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Director's Message

By Michael Greenberger, CHHS Founder and Director



*CHHS Founder and Director
Michael Greenberger, JD*

Welcome to the University of Maryland Center for Health and Homeland Security's (CHHS) Spring 2023 Newsletter. We are looking forward to a busy and productive spring and summer.

Responding to COVID-19 continues to be a focus in our work, as it has for most of the last three years. We are proud of our work during this time period and the support we were able to provide our clients and the communities they serve.

In working on COVID, many on our staff were embedded within local health departments and emergency management agencies, working on everything from setting up and running COVID testing and vaccination sites to dealing with problems like food insecurity caused by the pandemic.

As COVID begins to ease, our work is diversifying and broadening. We are doing more traditional emergency management planning, as well as in-person exercises that test the readiness of our clients' responses to threats of all kinds. We are also tracking legislative developments for our clients and returning our focus to improving and building our diverse graduate academic curriculum, which includes more than 20 courses across four graduate school degree programs.

Additionally, we are returning to conferences and speaking engagements, which are important opportunities to share our work. For example, this spring our staff will be attending and presenting at the annual Preparedness Summit hosted by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). The theme of the Summit mirrors our own work and the trajectory at present: "recover[ing] from the prolonged pandemic response, as we begin to define the endemic phase of COVID-19, natural disasters, emerging infectious diseases, terrorist threats, climate issues, and maintenance of all-hazards plans can now be reexamined."

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Director's Message (continued)

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This summer, a contingent of our Center staff will also attend and speak at the Maryland Emergency Management Association (MDEMA) Symposium, where emergency managers from all over the state gather to discuss challenges, share best practices, and strengthen partnerships. It also provides CHHS with a chance to catch up with many of our own alumni who have become leaders in emergency management across the state.

In the following pages, you will read about some of our new projects, as well as ongoing work that we are honored to continue. From our academic programs at the Maryland Carey School of Law, to our partnerships with state and local agencies, non-profits, hospitals, healthcare facilities, nursing homes, utilities, and many more – we are busier than ever. More importantly, the work we are doing is its own reward and I am happy to be able to share it with you.



CHHS Senior Policy Analyst Michael Block served as an evaluator at the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) Brighton Dam Failure Tabletop Exercise, conducted at the Laurel Emergency Operations Center in Laurel, Maryland. The exercise, whose participants were internal stakeholders from various WSSC departments and external stakeholders from both local and state of Maryland jurisdictions, was an opportunity for WSSC to test their Dam Failure Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and address any subsequent oversights, deficiencies, or otherwise unforeseen issues discovered during the group's participation. As an evaluator, Michael assessed participants' familiarity with their respective roles and responsibilities in preventing, responding to, and recovering from a dam failure situation. Specifically, the crafted scenario was designed to get participants acting in their respective official capacities and walk through what they would and should be doing in the event that Brighton Dam was in failure. Block also helped facilitate and coordinate the event.

CHHS Cyber Expertise Supports Maryland Counties, the State, and the Nation



Maryland Carey Law students benefit greatly from US Cyber Command Officials visiting the classroom to discuss legal and policy issues. These interactions are made possible through the US Cyber Command Academic Engagement Network.

CHHS has been selected by the State of Maryland to support the new State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP)

The State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP) is a new, first-of-its-kind, federal grant program that specifically provides funding to states to address cybersecurity risks and threats to information systems that are owned or operated by state or local governments. State and local governments have historically not had sufficient resources to protect themselves from cyber threats. Through the Infrastructure

Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, Congress appropriated \$1 Billion to be awarded to states over four years. Maryland is a recipient of a portion of these funds.

Given our cyber expertise, CHHS was chosen by the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), the state administrator of the grant, to support the creation of a State Cybersecurity Plan and to draft Investment Justifications for the disbursement of the SLCGP funds within Maryland and its localities. CHHS Cyber Director, Markus Rauschecker, will

lead CHHS's work in this regard and collaborate with MDEM, the Maryland Department of Information Technology (DOIT), as well as the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This will also be another opportunity for our CHHS law student externs to get unique hands-on experience in the field of cybersecurity. We are excited to begin this important work in support of the State and all of its local jurisdictions.

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CHHS Cyber Expertise Supports Maryland Counties, the State, and the Nation (continued)

Continued from page 3

CHHS Completes Cyber Incident Coordination Plan for Anne Arundel County, Maryland

After working with Montgomery County to develop a Cyber Incident Response Plan, CHHS has now also completed a Cyber Incident Coordination Plan for Anne Arundel County. The purpose of this Plan is to outline the County's approach to managing a significant cyber incident that affects County data and/or systems. The Plan complements existing Disaster Recovery plans that focus on the technical response by outlining the roles and responsibilities of all County agencies during a cyber incident and establishing an organizational structure for how these agencies coordinate a cyber incident response. The Plan was developed in close collaboration with the Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management and the Office of Information Technology. The Plan will protect the County's residents, its assets and information, and allow the County to resume normal operations as quickly and efficiently as possible after a cyber incident. CHHS is proud to have worked with Anne Arundel County on this initiative and looks forward to working with more counties on their cyber incident response planning going forward.



CHHS Director Michael Greenberger attends the Maryland Cybersecurity Council Meeting hosted by CHHS and Maryland Carey Law in October.

CHHS Externs Support the Maryland Cybersecurity Council Sub-Committee on Consumer Privacy

CHHS Externs Quinn Laking and Nikita Vozenilek provided instrumental research support to the Maryland Cybersecurity Council's Sub-Committee on Consumer Privacy. The Sub-Committee on Consumer Privacy studied all aspects of consumer privacy and will be releasing a report with recommendations on how to best



CHHS Public Policy and External Affairs Director Ben Yelin Presents at the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Conference on Cybersecurity Policy.

protect Marylanders' personal privacy. Areas of special focus for the Sub-Committee included protecting children's online privacy and protecting health care information. Laking and Vozenilek provided comprehensive insights on the various federal and state laws and initiatives related to these issues. The information they provided was foundational to the Sub-Committee's work. CHHS is grateful to all of our externs for their work.



Members of the Maryland Cybersecurity Council gathered for an in-person meeting in October. The meeting was held in historic Westminster Hall and hosted jointly by CHHS and the University of Maryland Carey School of Law. It was Attorney General Brian Frosh's final meeting as Chair of the Council. CHHS Director Michael Greenberger and CHHS Cyber Director Markus Rauschecker are both members of the Council.

During Inaugural Year, US Cyber Command Academic Engagement Network Has Been a Great Success

It has been a year since the University of Maryland Carey School of Law was selected – as the only law school in the country – to be part of the US Cyber Command's Academic Engagement Network (<https://www.cybercom.mil/Partnerships-and-Outreach/Academic-Engagement>). The goal of the Network is to foster relationships between cutting edge academic institutions and the entire US Cyber Command enterprise. The Network engages the future workforce, increases cyber applied research and

innovation, expands cyber-focused analytic partnerships, and enriches the strategic dialogue on cyber issues.

Since becoming part of the Academic Engagement Network, Maryland Carey Law students have already benefitted tremendously from the resources and opportunities offered through the Network. US Cyber Command Officials have visited students in the classroom to directly engage with them on cutting edge legal and policy issues that the Command wrestles with on a daily basis. This kind of interaction is invaluable to the classroom experience as it demonstrates the direct application of the classroom content to the

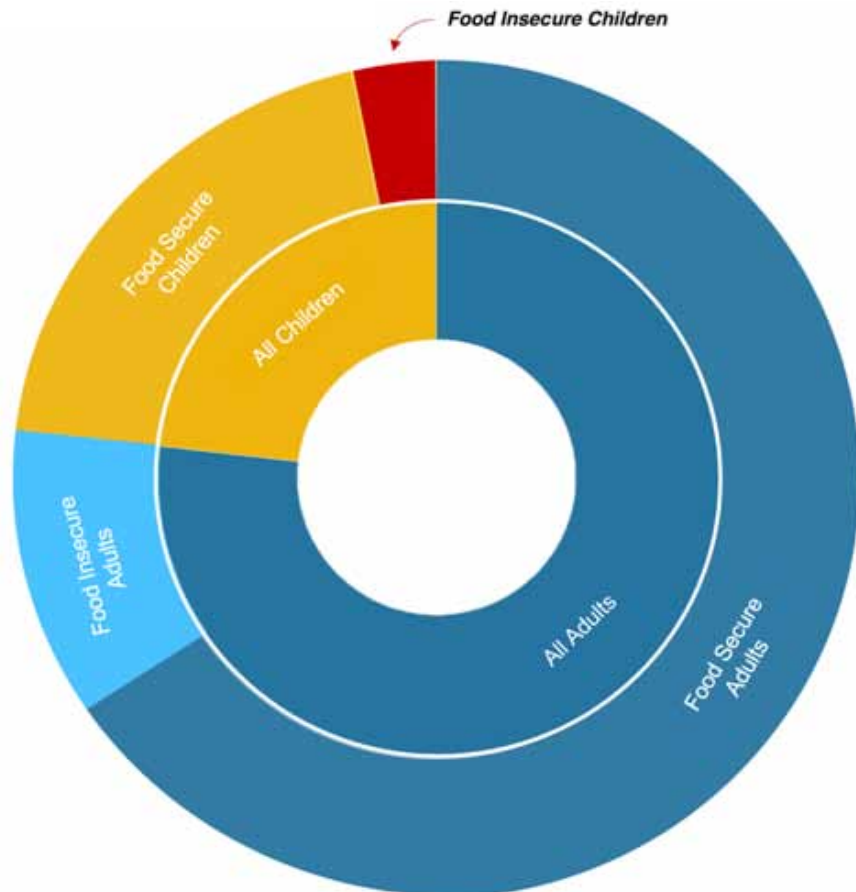
real world. Additionally, two teams of Maryland Carey Law's cyber law students have been selected by US Cyber Command to participate in the first CYBER-RECON Research Competition. Team 1's project is entitled: "Doctrinal Military Language in Kinetic Operations as Applied to Cyber Operations" while Team 2 will provide an "Analysis of the Public-Private Relationships that Shape Cybersecurity Policy." The goal of CYBER-RECON is to provide students with an opportunity to do extensive research on critical issues and for US Cyber Command to directly benefit from that research. We look forward to seeing what our students will come up with!

Helping End Childhood Hunger in Montgomery County

Since June 2022, CHHS has been working with the Montgomery County Food Council to craft a “Plan to End Childhood Hunger in Montgomery County,” which will be released in early 2023. CHHS helped the Food Council conduct more than a dozen strategic brainstorming sessions with nearly two hundred subject matter experts from a range of relevant fields. The project also incorporated data from a survey of more than a thousand residents and feedback from three in-person resident engagement sessions. CHHS helped the Food Council make sense of all this input by synthesizing expert opinions, survey results, and stakeholder feedback into a cogent set of actionable strategies.

Key to this work was gaining an understanding of childhood food insecurity in Montgomery County. Measuring food insecurity is a notoriously difficult task - “[while] its most extreme manifestations are often obvious, many other households facing constraints in their access to food are less identifiable.”¹ There is not a direct measurement or poll of children in Montgomery County aimed at determining their level of food security. That said, CHHS was able to use a set of indirect measures to paint a relatively clear picture of the scale of the need.

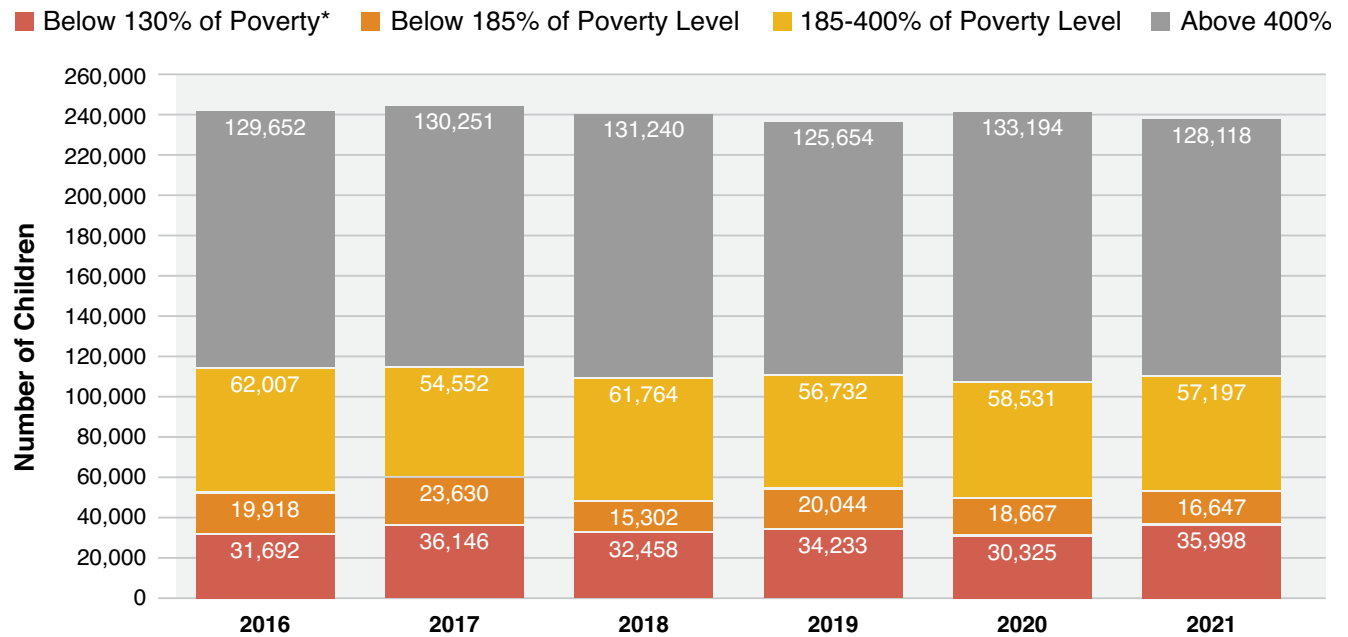
2020 Food Insecurity Breakdown
Montgomery County, Feeding America Data



Gunderson, C., M. Hake, A. Dewey, E. Engelhard (2021). The impact of the Coronavirus on Food Insecurity in 2020 & 2021, Update March 2021 [Data file and FAQ]. Available from Feeding America: research@feedingamerica.org.

¹Webb, Patrick, Jennifer Coates, Edward A. Frongillo, Beatrice Lorge Rogers, Anne Swindale, and Paula Bilinsky. “Measuring Household Food Insecurity: Why It’s So Important and Yet So Difficult to Do.” *The Journal of Nutrition* 136, no. 5 (May 1, 2006): 1404S-1408S. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jn/136.5.1404S>.

Children by Ratio of Household Income to Poverty Level Over Time



Source: US Census, American Community Survey, Table B17024 (2021).

*Census does not report specifically on 130% of poverty level so this is calculated as those below 125% plus 20% of those below 150%.

Among those indicators was data from Feeding America, which estimates that in Montgomery County **33,840 children (13.9% of all children in the County) face food insecurity.**² According to Feeding America, over the past five years, the food insecurity rate among children in Montgomery County has ranged from **10-14%, nearly double that of food insecurity in adults.**³

The relatively high cost of living in Montgomery County makes it important to consider income-based measures like the federal poverty level (FPL), and the University of Washington Self-Sufficiency Standard (SSS). The FPL is a measure used to determine eligibility for certain federal programs and benefits: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program uses **130% of the FPL** as a cutoff for program eligibility, while the National School Lunch Program,

and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children all use **185% of the FPL** as their cutoff. For 2022, the 130% of FPL in the lower 48 states was \$36,075, and 185% of FPL was **\$51,337.50.**⁴ In 2021 there were approximately **36,000 children living in Montgomery County households with income below 130% of FPL, and 52,000 in households below 185% of the FPL.**⁵

Continued on page 8

² Gundersen, C., M. Hake, A. Dewey, E. Engelhard (2021). *The Impact of the Coronavirus on Food Insecurity in 2020 & 2021, Update March 2021* [Data file and FAQ]. Available from Feeding America: research@feedingamerica.org.

³ *Id.*

⁴ 87 FR 3315

⁵ Based on estimates in the U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Table B17024 (2021).

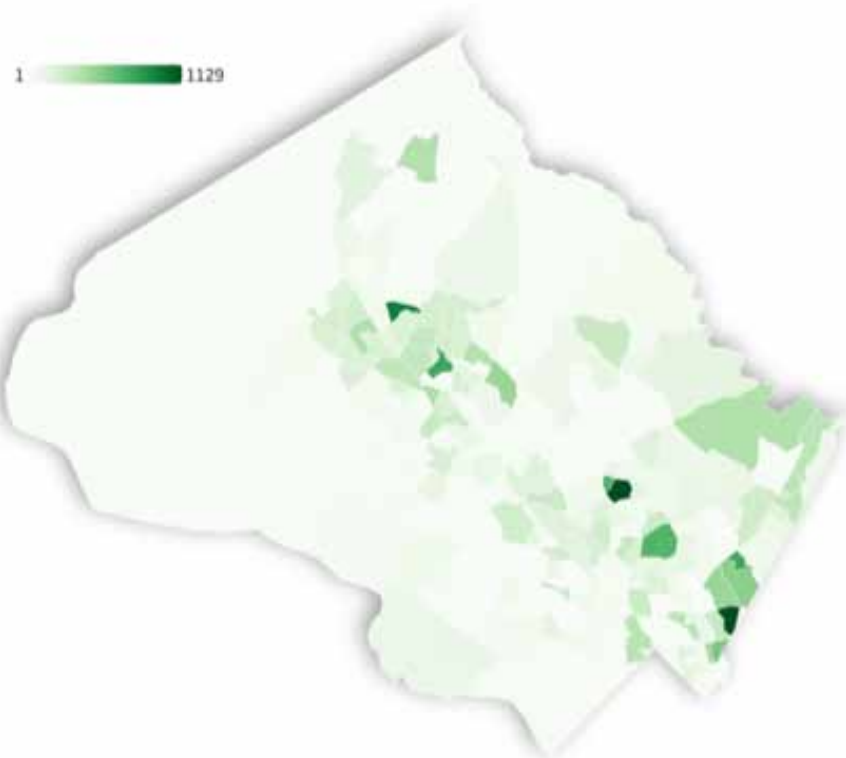
Helping End Childhood Hunger in Montgomery County (continued)

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SSS defines “the amount of income required for working families to meet basic needs at a minimally adequate level, taking into account family composition, ages of children, and geographic differences in costs.”⁶ In Montgomery County, for the most common family compositions, SSS is around **400% of the FPL or \$111,000**.⁷ It is important to consider the SSS because, while not a strict measure of food insecurity, it does give an indication of how many children live in households that do not have enough money to purchase basic needs, including food.

It is also important to consider where children at each household income level live when considering strategic investment. Many parents report transportation as a critical roadblock to receiving assistance, so CHHS helped the Food Council map census data to get a sense of where in the County interventions might be most impactful. With this data, CHHS was able to paint a clear picture of the need in Montgomery County and help the planning team make data-backed recommendations on which childhood food insecurity interventions should be prioritized. CHHS looks forward to the official release of the Montgomery County Plan to End Childhood Hunger in early 2023.

Too Much Income for SNAP, but Less than Self Sufficient Children in households with income between 130% and 400% of Poverty Level*



Source: US Census Data. 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Detailed Table B17024.

**Census does not report specifically on 130% of poverty level so this is calculated as those below 125% plus 20% of those below 150%.*

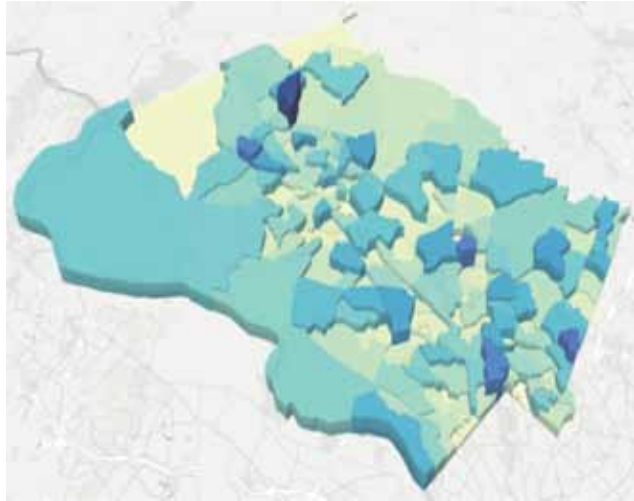
⁶ *The University of Washington Center for Women’s Welfare Self-Sufficiency Standard “defines the income working families need to meet a minimum yet adequate level, taking into account family composition, ages of children, and geographic differences in costs. The Standard is an affordability and living wage economic security measure that provides an alternative to the official poverty measure.” <https://selfsufficiencystandard.org/washington/>*

⁷ *To see specific self-sufficiency levels please explore the Montgomery County Interactive Self-Sufficiency Tool at Interactive Self-Sufficiency Standard.*

Where Children Live Household Income Relative to Poverty Level

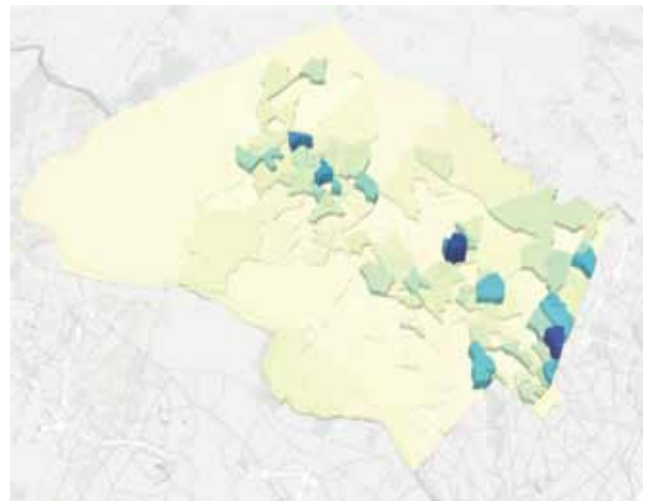
All Children

All Kids 0  3129



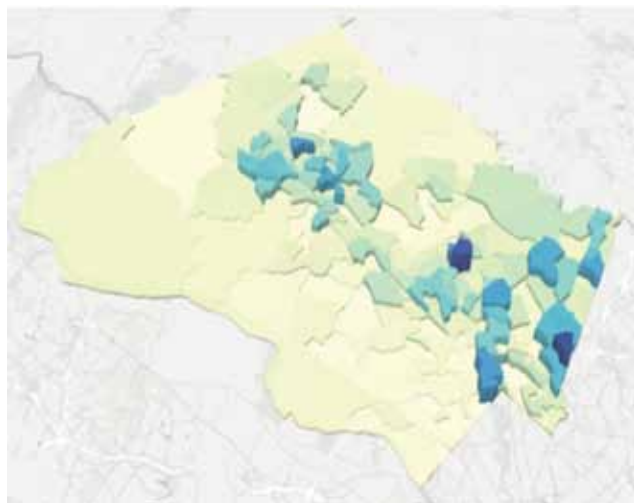
Kids in Households Under 185% of Poverty Level

All Kids 0  1752



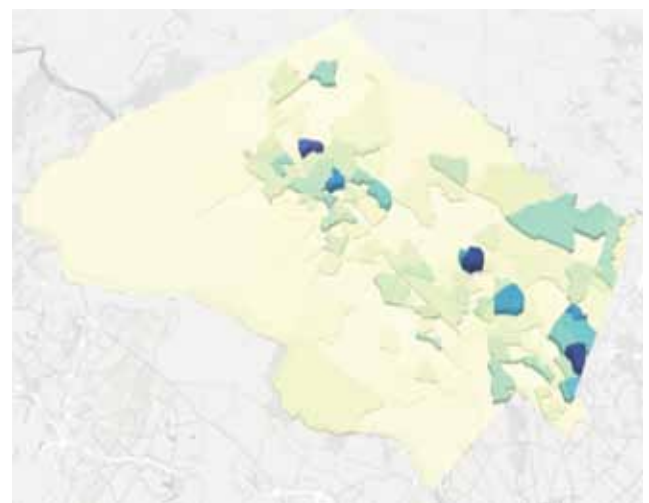
Kids in Households Under 400% of Poverty Level

0  2293



Kids in Households Under 130% of Poverty Level*

0  1129



Source: US Census Data. 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Detailed Table B17024.

* Census does not report specifically on 130% of poverty level so this is calculated as those below 125% plus 20% of those below 150%.

CHHS Externships and Research Assistants



CHHS staff practice packing wounds during a “Stop the Bleed” training presented by Detectives from the Baltimore Police SHIELD unit.

Since its inception in 2002, one of the primary goals of CHHS has been to engage with students. In fact, the very idea of a center that focused on emerging homeland security and health issues was born out of a series of teach-ins conducted by various UMB faculty leaders, including CHHS Founder and Director Michael Greenberger, to help students contextualize the events of 9/11. While the Center developed its professional workforce, it became

clear that there were opportunities for students who wanted to acquire real world experience dealing with homeland security, emergency management, public health, and eventually, cyber security issues. Clearly, the development of specialized academic courses at the law school enabled these students to develop the doctrinal knowledge of how the law informed and intersected with these critical issues; however, many students also wanted more practical experience.

CHHS has been able to meet this need over the years by providing externships for qualifying UMB students. The vast majority of externs originate from students pursuing legal degrees at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, but students from other schools on campus have also been able to complete the CHHS externship, including several representing the Schools of Medicine and Pharmacy. These externships range from 4 to 7 credits, with one credit dedicated to the attendant workshop and the balance of the credits allocated towards weekly client work. It has proven to be of particular interest to J.D. students who are pursuing the Certificate in Cybersecurity and Crisis Management because the externship satisfies the Certificate’s experiential requirement.

Each externship at CHHS is comprised of two principal components: practical work with clients and classroom learning with subject matter experts. To satisfy the classroom learning component, CHHS externs are required to attend biweekly lectures that are taught by senior CHHS staff and pertain to relevant areas of our work. These topics include: federalism and Emergency Management, emerging issues in cyber security, threats to public health, continuity of operations, and recovery operations, to name a few.

The rest of the externship, which also happens to be the most significant component, is the direct work that externs complete for clients under the supervision of CHHS senior staff. This arrangement has allowed many externs to work on critical issues they may not otherwise encounter until much later in their careers. Our externs have worked on legal projects as far ranging as planning for presidential inaugurations, investigating emerging cyber threats with CHHS partner agencies and businesses, analyzing proposed legislation, developing testimony for the Maryland General Assembly, researching novel legal responses to domestic terrorism, assisting with international delegations through the State Department, and implementing countermeasures to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations. While the nature of the work that CHHS clients have during any given semester will ultimately dictate the type of work that externs complete, most of our externs are able to be assigned to projects that fit within their area of legal interest.

CHHS also hires a select number of Research Assistants (RAs) each semester. Unlike externs, RAs do not receive course credit for their

work experience; instead, it is a paid opportunity. Research Assistants work for CHHS clients at an hourly rate under the supervision of senior staff. In addition to the type of client work conducted by externs, RAs also assist CHHS teaching faculty in the development of their courses at the law school, as well as other areas of legal interest and research. Most RAs begin their relationship with CHHS through the externship program and demonstrate that they would be a good candidate for hire as an RA.

CHHS hires many of its professional staff from graduates who completed a CHHS externship and/or worked as an RA for the Center. For further information about this program please contact us at <https://www.mdchhs.com/contactus/>.



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Spotlight: CHHS's Long Term Care Facility Tabletop Exercises

Long Term Care Facilities (LTCFs), including nursing homes, house some of the most vulnerable residents in Maryland and in the United States. In Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Management, both healthcare and vulnerable populations are a focus, and yet time and time again—in the cases of Hurricanes Katrina, Harvey, and Irma, Superstorm Sandy, and the COVID-19 pandemic—LTCFs often enter the narrative as a tragic story; missed opportunities that led to lives lost and families devastated.

In 2022, CHHS received funding to help change this narrative. Reaching out to Maryland-based nursing homes, a team of CHHS staffers offered 5 free, community-based tabletop exercises (TTXs). The TTXs were conducted in-person at University of Maryland-based facilities across the state: UM Hagerstown, the UM Donaldson Brown Conference Center, UM Southern Maryland, Universities of Shady Grove, and UM Baltimore. Public Health Program Director Trudy Henson, along with Senior Law and Policy Analysts Chang Won Kang, Hanna Leonard, and Julia Zheng, created and ran the exercises, as well as drafted After Action Reports for the participating facilities.



CHHS Senior Law and Policy Analysts Hanna Leonard and Julia Zheng greet participants arriving for a Long Term Care Facility tabletop exercise.



Participants discuss best practices at a tabletop exercise hosted by CHHS at the University of Maryland, Baltimore in December.

The half-day trainings allowed for multiple facilities to discuss hypothetical scenarios in order to identify strengths of preparedness and areas for improvement. Facilities were able to work collaboratively, sharing best practices and past successes. Some of these successful practices—such as patient tracking or evacuation—were facility- or region-specific, but

many translated to LTCFs across the state. As Ms. Leonard said, the work “allowed the Center to work directly with the community. By reaching out to these facilities and helping them directly, we not only were able to learn new things about emergency preparedness, but we were also able to tailor each session to better fit the needs of these facilities.”



CHHS Senior Law and Policy Analysts Hanna Leonard, Julia Zheng, and Chang Won Kang stand overlooking the Patapsco River at the historic Donaldson Brown Center, after conducting a tabletop exercise in October.

A recurring theme of the sessions was the need for LTCFs to have a bigger voice in the Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Management planning community. At several tabletop sessions, CHHS was honored to have representatives from Regional Health Care Coali-

tions, local health departments, or emergency management agencies. The representatives' presence allowed LTCFs to put faces to names and learn how those organizations and resources can help LTCFs during an emergency, strengthening the community network of response.

"As people live longer, I was always concerned about their well-being when they need some support from our society. By conducting several exercises, I was able to learn that nursing homes in Maryland are well trained and prepared for any emergency in order to serve their residents."

Chang Won Kang

CHHS Senior Law & Policy Analyst

The need for additional community-based trainings persists, and facilities across the state expressed their appreciation to CHHS for helping meet this need. Ms. Zheng found the dedication LTCFs have to "providing a safe and engaging environment for their residents heartwarming," and their "effort and passion for providing better care to the thousands of Marylanders" made assisting with the tabletops "even more rewarding." CHHS looks forward to continuing this service in 2023 and helping to make every LTCF's narrative the same: *Disaster struck, and we were ready.*

CHHS Aids in Effort to Research State Disaster Relief Fund

On September 1, 2021, the City of Annapolis and portions of Anne Arundel County were hit with a strong EF-2 tornado. The tornado caused the collapse of three structures and damage to dozens of others. Normally, in the aftermath of such a destructive storm, the local government would work with state officials to obtain a disaster declaration, which would unlock access to critical federal disaster funds. However, due to the extremely localized nature of this storm and its damage, there was no statewide disaster declaration. As a result, Annapolis and Anne Arundel County residents and businesses were left without critical resources.

To address these types of scenarios, the Maryland General Assembly passed SB0310/HB0386. The bill specified that when a local emergency does not merit a statewide disaster declaration, local officials can declare a local state-of-emergency and get access to funds through the statewide Small, Minority, and Women-Owned Businesses Account. The bill, however, only applies to the City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County. Efforts to expand the bill's reach to



Raising nearly \$1,000 for the Special Olympics, a dedicated team from CHHS participated in the Polar Bear Plunge on February 3, 2023. Chris Webster, Christine Gentry, Mike Vesely, and Trudy Henson (not pictured) represented CHHS in this chilly and admirable adventure.

the state's other jurisdictions were stripped out during the legislative process. Thus, the policy problem remains: what resources can local jurisdictions obtain in the absence of a statewide disaster declaration?

Lawmakers included a provision of SB0310/HB0386 intended to address this problem by creating a summer study to investigate the feasibility of a statewide disaster relief fund. The legislation called for the creation of

a workgroup, made up of a diverse set of stakeholders from the public and private sector to help address these issues. The study was overseen by the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM). MDEM brought on CHHS staff to do policy research and analysis for the study. During the Fall of 2022, CHHS staff, externs, and research assistants produced research on how the eight other states with statewide disaster relief funds run their

Funds for the Center for Health and Homeland Security are administered by the University of Maryland, Baltimore Foundation, Inc.



CHHS Senior Policy Analyst Patrick Fleming assists in the Baltimore City Emergency Operations Center during a water contamination incident last Fall when the presence of E. coli was detected in West Baltimore and some of the surrounding areas.

programs, including funding mechanisms and which events qualified as triggering “disasters.” CHHS was also able to conduct research on more “under-the-radar” issues, such as whether funds disbursed would be affected by the Biden administration’s “Justice 40” initiative, which requires that federal funds on climate resilience and emergency response be distributed at least 40% to low-income and minority areas, and the constitutionality of the Catastrophic Event Account fund being managed directly by MDEM, rather than through the Governor’s

traditional budget authority. In all, CHHS research made up the bulk of the background briefing materials for each of several workgroup meetings that took place this past Fall.

With the assistance of CHHS’s public policy research, the workgroup undertaking this summer study presented its findings and recommendations to the Maryland General Assembly in time for the 2023 legislative session. Lawmakers are expected to consider a proposal to allow units of



CHHS Senior Policy Analyst Michael Block supports the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) on a variety of Emergency Management planning initiatives. This fall, he had the opportunity to participate with WSSC in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s Emergency Action Plan Dam Functional Exercise.

local government to obtain disaster assistance even in the absence of a statewide disaster declaration.

CHHS was proud to take the lead on conducting policy research for this workgroup, and its staff and law student externs and research assistants are available to conduct similar policy research for state and local clients.

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Johns Hopkins Hospital Active Assailant Tabletop Exercise (TTX)



CHHS designed, facilitated, and evaluated an active assailant tabletop exercise for Johns Hopkins Hospital. CHHS Continuity Director Eric Oddo leads hospital participants through a facilitated discussion of the scenario to test emergency procedures.

On November 1, 2022, CHHS facilitated a Tabletop Exercise at Johns Hopkins Hospital. A Tabletop Exercise is a conversational simulation of how an organization would respond to a hypothetical emergency event. Continuity Program Director Eric Oddo served as lead facilitator while Senior Law and Policy Analysts Frank Maldarelli, Chang Won Kang, and Julia Zheng served as evaluators. This exercise featured a recently terminated hospital employee who gained access to a medical unit and proceeded to carry out a mass shooting resulting in several fatalities. The assailant then barricaded himself in a family lounge area for an extended period.

Exercise players were asked to comprehensively assess the hospital's ability to do the following things: (1) activate its mass notification system

and alert its staff during an active assailant event, (2) deliver timely and accurate external communications with the media and the public, (3) execute active assailant response procedures, i.e. "run, hide, fight," (4) activate and implement the Incident Command System (ICS), (5) triage injured patients, (6) coordinate with Baltimore City Police, and (7) implement its Business Continuity Plan.

CHHS delivered an After-Action Report (AAR) to Johns Hopkins Hospital leadership in December, which identified strengths, areas of improvement, and corresponding corrective actions related to each of the aforementioned objectives. The exercise was considered a success by all involved.

Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD) Continuity of Operations (COOP) Program Development

In July 2022, CHHS began a year-long project to develop a comprehensive Continuity of Operations (COOP) program for the Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD). MSD – a diverse, bilingual community with campuses in both Columbia and Frederick – provides free public education to deaf and hard-of-hearing Maryland residents from birth to 21 years old.

A COOP program ensures that an organization's essential business functions will seamlessly continue in the aftermath of a natural or man-made emergency event. CHHS Continuity Program Director Eric Oddo and Senior Law and Policy Analyst Frank Maldarelli, via dozens of collaborative workshops, are guiding MSD leadership through an information gathering methodology required by the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM). It ensures that all Maryland state agencies are identifying essential functions, staffing needs, physical and electronic resource requirements, and contingency solutions in a consistent and standardized manner. This project is scheduled for completion at the end of June 2023, at which time MSD will have a COOP program in full compliance with MDEM requirements.



Detectives from the Baltimore Police SHIELD unit trained CHHS staff on life-saving skills during a "Stop the Bleed" training this winter.

That's a Wrap

It's been almost three years since our lives were rocked by a global pandemic. A timeline of events, which no one could have predicted involving ups and downs and unpredictable variants. On top of the pandemic, social unrest created complexities to respond. Just on the heels of COVID-19, 2021 brought the third-most active Atlantic Hurricane season on record. If these real-world scenarios and circumstances were injects from an exercise, participants wouldn't believe it to be realistic in nature. Some experts claim our lack of preparedness was due to a lack of imagination. It could be argued we can only go as far as we've been. Uncharted territory is impossible to predict or prepare for fully. Additional complications with preparing for the seriousness of COVID-19 stem from previous "false alarms" in the decade prior: SARS, H1N1, Ebola, and Avian Influenza.

This all begs the question...
what have we learned?



CHHS Continuity Director Eric Odde facilitated a COOP workshop in Frederick County in February, 2023. The workshop served as a tool to familiarize county agency COOP coordinators with updates to the county COOP template and review lessons learned from COVID-19 as a case study.

Depending on where you're standing and the angle from which you are looking, perspectives and experiences vary. However, major themes have remained a constant. The required response pace of the pandemic was faster than the status quo. Communications in the Information Age require an overhaul. Enhanced coordination and an overall strategy from the federal, state, and local level

is essential and must be addressed with specific plans and policies, not mere planning assumptions. Constant success stories stem from the coordination and skill sets of local emergency management personnel. With all these lessons learned, turning them into recommendations for enhancements can start with the foundational emergency management plans.

CHHS has been working with clients to turn the lessons learned from the After-Action Reports into concrete and actionable improvements. Through integration of emergency management plans, policies, and programs revamping the Emergency Operations Plan can create the momentum necessary to fully optimize daily operations and the infrastructure for the future.



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