

Direct To You

Tuesday
6/15/20

Patricia Wells, OHA Executive Director

Our Shared Journey

As I think of all the conversations I have had since I issued the **Direct To You** following the first weekend of protests, I am struck by how many more people are now searching for understanding in all that has happened; seeking to embrace what they feel; and trying to figure out what to do next. That gives me hope. Hope that in an awakening and awareness of the realities of black and brown communities more people will be inspired to join the journey to achieve positive, meaningful, and actionable change.

As I committed on June 1, OHA will model the change we want to see - that is, the journey we are on, together.

Change starts with the identification of a need. That need was amplified by the horrific death of George Floyd, which ignited protests in Oakland that were generally peaceful with a few exceptions in the first few days. While significant vandalism and looting did occur primarily in the downtown area, OHA had only minimal impact. The temporary boards installed on the back side of 1540 Webster Street became the "canvas" for social and political messaging, which, while not typically an optimal impact to our buildings, this particular instance of tagging gave an opportunity for our OHAPD Officers to initiate a dialogue with the tagging community, resulting in an innovative partnership that honors the voice of the community while ensuring respect for the buildings where we work to achieve the mission of OHA. It was a step forward on our journey.

As an agency, OHA had already started on the path to make enhancements that model equity, fairness, and inclusion, affirming our commitment to being a leading agency for positive change.

In an impassioned statement delivered to OHA Directors and Command Staff, Chief Duplessis expressed his steadfast commitment to rebuilding the trust he feels was squandered by the irresponsibility of those former officers who took the life of George Floyd and others who responded poorly to protesters across the nation. Our Chief affirmed that positive change is required.

Leading positive change is not a new concept for OHAPD. Under Chief's leadership, our police department has made sweeping changes following the community policing philosophy, building and maintaining strong relationships with the children, families and seniors who have a home in one of OHA's owned and managed housing communities. All OHAPD staff, sworn and civilian, have demonstrated their sincere commitment to the high standards of community policing and care for our staff and the families we serve.

OHA has been modeling positive change to the systems that have kept progress stagnant for quite some time. Our MTW housing programs have opened the doors for families who may have otherwise not been able to get into affordable housing from a variety of communities, including Foster Youth coming into adulthood, formerly homeless individuals, and persons exiting out of incarceration and reuniting with their families.

When it comes to the OHA work family, the Human Resources Team has implemented new professional trainings and employee support programs for staff. Most recently, ZOOM Sessions have been offered that deliver a communal space to talk and share with co-workers some of the emotional impacts of COVID-19 and an outlet to discuss the national pain exhibited as a result of the ongoing protests. Our HR and Risk Management team is re-imagining professional development and staff supports by providing equitable and thoughtful staff benefit services.

This is just the beginning of our collective journey.



Scan QR-Code to access updated information on the OHA website at www.oakha.org.
(You may need to download a scanning app to your smart phone.)



The June 1 **Direct To You** identified three paths on this journey for OHA to lead and be the change we want to see. Look at what we have already accomplished:

1. Re-examining OHA organizational culture through respectful engagement, communication, and action:

- We completed over 19 small and large group dialogues between staff and the Executive Director, resulting in action items that helped formulate the OHA 2020 Strategic Goals, which were recently approved by the Board of Commissioners. The Strategic Goals will be shared with all staff during summer Zoom meetings.
- Initiated the Direct to You and Direct From Me two-way communication programs.
- Implemented several staff work protocols, and both benefit and leave packages, to support the challenges staff are facing due to the impacts of COVID-19.

2. Continue to improve our policies, procedures, and methods for delivering service:

- Established online Leased Housing briefings and resident services.
- Implemented several HUD waivers in response to the financial burdens families are experiencing due to the impacts of COVID-19.
- Modified OHAPD polices and methods of public safety services to our communities.

3. Actively contributing to local and national advocacy to influence systems change:

- Participated in over six Regional and National discussions regarding housing policy, via ZOOM.
- Submitted four Advocacy Letters to the White House and our Senate and Congressional Representatives.
- Engaged in several City & County collaborations to discuss systems change with the objective of creating innovative ways to preserve and increase affordable housing.
- Initiated discussion to establish positive communications with representatives of the unsheltered and homeless communities that neighbor several of our properties.

The work that each of us do every day, is important and will fuel us on our journey to being the change we want to see.

Since June 14, 2020 was National Barack Obama Appreciation Day, I am going to stay focused on his words:

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

OHA, we are hope for the future.

Peace and continued good health,

Patricia



NEW Update on Face Coverings in Alameda County



To further control the spread of COVID-19, on June 8, the Alameda County Health Officer issued a superseding Health Officer Order broadening when a face covering must be worn. **Now face coverings must be worn at all times by all members of the public, including outdoors while engaged in physical activities (walking, running, biking, etc.) and within 30 feet of people outside of their household.**

The updated requirements, which include stricter guidelines on the use of face coverings while in public spaces, will help advance the continued efforts to re-open parts of our community in ways that are responsible and help mitigate the risks of spreading COVID-19. These changes impact OHA employees while at work, as well as when away from work on personal time. Check the requirements in your home county, if outside of Alameda County.

As you may recall, OHA implemented strong requirements for face coverings on April 13, which stated that while on site at all OHA properties, both indoors and outdoors – all employees must wear a face covering while in the presence of others and in social spaces. OHA's requirement pre-dated the County's own health ordinance, which went into effect on April 17, 2020.

Employees of OHA are also required to maintain 6ft of social distancing and now must be prepared to put on their mask whenever they may come in contact with others within a 30 ft. radius. This means that if you might encounter other people on an outdoor path, when walking down a hall to a restroom or when walking to and from your car in a OHA parking lot - a face covering is required.

Wearing face coverings is one of the few tools we have that will allow us to decrease risk as we gradually allow for more activities outside the home. Face coverings help prevent transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19, by blocking and slowing the droplets that can spread from person to person. Everyone should wear a face covering—which can be simple and homemade, made of cloth, fabric, or other soft or permeable material without holes, that covers the nose and mouth—anytime they are outside the home and around other people.

We are also providing the same instruction and education to the families we serve, to ensure that in all situations the broader OHA community is united on preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Face coverings and the 6ft social distancing rule: It may not be comfortable, it might feel annoying, but it is one of the best and easiest ways to fight COVID-19.

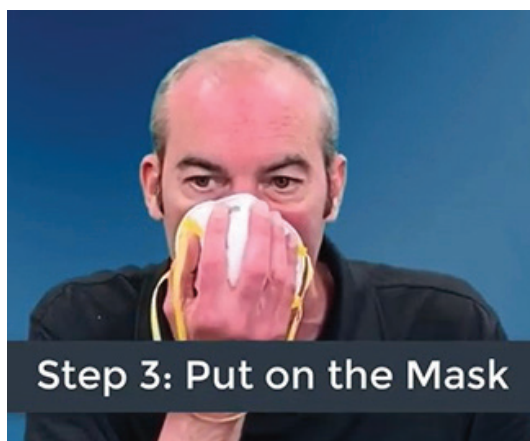
Thank you for doing your part in keeping OHA healthy as possible.

For more information on the Health Officer Orders and accompanying documents, visit:

- <http://acphd.org/2019-ncov/shelter-in-place.aspx>
- <http://acphd.org/2019-ncov/health-officer-orders.aspx>
- <http://acphd.org/2019-ncov.aspx>

Proper Way to Wear a Respirator

OSHA released a new video and poster that show employers and workers how to properly wear and remove a respirator. The video and poster are also available in **Spanish**.



Note: Children aged 12 and younger are not required to wear a face covering, and any child two years old or younger should not wear a face covering. The Order does not apply if a person is only with members of their own household and does not expect to come into contact with a member of the public. A person engaged in walking, hiking, bicycling, running, and other physical activities is not required to wear a face covering during the entire duration of their activity, but that person must carry a face covering that is easy to access so they can wear it once they are within 30 feet of other people.

Direct From Me Winners!

Thank you to the 31 OHA team members who submitted a message to me using the **Direct From Me** portal.



Your thoughts, ideas and suggestions for meaningful change at OHA was encouraging and confirmed that the desire to help OHA be successful on our shared journey to positive change is agency-wide, and it shows me that so many of you are committed to making our agency a more effective agency and a better place to work.



As promised, each of the 17 employees who submitted a **Direct From Me** during the first week were entered into a random drawing for a “thanks for participating.” Five of those individuals’ numbers were pulled, with each lottery winner receiving a \$25 GrubHub gift card. I thought GrubHub cards would come in handy during these days when we’re less free to move about.

The submissions have been compiled into a summary report to be considered by the leadership team during the month of June. Any suggestions that are to be implemented will be reported to the entire agency in a future **Direct to You**.

I invite you all to use this tool to make your voice heard and keep our two-way communication going – the goal is to keep the lines of communication open and to be transparent about all of our ideas.



Direct From Me is the new program we will use to facilitate getting your thoughts straight to the agency’s leadership. To make your ideas actionable, we need a way to know what you’re thinking, and if applicable, how to make your ideas work on a large scale. Earlier this year, we launched Direct To You, my half of our 2-way communication, and now, it’s time for us formalize the way you can communication back with me and Leadership Team.

In just a few short steps you can make a difference:

1. Click on the **Direct From Me** link: <http://oakhapmd.org>
2. Fill out the online form and include as many details as possible;
3. Then click submit.

It’s that easy! Your ideas, which can be submitted including your name or anonymously, will be logged, processed and delivered to me, and the Direct From Me coordinator, who will help assess next steps. From there, I’ll make certain that your ideas are heard, valued and considered--whether that’s to thank a co-worker, document an accomplishment or create a new process.

REMEMBER: if you have reasonable suspicion that you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or if you are experiencing symptoms of fever (100.4 Fahrenheit or higher), coughing, or shortness of breath, do not report to work. Immediately contact your primary care provider and then your supervisor for instructions on what you need to do next. If you have any questions regarding your schedule, please contact your supervisor or Director. If you have questions in regards to pay or leave time, please contact Human Resources at (510) 874-1575.



RESOURCES

How Long Can Coronaviruses Live?

Washing hands and cleaning surfaces are among the most effective ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses. Learn how long the virus can live on different surfaces and how to clean them effectively.

REMINDERS

Social Distancing and Face Masks

Use a cloth face covering that covers the nose and mouth whenever interacting with another person at OHA, walking through common spaces, and if you are in the rare situation that you are in a vehicle with another person. Team members working independently in a vacant unit may opt to not wear a face covering while working alone in the unit. Similarly, if working in an office, you may opt to not use a face covering while in your work area alone and you are keeping to the 6 ft. Social Distancing Space requirements. If someone comes into your office or within 6ft, you must put on your face covering.

Daily Check-In

Each employee, whether working remotely (at home) or at an OHA site must complete the Daily Check-In each morning prior to 9:15am. This is a short form that indicates where you are physically located and assist your supervisor and/or director in easily identifying which team members are available and where they are, for safety and scheduling purposes.

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) now recommends use of face masks. [Read more.](#)

Download, print and use patterns below to make properly fitting face masks.

[How to make a face mask \(with YouTube video\)](#)

[Large Adult Mask Pattern](#) [Small & Medium Face Mask Pattern](#)

[Young Kids \(7-12 Yrs\) Face Mask Pattern](#) [Small Kids \(3-6 Yrs\) Face Mask Pattern](#)



To learn about resources that are available to OHA employees during this current health crisis, visit the previous **Direct to You:**

<https://mailchi.mp/6770d9e99283/direct-to-you?e=822c0d5b41>