

IMPACT

Summer/Fall
2020



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Outer
Cape



HEALTH SERVICES

Welcome to IMPACT



Pat Nadle, Chief Executive Officer

The pandemic of Covid-19 has disrupted our world. The world, as we knew it, has changed and challenged each of us to our core. I can't think of anyone who hasn't been affected by this public health crisis which, unfortunately, is not over. And yet, we move forward.

At Outer Cape Health Services (OCHS), our role — our mission — is healing. Our duty and our privilege are to heal. And while healing is a broad term and does not only mean to cure — it also means to keep our community safe and whole, while providing hope, especially during this pandemic.

In Provincetown, Wellfleet and Harwich Port, our nonprofit community health centers bring healing and hope by caring for everyone, with the same compassion, skill, and relentless intensity, regardless of one's

skin color, resources, or life circumstances.

The care and well-being of all who live in or visit the Outer and Lower Cape is our highest calling, even while being challenged by the virus at hand. It also means bringing our very best at times of crisis. Our "very best" is more than our health centers' many capabilities. It's also the caring and resilient spirit of our staff, patients, friends and neighbors demonstrated during this highly historic time.

This special issue of IMPACT chronicles the many inspiring experiences we have had over recent months that have actually strengthened us as an organization. I hope you will feel the same after reading this newsletter. Our staff, our patients and community have rallied around us, and as you will read, there are more opportunities to rally in our future ahead with resolution, resourcefulness and ingenuity.

We know not what truly lies ahead, but if we remain "in this together," our IMPACT will be undeniable.

With hope and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pat".

Pat Nadle
Chief Executive Officer

P.S. To share and view this newsletter and past editions online, visit outercape.org/newsletter.



Pat Nadle (left) with Harwich Port health center staff who provided free Covid-19 testing services on June 17 and 18 along with our Wellfleet and Provincetown sites.

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Mission

Our mission is to provide a full range of healthcare and supportive social services that promote the health and well-being of all who live in or visit the ten outermost towns of Cape Cod.

Pictured on cover

Grateful patients Jennifer Shannon and Jane Lea

All OCHS services and sites are now open

per the guidelines of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for Covid-19. We are offering both in-person and telehealth appointments, depending on individual patient needs. Behavioral health visits continue to be successfully offered almost exclusively via telehealth.



We also continue to accept new patients. To learn more, call our patient access center at 508-905-2888 or visit outercape.org/information-for-new-patients/

Thanks to public and private support during the pandemic, we have been able to maintain and introduce new services including:

- Covid-19 testing for symptomatic individuals—the first community health center on Cape Cod to do so.
- Expanded telehealth options for primary care and behavioral health visits
- Vital pharmacy operations, including local delivery service and curbside pickup
- Urgent Care services in Provincetown
- Covid-19 contact trace team to halt the spread of the virus on the Cape and beyond.



WE FEEL THE LOVE

So many grateful patients and supporters have written us notes and emails over recent months. These messages have buoyed staff, and we say thank you back. Here is just a small sample of the gratitude expressed:



Thank You . . . It is a great comfort to know you are there for our community. – Irene

Thanks for being there for all of us in Harwich. One good thing—you're in your new space to meet this challenge. God bless all of you at this time and always. – Rebecca

In gratitude for keeping us informed and safe during these difficult times and for your abiding diligence and professional caring. – Susan

Friends – Enclosed is an additional gift from my wife and me. We are especially grateful that the Outer Cape Pharmacy in Wellfleet has remained open during this crisis. – Walt

OCHS – Thank you for your great services. I could not live without you. – Jim

I know these are hard times. I really appreciate the telephone visit with my provider. From a long-time patient and a long-ago nurse employee. – Susan

From the desk of OCHS Chief Medical Officer: Andrew Jorgensen, MD, FACP, FAAP

Community health centers such as Outer Cape Health Services have always had at the core of their mission, the goal of serving everyone while providing extra focus to care for those in the greatest need. The current pandemic has further highlighted the health disparities and social injustice faced by these individuals. Covid-19 has had a disproportionately negative impact on people of color, those with chronic disease, the elderly, and other marginalized populations. Our mission continues to include a constant reminder in everything we do, that these individuals cannot be forgotten.

In response, Outer Cape Health Services nimbly developed and introduced several important programs to allow us to continue to serve our communities. If you have had a visit with a clinician recently, it most likely occurred over the phone, or at a computer with a video connection. Changes in funding of these visits and grant support provided us with a means to deploy this model of care quickly to continue to deliver care while keeping everyone safe at home.

Infection control and safety procedures have been completely revised to ensure that those who need in person care can do so in a way to keep them and our staff safe at all times. No person enters any of our buildings without a temperature check and screening for possible Covid-19 symptoms. Our patients have demonstrated tremendous patience as we made these changes.

I also want to highlight our testing capabilities. From the first day that test kits were available to us, OCHS has been the only organization providing testing on the Outer Cape. We have tested hundreds of individuals for Covid-19 at drive-by appointments in Wellfleet and in Provincetown. Additionally we have partnered with the Department of Public Health to participate in the commonwealth's contact tracing program. The goal of this initiative is to quickly reduce the spread of the disease by identifying, testing, and isolating those that may have come in contact with infected individuals.

To further address issues of inequities in testing, OCHS participated in a large scale, state-wide initiative to provide testing to anyone who had recently participated in a large gathering. Over the course of two days, we provided free testing at all three sites to more than 2,200 individuals. Our close partnerships with first responders in the towns we served allowed us to quickly organize and implement this "pop up" event.

So where do we go from here? We all keep hearing that we are headed towards a new normal. No one is able to say for sure when this will happen but most indicators lead to the conclusion that this will happen once a vaccine is readily available to immunize enough people to create "herd immunity". This is the idea that once enough people are immune, either through vaccination or contracting Covid-19, it is much more difficult for an infection to spread. We have many more months to go and must remain vigilant in practicing good hygiene, social distancing and mask wearing.

On behalf of OCHS, I send my warmest thanks to our providers and front-line staff, the community and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for their partnership in combatting the novel coronavirus in our service region.



#INTHISTOGETHER!



Faces of Front-line OCHS Staff Amidst the Pandemic



Outer Cape Health Services offers Covid-19 testing for symptomatic individuals at our Wellfleet and Provincetown health centers.

A screening call is required with an OCHS clinician in advance of booking an appointment.

For questions and screening appointments, call 508-905-2888.

Creative Ways to Support OCHS this Summer and Socially Distance



In lieu of OCHS' annual Lobsterfest benefit gala in Provincetown during Carnival week, we present: **Lobster without the Fest**

This virtual 2020 benefit gives food lovers the chance to support local restaurants in a socially distanced manner the week of August 15-22, while also benefiting OCHS.

Advance Lobster Bake Dinners can be ordered for \$40 with an optional additional donation to OCHS at these three fine establishments:

Lobster Pot in Provincetown, Moby Dick's Restaurant in Wellfleet and **Mac's Chatham Fish and Lobster**. Reserve and donate today at outercape.org/events and have your Lobster without the Fest!

Lobster without the Fest is sponsored by:

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Archstone Law Group, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, DBVW Architects, Dowling & O'Neil Insurance and Infinitt North America

The **2020 White Party in Provincetown** benefiting OCHS has been cancelled; however, past donors of the Labor Day weekend party are encouraged to still give this year. As a thank you from event host and organizer Bob Lenzi, 2020 donors at \$250 or higher will be put on a special list for advance access to Whale Donor tickets for White Party 2021.

Give by Sept. 5, 2020 for this special offer at outercape.org/donate or call 508-905-2850.



The **33rd Provincetown Swim for Life & Paddler Flotilla** begins NOW through a virtual online event culminating on September 12. This vital fundraiser raises funds for the healthcare network of the community, and is sponsored by the Provincetown Community Compact. OCHS is a longtime and grateful beneficiary.

Personal or team challenges are encouraged. To learn more, register and/or donate, visit swim4life.org. All registrants, including kayakers, volunteers and boaters, receive a 2020 swim cap.



Buy Signs of Hope from Roots in Provincetown. This highly creative Provincetown storefront kiosk promotes contactless purchases of signs sporting hopeful messages and designs. "It's like a vending machine without glass," according to Roots Home and Garden shop owner and longtime OCHS patient Michael Rogala. "It's a simple product that states simple sentiments. We are always working on new designs."

Partial sign proceeds benefit OCHS. Learn more and buy a sign at shoproots.com or visit the store kiosk at 193 Commercial St. in Provincetown.



Thank you to the Community We Serve

Outer Cape Health is extremely appreciative of the hundreds of individuals, businesses, foundations and trusts that spontaneously came to our aid at the onset of the pandemic on Cape Cod. We are humbled and forever grateful for all who offered both in-kind services as well as gifts of cash to offset the severe revenue losses we incurred due to reduced visit volumes.

We acknowledge these Super Sustainer Heroes who generously made gifts of \$10,000 and greater:

- AIM Thrift Shop, Inc.
- Cape Cod 5 Charitable Foundation Trust
- The Cape Cod Foundation
- The Cooperative Bank of Cape Cod & Charitable Foundation Trust
- Fife-Cragin Charitable Trust
- Jack Hornor and Ron Skinn
- Ryan Murphy and David Miller
- David and Sharon Neskey
- Shippy Foundation
- Stephen C. Cook Family Foundation

As we gradually extend operations, the support of the community remains as vital as ever.

So many in-kind volunteers and donors also came to our aid, including many mask makers like Jane Corbin of Truro:

A retired Provincetown letter carrier, Jane Corbin was delayed this spring in returning to her seasonal hospitality job. While sheltering in place in her Truro home, she stumbled upon a mask-making tutorial on facebook. "I thought, I can do this. So I started making them from my basement sewing studio. I didn't have a plan originally to make several hundred, but I did!"

With leftover elastic she had saved for a long time and quilting material she had been holding on to "for just the right moment," a mask maker was born. Before she knew it, Corbin was making up to two dozen masks a day in assembly-line fashion from colorful prints.

Her first big "order" came from her husband Ken Oxtoby, a longtime RN at OCHS' Provincetown health center who wanted to share his wife's creations with colleagues.

"I gave Ken all that he wanted and I still had material, so I announced on facebook that I was making them. I started to hear from people I didn't even know. People are very appreciative. I figured we will be wearing these for a long time, so I will continue to make them as long as people want them."

While Corbin has taken special custom orders from businesses, she largely makes her masks for free with a philanthropic twist. "I carry them around and pass them out with a printed flyer asking the recipients to give a donation to Outer Cape Health."

To make a donation to Outer Cape Health Services, visit outercape.org/donate or use the enclosed envelope. For questions on ways to give, contact the OCHS development office at 508-905-2850 or development@outercape.org.



Jane Corbin

Grateful Patients Conquer Coronavirus with Strength from Community

It was mid-March on the Outer Cape. Spring was just around the corner. And then Covid-19 hit for Truro residents Jane Lea and Jennifer Shannon.

Shannon was the first to get sick. "I had a day when I had a really bad headache, chills and slept a lot. I kind of felt like I had a head cold and had difficulty catching my breath." More cause for concern came when Shannon and Lea learned that friends with whom they recently spent time with had tested positive for the coronavirus.

"And then another friend we had recently visited with also tested positive, and then my wife Janie got sick," recalls Shannon.

"We were so cavalier about it at first, thinking it was just the flu," adds Lea. "We called Outer Cape Health and got tested immediately in Wellfleet. It was fast and efficient. Because we had been exposed to confirmed positive individuals, Nurse Practitioner Sue Roderick triaged our call and got us right in to test."

Both Shannon and Lea tested positive, receiving their results within two and three days.

The virus played out for two weeks less virulently with Shannon, but Lea experienced Covid-19 – the disease manifested by the coronavirus – for more than three weeks and with harsher symptoms.

Lea explains, "At first I thought I felt rotten from a cold. I was really tired and even faint at times. I remember coming into the house and Jenn was roasting a chicken,

and I asked, 'Have you put that chicken in the oven yet?'. It was in the oven and I didn't smell it."

"It took us a long time to regroup," says Shannon, who teaches yoga and meditation on the Outer Cape, but is now limited to instructing from her home studio via Zoom. "We were lucky and grateful for friends who brought us soup and left it on our doorstep."

As Shannon and Lea slowly recovered, the effects of the virus lingered as the couple watched an at-risk elderly neighbor grow even sicker from the virus. "We were worried for us and our neighbors. Dr. Bill Shay, our primary care physician, and his team, kept in constant touch and checked up on us and also offered advice, which was really nice."

As early victims of the coronavirus, Shannon and Lea have since participated in an antibody study with a specialist in Plymouth. "We both tested super strong in

antibodies and now have appointments to donate plasma through the Red Cross in Weymouth," shares Shannon. "We hope that we can help others to fight the disease; and yet, we are still not guaranteed we have immunity even though we have strong antibodies."

"Definitely take this virus seriously," advises Lea. "And be in contact with your healthcare providers. We are very grateful to Outer Cape Health and our community for being here for us. I wouldn't want to go anywhere else."



Jennifer Shannon (left) with wife Jane Lea at their Truro home



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49 Harry Kemp Way

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www.outercape.org | Scheduling & Appointments: 508-905-2888

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