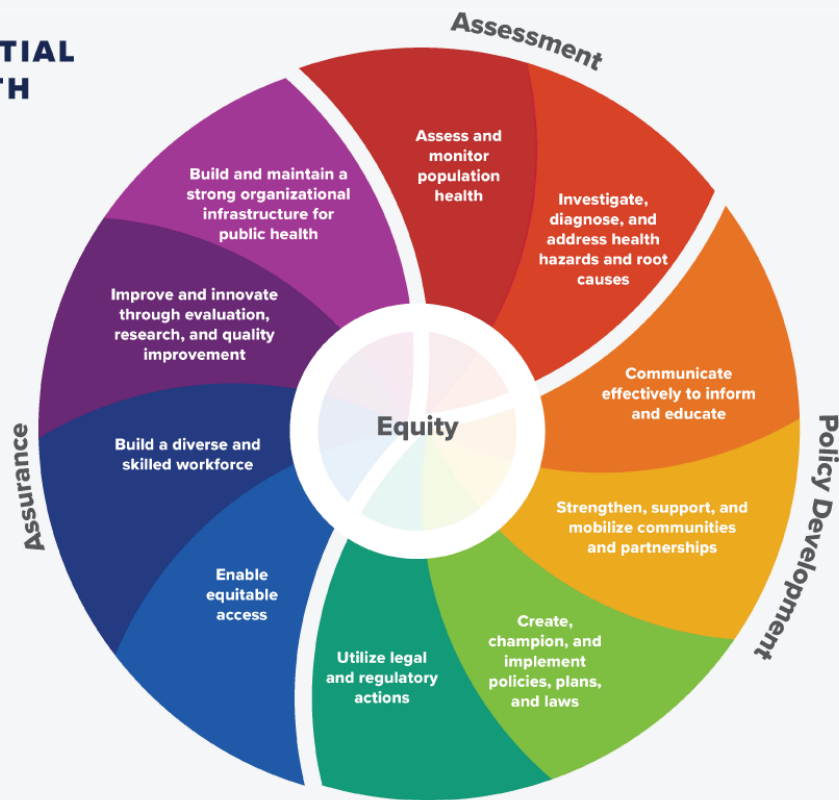
NCPHA Black, Indigenous, People of Color Caucus (BIPOCC)

— Michaela Penix, MPH

THE 10 ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

To protect and promote the health of all people in all communities

The 10 Essential Public Health Services provide a framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. To achieve optimal health for all, the Essential Public Health Services actively promote policies, systems, and services that enable good health and seek to remove obstacles and systemic and structural barriers, such as poverty, racism, gender discrimination, and other forms of oppression, that have resulted in health inequities. Everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to achieve good health and well-being.



Season's Greetings to all! I hope that during this season of joy and celebration, that you take time to celebrate the amazing diversity North Carolina has to offer. Not just by way of majestic mountains, rolling sandhills, and our beautiful coasts, but the amazing diversity of our citizens and residents. Did you know that North Carolina has the largest population of individuals who identify as [American Indian](#) among ALL the states east of the Mississippi River? Another amazing fact is that the new NCPHA Black, Indigenous, People of Color Caucus (BIPOCC) established in the summer of 2021 is the first of its kind, and paves the way for an operationalized effort to continue NCPHA's commitment to ensuring that our association is a welcoming and supportive place for all public health professionals. A diverse workforce is more than just a

variety of races, ethnicities, and gender identities. It is making sure that every member of the workforce feels valued, respected, and supported instead of tokenized or ignored. Dismantling racism and mitigating implicit biases is not easy work, but it is necessary work to ensure that we are adhering to the [10 Essential Public Health Services](#) to promote the health of all people in all communities as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It is our hope to help all of us grow and learn together to better serve our communities, to support our public professionals who identify as a person of color, and in celebrating our state's beautiful diversity in all of its forms.

Thank you to the champions who worked to make the BIPOCC a part of NCPHA, and to all of you who are doing the hard work to make sure that North Carolina is the best place to live, work, and play for every person regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, or income. As we enter into 2022, look forward to more learning opportunities and a continued commitment to celebrating diversity.



Public Health Leaders Section

— Pamela Brown, Chair of Leadership Section



Thank you, Public Health, for another year of doing the hardest of tasks and making the hardest of decisions to face the pandemic and many other challenges in order to give your communities the best opportunity for health in all of its manifestations! The struggles, tears, and triumphs are real and ongoing, but you have been unwavering.

At the October PHL Section virtual meeting, we decided to postpone the selection of new section officers until the spring conference in 2022. Please consider whether you would be interested in serving in one of these roles and let me know if you are interested:

- Chair**
- Vice-Chair**
- Fall Educational Conference Committee Representative**
- Advocacy Committee Representative**
- Secretary/Treasurer**

I came across this quote in doing some research for this newsletter article and thought it summarized much of the work public health is currently engaged in. I would like to share it with you:

“If we are gonna tackle the huge issues that impact health, like poverty and racism, the truth is, we can’t do that alone. The future of public health is crossing sectors. Working with partners outside of traditional public health, with everybody doing the part they do best to bring together all the players who impact the social determinants, because it’s all linked. It’s all about health. That means we need to partner with the same sectors we’ve been talking about: education, employment, housing, food, transportation, and healthcare. Public health is the right group to bring stakeholders to the table, or to many tables, to positively impact the social determinants. We in public health are collaborative by nature. We’re conveners, we understand the power of synergy. We are the right people to change the way we as a society approach health. You are those leaders.”

—Lisa M. Carlson, MPH, MCHES, Immediate Past President, APHA

Source: debeaumont.org/news/2020/10-inspiring-quotes-from-apha-2020

I know you are those leaders, and North Carolinians are fortunate to have you working tirelessly for them.

Finally, I wish you the happiest of holidays and a season of refreshing in preparation for the monumental work you will do in the new year!

Pamela Brown, Chair of Leadership Section
pam.brown@lenoircountync.gov



Social Work Section



“It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year,” but what if it isn’t?

— *Deborah Smith, MSW, LCSW, Chair of Social Work Section*

The lights, the good food, time with family and friends; all these things represent this time of year, and they are all supposed to be wonderful; there’s even a song written about it! However, for many this time of year reflects dimness, loneliness and a sense of loss and grief. Perhaps you have lost a loved one this year or perhaps you are supporting a griever this year; if either of these scenarios describes you, then keep reading. If neither of these scenarios describe you, then keep reading, because one day one of them will describe you.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 2.8 million people die each year in the US¹. Assuming each of these individuals had a relationship with 4-5 other individuals, we can

estimate that there are 11 to 14 million people who are grieving their loss, and they are also likely experiencing their first holiday without the presence of an important person.

Grief often has negative connotations associated with it. Some have opinions on how grief should look or how long an individual should grieve, but grief is unique to each individual and no two people will grieve the same. The grief process is not linear and there’s not a scientific method to provide a step-by-step guide of how to progress through grief to healing (side note: healing does not mean you do not miss the individual; it means that you are able to cope and to identify and efficiently live in a “new normal”).

continued

¹Mortality in the United States, 2018, NCHS Data Brief, no 355. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2020. Retrieved from: www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/deaths.htm

²Adapted from “Ten Ways to Cope with Holiday Grief” by L.B. Schultz.



may not be comfortable asking for help; in these situations, everyone needs to eat. Send them a gift card for a meal delivery (Door Dash, Uber Eats, etc.) or arrange a homecooked meal.

What if You're the Griever

On a personal level, my family is experiencing our first major holiday season without my brother. Covid-19 latched onto my family earlier this year, and as a result, my brother departed this life, and we nearly lost my mother (side note: please purchase a pulse oximeter for home use especially as Covid rages on; it saved my mother's life). In preparation for the holiday season, here are some ideas to cope with holiday grief.²

How to Support a Griever

How many times have you written a sympathy card and expressed condolences? The word condolence is comprised from two Latin roots, and when broken down the word literally means "to grieve together." In essence, when offering condolences, you are verbally committing to support that individual through their grief. What a powerful action to take to stand with the brokenhearted. However, once we mail that sympathy card or send flowers, we often move on to continue with our own lives. Here are some ways you can continue to support an individual who is grieving:

- Write your loved one a letter
- Surround yourself with those who will support you, those who will make you laugh, those who understand the complexities of grief
- Decorate their memorial
- Do something for someone else or volunteer in the loved one's honor
- Plan a meal incorporating your loved one's favorite foods
- Play music
- Read a book about grief
- Do what is right for you. You are entitled to grieve. You are entitled to your emotions as you navigate the grief. Do not let anyone tell you differently.
- Remember the anticipation of the day is often more emotional than the actual day

■ Ask for permission to talk about the deceased. The griever may not want to discuss details about the events surrounding the death, but many will want to share memories and they will want to hear your memories. They may cry, and if they do, then offer a tissue.

■ There are no words that will heal their grief. Grievers don't expect anyone to have the perfect words, so be prepared with a listening ear. Also be prepared for silence in case the griever does not want to talk but simply wants someone close.

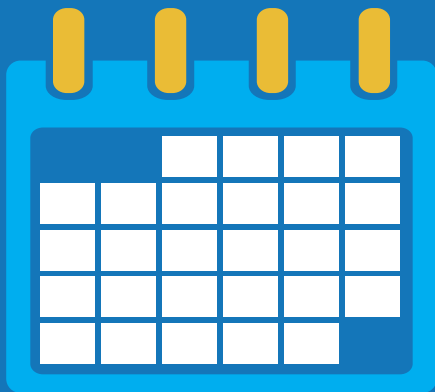
■ Do not tell a grieving individual that you "understand." While you may have experienced grief, your experience and their experience are not the same.

■ Ask how you can help. Some individuals will feel too overwhelmed to say what help is needed or

Unfortunately, I know I am not alone in this experience of losing a loved one, so I dedicate this article to my brother, Richard Chase (11/10/1972 – 08/08/2021) and to the other amazing souls we were forced to say goodbye to in 2021.

"Grief is the last act of love we can give to those we loved. Where there is deep grief, there was great love." -Unknown

HEALTH DAYS CALENDAR



December

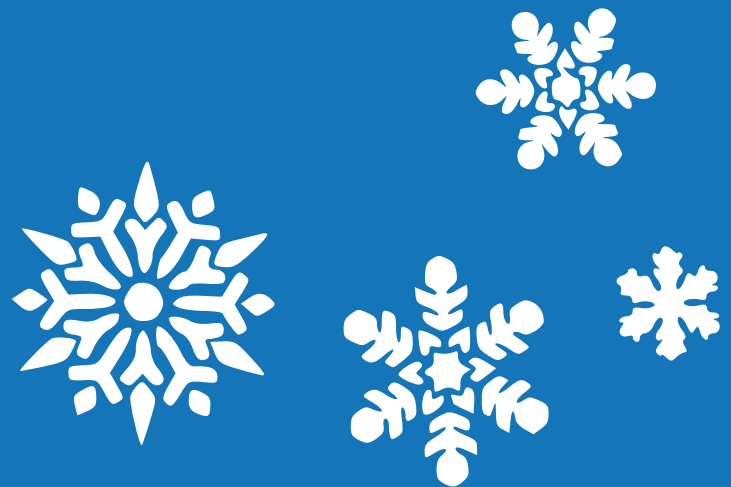
AIDS Awareness Month

Worldwide Food Service Safety Month

Safe Toys and Gifts Month

National Human Rights Month

Flu Vaccine Month



Contact Us

Executive Director: Katy Griffin
Kim Dittmann, Operations Officer, E-mail: kdittmann@ncapha.org
222 N. Person Street
Suite 208
Raleigh, NC 27601
Phone: 919-828-6201 Fax: 919-828-6203 Website: ncpha.memberclicks.net



Graphic Designer: Zannie Gunn, TypeColorShapes.com

