

End Date	How is our state doing now when it comes to delivering health and environmental services?	What are our state's greatest challenges to delivering effective, efficient, and accessible health and environmental services in the future?	If you could improve 1-3 things about our state's health and environmental services, what would they be and how do you envision they be implemented? (to best be implemented?)
2021-08-17 16:54:16		<p>1.Executive Leadership turnover—The rapid turnover is difficult to assure consistency in direction given that it takes several years to even learn the agency. 2.Past reductions in regional infrastructure has had a negative impact on the bench strength necessary to adequately respond for daily operations as well as outbreaks and emergencies. For example, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, we added an additional 1600+plus contract/hourly employees and finding people with leadership skills necessary to respond was virtually impossible. Currently we have 600-plus temporary hourly/contract staff remaining and we will likely have them for the duration of the pandemic to allow regions to continue to effectively respond to COVID. The regions are still in the process of backfilling leadership and general staff positions in the regions' local health department sites as we build back up to full capacity. 3.A significant number of emerging and/or reemerging infectious diseases and responses have recently impacted our state/regions (e.g., COVID, hepatitis A, syphilis, TB, measles, mumps, etc.). 4.The regions are responsible for Medical Needs Sheltering (MNS) during public health emergency events, particularly hurricane responses. Currently we have approximately 10 nurse vacancies which inhibit our ability to staff shelters. 5.Preparation for the next big event. (pandemic, regional outbreaks, hurricane, earthquake, etc.) is going to take: 1.Commitment from legislature—infrastructure funding in the form of recurring dollars 2.Additional staffing infrastructure—more boots on the ground to build response capabilities 3.Informed planning, to include region input from those who coordinated events and who worked events at the local level. 6.Inadequate Public Health Funding, a America's Health Rankings for South Carolina 132nd for per capita PH funding (state & federal dollars), and 142nd for overall community health outcomes. 6.Per capita State PH Funding (State Health Access Data Assistance Center, University of Minnesota) *in 2008: \$41 •in 2019 (pre COVID): \$27. County funding is inadequate for facility upkeep or provisions of PH services. In 1981 the counties were released from their responsibility to provide local PH services in their community. Similar Language and amounts in State Budget in 1981 hasn't really changed in 40 years—in 1981 legislation was passed in S.C. that allowed county employees working at County Health Departments to become state employees. The cost for all counties via the 1981 change was \$5,621,120. The act required the individual County's cost to be deducted from Aid to subdivision, the state Income Tax portion and the amount would be the same each year. Now 40 years later SFY 22, \$5,430,697. (per South Carolina General Assembly - 124th Session, 2021-2022 - Part 18 SECTION 34 - JO40- DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL - 2021-2022 Conference Committee Report, 34.2 and 34.6) 7. We are challenged by politics influencing public health practice. For example, in the COVID response DHEC routinely couldn't follow our established response plans because of political interference. 8. Hiring vacancies run between approximately 20% and 30% in all Legislators, the incompetent governor, lobbyists, politically appointed agency directors who doesn't have the experience nor the expertise. On the environmental side, our upper management have gotten very politically loyal, not listening to scientific evidence but rather giving polluters another unpermitted chance to come into compliance while the environment continues to deteriorate. Decide one way or the other, but if the agency is split, beware that there will be a lot of confusion in the next 10 years or so until we all figure out how to navigate the new system.</p>	<p>1. Put more funding into DHEC. 2. Restructure nursing salaries at DHEC to promote nurse recruitment/retention. Request a copy of the plan that Office of Nursing submitted to public health leadership.</p>
2021-08-14 19:40:47	Doing the best we can. This issue of splitting the agency comes up every few years by some disgruntled, angry representative of whom ever, or when there is a health or environmental disaster/emergency. An 'advisory' groups is formed consisting of folks that have conflict of interest with DHEC, they meet, talk, yet another salary surveys done that costs money and time, etc etc etc. The outcome has always been the same: They realize it would cost crap load of money, resources, etc to split the agency! However, none of these groups read previously done studies that had cost the state at least thousands to prepare. Read the study that was done in 2016, Tommy Lavender and his group, instead of asking to do yet another comparative study SC vs GA and NC! All these studies has the same conclusion: NONE COMPETITIVE LOW SALARIES, HIRING AND RETENTION, INCREASED WORK LOAD, DISGUSTING WORK ENVIRONMENTS. To add to that, we have been dealing with politically appointed directors that have wrecked havoc by their meddling and incompetence. We had a pretty good system of bureau level IT services after it was merged into a big mess where now with can't help from, and the huge gig economy mess of Human Resources led by some joke brought in by the second Catherine who made everything harder, confusing leading to delays, noting etc! While we applaud Dr. Simmer's efforts, this again is a useless endeavor! The bottomline issues needs to be addressed before haphazardly going into dividing the agency. You realize that if the agency is split and merged with other agency, services will be disrupted, right? Everybody is going to blame the other for not getting the job done, or multiple decisions made that are not in sync with each other, changing offices which cost money and time. The current mentality of LAW MAKERS and OUR OWN UPPER MANAGEMENT is slave work: Do a lot of work but don't pay a penny more. Instead of having these useless meetings and trying to make a cabinet agency, focus on how to better our salaries, value and respect us, improve our work environment, bring the IT back to bureau level where they actually know what we need. Our IT folks are great, but they can't help us at bureau level because they have no idea of our needs. Also, why the heck are these folks are in the environmental health sub committee? SC Restaurant and Lodging Association, SC Convenience & Petroleum Marketers Association, SC Chamber of Commerce, SC Department of Agriculture, ReGenesis Community Development Corporation, Home Builders Association, SC Farm Bureau??? This is a new level of stupidity! ADDRESS OUR NEEDS, WE ARE THE EXPERTS AT WHAT WE DO, NOT YOU!!! Stop appointing useless, inexperienced agency directors. By the time they figure our how complex DHEC is, they want out because they can't handle it. Our retired upper management doesn't even want to engage in these surveys, because they had to work on these repeatedly during their careers. Also, they don't think it would make an iota of difference. We are tired, under paid, over work. Give us what we need and step aside so we can do the jobs we have committed our careers to do.		<p>1) Bring our salaries to a competitive level and improve our work environments. Unless these are done, revolving door of continuing to hire new employees, invest money in them to train them and for them to turn around and leave the agency in a few years will never, ever stop. 2) Legislators, the governor, listen to us: we make sound, evidence based scientific and medical decisions, you are not the experts, but WE ARE. If you know how we do come to these conclusions, you would understand, and that's a maybe, how diligent we are. 3) Stop meddling with DHEC. Each of these 'work groups' have reached the same conclusion: Steady as she goes and leave the agency as is. 4). Go do your jobs of legislating without being swayed by others and your political ideology and work on doing what's good for the people, and the environment. Had the governor not aligned his self with that orange headed loser, and listened to expert scientific and medical advice and actually considered how many lives would be lost, we would not be back to this horrible pandemic epidemic again.</p>
2021-08-14 12:48:52	Terrible due to the governor's recent ban on mask mandates in schools. It's a failure of competent leadership on a massive scale, and it's already proving to have tragic consequences.	Our governor	It would be great if South Carolinians had a governor and legislators that actually cared about our health instead of letting disinformation and conspiracy theories dictate how they govern.
2021-08-14 08:35:53	We're doing ok. I believe the agency has its community's best interest at heart. I'm concerned, however, that we do not have the right leadership in place to move us into the next phase of where we need to be. I was part of the newspaper industry when it changed over night. I saw the changes happening at lightning speed and decisions weren't being made fast enough. I feel like I'm watching history repeat itself. Leadership should represent our state and agency. It should be people who have been on the front line and know what is happening in the community. It reminds me a lot of our political leaders, these days who think they know what's best. How can you know if you aren't doing this listening and working ?	<p>1. leadership, put the right people in charge -> a huge concern I have is non-medical/clinical leadership making decisions for those of us who are licensed professionals. Through COVID, I've seen many things that have made me concerned for my license. 2. Paying attention to rapid changes. There are other agencies and services that can do what we do. If not careful, we'll make ourselves irrelevant. 3. Services need to be virtual, in the home, in the community meeting patients where they are. 4. Our clients biggest challenges are transportation, childcare, and insurance/finances - we have to provide services in a way that remove those barriers. 4. The community has lost faith and trust in DHEC, DHEC seems to "react" and that is becoming our reputation. 5. We need to create a professional image. Our buildings are out of date, they need to be spruced up at the very least where clients are in the building. Jeans policy is tacky. Nurses should be in matching scrubs with DHEC logo, so we have a continued presence.</p>	<p>1. Leadership. Put people in place who dictate how they govern. Clinical, licensed professionals, should be managed by other medical personnel. I hear all too often of people getting promoted into positions for reasons other than professional, this needs to stop. We're losing quality, valuable personnel because of it. 2. Services need to be accessible. I'm the home, virtual, or in the community. All day, every day. On the weekends for a few hours, and after 5 weekdays (for a few hours), we talk about accessibility, we need to be accessible. 3. Retention of, good, valuable nurses. Pay and incentives. I work here because of the flexibility to work from home, Monday thru Friday 9-5, benefits and retirement, holidays. Those are valuable. It's not about money. Make those known. There are things you can do for recruitment that aren't always monetary. Work from home, birthday day off, the incentives work!</p>
2021-08-13 22:46:03	We have good people and researchers in place, but we are thwarted by politics.	Politics and funding. Competitive salaries and work-family balance to recruit and retain excellent staff for health/environmental services/initiatives.	see above
2021-08-13 15:49:11	Services need to be offered remotely when possible. Clients have trouble with transportation. Also telehealths need to be an option. More clients would be reached.	Staff are underpaid and some are looking for higher paying jobs. Nurses especially. This will cause a shortage.	I think DHEC needs to be more progressive in the way they think about services.
2021-08-13 15:06:37	Good given the numerous budget cuts made to our agency.	Politicians	<p>1. Hire a director from within the agency. 2. Let us do our jobs and don't let politics get involved. 3. Keep Health and Environment together, don't split the agency. What affects the environment affects people health and vice versa.</p>
2021-08-13 13:48:45	I think DHEC has been pandemic focused and worked hard on doing their best in COVID response. I do think that some other programs and care has suffered because of all the extensive focus on COVID at times.	One of the greatest challenges is being accessible. For SC to truly meet many of the citizen's needs we need to go another step and meet them where they are at... be in for prenatal education, STD testing and awareness, vaccinations in home or off site locations, health screenings in local community locations like churches or centers. Not everyone can come here in a traditional 9-5 capacity or has the transportation to do so. It's time to step up and do more!	Women's care..... maternal health care, pregnancy support, postpartum support lacks severely. Even women with significant means are affected by rates of maternal morbidity, postpartum depression and anxiety, postpartum complications. Programs that are beneficial are being cut all in the name of the dollar. We will never see changes occur in this sector if we don't focus on the facts, keep programs in place like Nurse Family Partnership for example and try to make changes. I hope this action group does something and is more than a great idea that implements nothing except meetings without follow through.
2021-08-13 11:28:50	There aren't many opportunities to increase monetary income to support environmental programs. The environmental service areas need to be streamlined and expanded.	Money. Paying your employees fairly - not just "engineers". All you talk about is how you can pay "engineers" better, it is the talent in the data processing and regions that need retention as well. A new employee should not be making the same amount as someone in the same position for 3-5 years. Cost of living raises don't coincide with the rate of inflation over the years. State benefits are not comparable to private sector benefits anymore - this has deteriorated. No one works for the state for the "benefits".	<p>1. Allow more public environmental information to be accessed through websites. The information can be behind a paywall. The public can pay for a subscription to download as much information as they want or a one time fee for specific documents that no one needs to pull (save personnel) because the documents are already online. Fees are for maintenance and updating of information by the departments that validate it. Reduce FOIA requests and increase transparency of data. Even the data available now should be paid content. Come on DHEC, utilize modern technology. 2. Streamline the regional personnel. Water/wastewater regional folks should be managed by the BOW. They should not have to do air inspections or UST inspections. The regional offices should be managed by Environmental Affairs. The regional offices need to be evaluated. The amount of driving/gas could be saved by splitting up the regions more. 3. Increase teleworking for permit writers and data/report evaluators. Teleworking should be a right in state government. It saves money and employees make less of an environmental impact when not driving to work every day. Money could be saved by employee office sharing by alternating teleworking days. Reduce the amount of space that personnel need and move programs into newer facilities. Save electricity, office supplies, office space, parking, traffic, etc. Central office positions could be posted for anyone living anywhere around the state, not just in the Columbia area, broaden the talent area. Why couldn't a person living in Greenville go to the regional office for in-office days? Savings could be used for pay raises for retention.</p>
2021-08-13 09:07:15	Okay but the legislature is not funding DHEC well enough to be doing great.	Political interference from the legislature and the governor or governor's office. In addition, not funding these areas well enough to be able to provide the services everyone needs.	<p>1. More funding from the legislature via putting more funding in the budget bill. 2. Keep the legislature out of health and environmental services by not making DHEC or a future agency a cabinet agency. If you make a future agency that does environmental or public health a cabinet agency you will see the following consequences: 1. Many very experienced staff will retire or leave the agency because they don't want the governor, governor's office or the legislature telling them how to do their job based on political motivations. Folks leaving will negatively affect providing health and environmental services to South Carolina. 2. Having a new agency be a cabinet agency will allow all bureau directors and others to be politically appointed which means health and environmental services are no longer independent, they are politically influenced and that means South Carolina citizens will not be looked after, all decisions will be about politics and winning votes to stay in office for one party or the other. 3. This will cost tax payers so much money that could be used to invest better public health and environmental services or pay for badly needed things like better education.</p>
2021-08-12 18:46:44	Doing better on the environmental side than the health side. Recruitment of nurses is difficult because of low salary and no clear clinical career ladders	Lack of w/ll access for all state citizens	Allow the regions to hire their own HR Staff
2021-08-12 16:58:24	I think the state does a fairly decent job with delivering health service. Improvement is needed in environmental, some departments in environmental are spread too thin.	Funds and then better appropriation of funds given to DHEC by the citizens of SC.	<p>1. Have more access, the health side has many offices, but environmental is isolated, services should be available in every county. 2. Pay your frontline employees better. 3. Have more educational forums or classes about environmental issues and how the public can help.</p>
2021-08-12 13:54:42	Fair. On many environmental issues, politics precludes impartial, fair, health and science based decisions that are based on scientific fact and stake hold input. The current political situation imparts ignorance and "I want it my way, damn the consequences" type decisions that will become accentuated with a leadership process that is more biased to politics than the current oversight board/director process. More care and should be done to integrated the benefits of having the health and environmental programs in one agency.	Politics and the lack of correct public information of the facts and truth of situations and science via social media driving decisions is an obstacle that needs to be improved. Public education and the need for critical thinking skills for all ages and ethnic groups have to be improved. Communication of highly technical scientific information and the nuances of the consequences of different decision processes without bias of misinformation to the public, industry and political decision makers through diverse information media and outlets is an ongoing impediment that will need a range of innovative processes to overcome. It is imperative that information is delivered in a factual and non-spin control manner.	Better delivery of health services in an equitable manner to all levels of society. Limiting environmental exploitation of resources that benefit only a limited few through broader and open to the media processes. Open access to information and better check and balance, verification of information processes. Leave the current Agency structure in place but develop better communication and information sharing systems between Agencies, to the legislature and up and down the DHEC level of management and staff.
2021-08-12 12:31:51	Average	The agency is too big. Too much bureaucracy and red tape. Many employees don't innovate or try to make things better because any idea gets lost in upper management. Meanwhile upper management are stretched to the max with various initiatives of other things that they end up doing all of them half-assed. Breaking up the agency would allow for more targeted improvement efforts that would be more successful in the end.	Break up big agencies. Let environment focus on environment and health focus on health.
2021-08-12 10:51:46	Very well. The success of both health and environmental protection parallels the funding available. Adequate funding and staff salaries would ensure even greater success.	The systems, processes, programs, and services are in place. Inadequate funding and staff compensation/retention/retention are the greatest challenges. The agency is not a competitive employer.	-Improved funding for programs, services, and staffing -Less political meddling (COVID-19 response has become a political football), not a public health initiative -Consistent leadership (Director position should be sought from inside agency. Outside Directors have proven to be short-lived, inexperienced in environmental or public health issues, if not both.
2021-08-12 10:50:57	I would give SC a 6 on a 1-10 scale for its delivery of health and environmental services. Predominantly, I attribute the mediocrity to a lack of understanding by the General Assembly of how those services could and should be improved, which results in a lack of adequate funding for such improvements.	Aside from the resistance to change within the legislative and executive branches, the greatest challenge to delivery of sufficient health and environmental services would be splitting those categories into 2 or more agencies. Service delivery will be more effective, efficient, and accessible if health and environmental services remain within one agency.	A long-term commitment by our state's leaders to the improvement of health equity and environmental justice would be the most significant improvement we could make for our residents. Implementation must be guided by local leaders who know their specific community's needs, as those needs differ widely from place to place. A statewide, multi-disciplinary task force could ensure the mission remains focused over the life of the project and that distribution of funding was fair and equitable.
2021-08-12 10:45:58	From the environmental side I believe we do the best we can with the lack of employees, and the lack of pay. Unfortunately with the lack of employees, lack of sufficient pay, and having to cover such large areas we are backed up and not doing the best by the citizens of SC	Paying employees enough. If you do not pay the employees enough they will not provide the best work. You can't expect us to bust our asses for a joke of a salary while the higher ups who sit in the office get paid all the money.	Invest in your employees. Make us as well as you do our best. I'm not going to break my back just because I get a kudos or a good job. Show us that you care. Don't waste money on blankets and speakers and actually pay us what we are worth. Stop giving raises and bonuses to the higher ups who are SO DISCONNECTED that they have no clue what is actually happening.
2021-08-12 10:39:40	Great. Dividing the agency up would cause impacts on the relationships that are already in place to complete the job. Adding DMH or other agencies would just make the agency even larger and more difficult.	The ability to compete with the private sector, the federal government, and other states with recruiting and retention of qualified staff. Pay equity across the agency and compared to those outside the agency is a huge limiting factor. Region concept. Each region is its own independent agency. Most have their own "rules" and protocols. DHEC should be a statewide agency. The process should be the same no matter what DHEC location you are in. These differences not only cause confusion with staff but with the public.	1. Streamline reporting requirements. Make systems more user-friendly. 2. Streamline the ability to release data, make public data public. 3. Restructure DHEC executive leadership format. Support services should be done the same way across the state and report to one "ELT" member, such as a Chief of Staff.

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2021-08-12 10:24:08	I think as a state we can do better. I know many people do not like mandates however with the increase of COVID numbers its necessary to ensure lives are saved. We have lost 10,000 to COVID due to not having proper systems in place.	One is not being as proactive. Not have the latitude to make decision for the state with out the buy in of the legislature. Also taking in consideration staff feelings and concerns	Retention of staff- You have to pay people what they are worth. Mandates on Public Health- we have to ensure we are taking care of the majority of people not just a hand full. Positive leadership- Visionaries who know the mission and live by the mission
2021-08-12 10:22:12	The state of SC operates on a very small budget when it comes to health and environmental services yet it continues to do so with great skill and flexibility. The state of our environment effects the state of our health; the current structure allows a holistic approach.	Funding Funding Funding Political support	1. Increase recurring funds so critical efforts are based off of temporary dollars. 2. Increase awareness of the essential and valuable work currently done by health and environmental services. 3. Partner more with other states to learn and emulate best practices.
2021-08-12 10:20:33	Average.	One of the greatest challenges is access to data. Data is the future of public health, and our own archaic, asinine statutes prevent us from accessing and diversifying our data sets. We should be able to have a digital footprint "from birth to death" and link in data sources from DHEC, DOE, DSS, DMH, etc. etc. Access to all data is critical in advancing public health.	Director turnover at DHEC is a massive issue. You can't expect employees to get excited for and support agency initiatives when they know it'll likely be pointless because there will be a new director in the next 2-3 years.
2021-08-12 10:20:07	Our state is doing a good job, but DHEC should stand stronger for the people of SC and challenge the Governor on his recommendations for Covid-19. DHEC employees the Public Health experts, so they should always stand firm in their knowledge and recommendations no matter what the Governor has to say.	The greatest challenge in my opinion is HAVING to do what the Governor says. It would be great if Public Health leaders could speak the facts and go with public health recommendations that would save lives and not have politics determine what to do.	1. Limit direction from the Governor and Legislators as they make recommendations that improve the lives of themselves, their family and friends, not the greater population of SC that are in need. They do not represent and support the constituents as they should. 2. When creating a needs assessment for the agency, create a plan that addresses each County individually. SC is so different we must ensure we are meeting the needs of the people. The same goals for the entire state is not moving the needle.
2021-08-12 10:16:19	Room for improvement, more retention of younger professionals to engage with the largest majority population which is Millennials. Online portals and software that is user friendly for the public.	Continuing on air quality and pollution control across the state. Green energy initiatives and tighter regulation on emission control and greenhouse gases.	1. Retain younger staffing to learn how to become future leaders within State Government & DHEC. 2. Uplift employees with sign on incentives, pension programs, hourly worker benefits. Retain as much human capital as possible within the organization. 3. Have point of dispensing storage warehouses across the state that will harbor supplies for natural disasters & public health emergencies. Have knowledgeable staff run them with fair pay & benefits.
2021-08-12 10:11:23			I was very disheartened to hear that if we are out sick with COVID 19 or the Delta variant, we will not be paid. I personally do not have enough time to take off and I am sure there are others. Why have the rules changed? We used to be compensated.
2021-08-12 10:09:49	I think since we are the "health dept" we should be offering covid test and vaccines from every health dept. while the pandemic is on going. From working front and answering the switchboard I know people are still looking for places that do testing and they are not wanting to pick up a kit and do it themselves. We should make it easy for the public.	We really don't offer any health services other than STD, birth control and immunizations. We need to broaden our health services to what it used to be 30-40 years ago.	Offer a lot more variety of health services. We used to do BP checks, child well checks, sports physicals, prenatal care, some offered dental...there's so much that we're missing with helping with the public obtain health services. We're the "health dept" and hardly offer any "health" services at all.
2021-08-12 10:02:55	Our state is below average in delivering health services. We are not leading the region or nation in delivering excellent health services to all South Carolinians. We need to think bigger if we want to address disparities in health equity and tackle major health problems like opioid overdoses and the HIV epidemic.	We have not expanded Medicaid and are leaving millions of our tax dollars in federal coffers. We could be using that money to improve the health of the working poor and implementing preventive health programs. We are not investing in the health future of our children.	We need to recruit and retain the best public health and medical staff in the country to be part of bold solutions in South Carolina. We need to implement Medicaid expansion to allow the working poor better access to health services, now more important than ever in the pandemic. We need better data collection on social disparities so we can implement data-driven solutions to the root causes of many health problems.
2021-08-12 09:53:48	not great. we are very slow moving and in many cases ineffective	challenging our governor to do what's in the best interest of the residents and not politicians	n/a
2021-08-12 09:52:36	Great	Getting information out in rural area of SC	
2021-08-12 09:24:59	I am sure we can do better in certain pockets, but overall, I am pretty impressed what we do with the limited resources and red tape in place.	Stubbornness. Convincing people that the way we have always done it is not necessarily best and that the improved ways will benefit them.	Somehow streamline contact for services. Maybe a liaison type department to help folks navigate requests? Or maybe beef up constituent services? DHEC does so much, and we do it well. But sometimes finding the right point of contact is hard and frustrating. Certain clients and employees get in a rhythm and no a general area to contact. But others are not familiar and just know I was told to contact DHEC on this matter (external) or X used to handle this, not sure who does now (internal). If one person or program could track down the response and get back to the individual, I think that would help. A long way to say, beef up the constituent services program and promote it more. :)
2021-08-12 09:08:48	On the environmental side of the agency, we are doing the best we can with very limited resources. We do not have sustainable funds from the state, we have recruitment and retention issues, our salaries are not competitive, employees are undervalued. DHEC is the designated agency for administering these federal programs. Unfortunately, if we don't meet the requirements set worth, EPA would take over and administer them.	Scientists are very undervalued when the engineers are exalted. It needs to be recognized that if we scientists didn't collect samples, analyzed them, model them, compile reports concerning the quality of our waters, air, and land, and developed standards, mapped them, engineers would not be able to issue permits. Additionally, some of our scientists have multiple post-graduate degrees compared to a bachelor's degree held by the majority of engineers that are not "professional engineers" (PE). Among scientists, there are generalists, and there are specialists. Generalist can become an expert in 2-3 years. Whereas the specialists study longer and gain enormous experience that is highly valued in the private sector. These specialists have a vast amount of knowledge but our salaries are between 40K- 53K.	Sustainable funding is essential for us to continue to serve the residents of South Carolina. This is one of the most crucial points to make. Our work's loads are increasing, we are using innovative solutions to the problems, thinking outside of the box. Instead of trying to cut our budget multiple times, we need consistently increasing budget allocations. Most folks don't realize that our environmental programs are some of the best in the county.
2021-08-11 19:31:22	Services are being delivered by overworked, under paid employees that are not treated well. We get more work added to our plates, but salaries remain the same. Members of the group, please read this: https://www.admin.sc.gov/sites/default/files/state_nj/FnaH2020Report0620-%20State%20Classification%20and%20Compensation%20System%20July%202019%20Revised%20Report.pdf Everyone in the state benefits from work we do at DHEC. We are tired of the lower and upper management giving us service, but doing nothing to improve our salaries. DHEC will NEVER be "preferred employer". Folks come in, gain experience, then leave. There is nothing attractive about working at DHEC. Our buildings shows their age and not one leader has tried to find us a better, modern place to work from. Our contribution to health insurance and pension plan are in par with private industry. We get bashed from governor, law makers, Sammy Fretwell at The State newspaper. We have been screaming for management to do something about salary discrepancies but all we get in turn is high praise. High praise is good, but it's not feeding our families. In 1995, 5 pay scales were combined into one generic position "Environmental Health Manager" or EHM. We are a diverse group of folks with high school degrees to PhDs. We are all needed but we need better living conditions for day care, braces, rent, mortgage, utilities, food, etc. Consumer prices and inflation is leaving us behind. Let's imagine us not doing our jobs or all of DHEC employees not coming to work. Who will you call for New Indy odor, someone getting sick and dying (really) from eating systems sold with questionable provenance pick from contaminated shellfish beds, who will make sure the pool you are swimming in has the right balance of chemicals and you will not get sick. Who will make sure fish you caught are safe to eat and inform you if it is not, streams, lakes, beaches, coastal areas are safe to recreate so you and your loved ones don't get sick, inspect the dam you own that is about to breach and advise you, monitor the surface ozone levels and issue guidance for those that might be effected and get sick, analyze the water samples from your private well, issue permits, meet with you and explain things, who will do all the mathematical and computer models to make sure our estuaries are not depleted of oxygen, make sure our ground water resources are protected, meet with the board members and explain everything??? The list goes on.	The reason we stay and continue to work at DHEC is we love our jobs, we believe we make a difference. We can't talk to our most upper management because "it needs to go up the chain of command". The board of directors, former directors of the agency, environmental affairs leadership, bureau chiefs and down to front managers are not amiable to listen to our concerns of salary discrepancies, men earning higher salary than women, our work environment... Manages promote and reward their favorites in their division, sections, etc. If an employee wants a higher salary, they move within DHEC or other state agencies, because DHEC employees are paid such low wages. Legislators snub us and don't listen to scientific conclusions and medical advice. If you want to split the agency, go right ahead, but know that the environmental affairs implement federal laws, therefore will not just go away.	Improve our work environment, pay competitive wages, all our management from front line to agency director to listen to us and instead of giving lavish praise help improve our lives.
2021-08-11 18:49:16	As a current employee, we are doing ok on the environmental side. Upper management doesn't know what an environmental health manager (EHM) is responsible for and think nothing of us! A just out of school earns more than a seasoned EHM. After gaining experience, engineers leave. TASK FORCE: Go read the study that was finalized in 2017 first! On August 10 meeting, one of the members of the committee mentioned a comparative study of neighboring states: That study has already been done (read the study first). It said that we are lowest paid employees in the southeast. When it comes to contributing to pension plan and health insurance, dhec is on par with private industries and 3% above of all US states! How many more studies needs to be done, to come to same conclusion? Our buildings are ancient! Canteen in sims-aycock sells expired food and drinks, there are dead cockroaches everywhere. Why don't you come and work from our buildings for a month? At the end, you'll develop allergies. Be careful driving and walking in the parking lot, especially if it has been raining: you will fall into one of the potholes, and your car' undercarriage will get a dent. Our upper management does not go to bat for us. During every environmental affairs meeting, we get hire praise for doing a great job! I have been hearing this for 23 years. When we bring up salaries, the answers are: we don't have money, health side of the agency gets majority of our state budget allocations, there are other priorities, stormwater and dams programs really need this money... Upper management talks a lot, but this systemic issue has not been addressed. We don't have advocates, but we have a lot of lawyers, business owners, law makers blaming us. Unless these are addressed, in a few years when most of the management becomes eligible to retire and some will, the whole state, hopefully, will understand what we have been struggling with. Forget about delivering health and environmental services, and all the "healthy" people living in healthy communities! If we are not taken seriously, not considered as professionals, valued respected, dark days are coming. Dr. Simmer if doing a good job but leaders of environmental affairs is not! When we tell them how little we are earning, their jaws drop. We love our jobs but where is the satisfaction of getting paid a decent salary?	On the environmental side, lawmakers, lawyers, critics to step aside and realize we are administering federal laws. To become an expert at what some of us are doing takes 5-8 years of study. When one us leave that is 5-8 years of lost experience and knowledge. It'll start at zero again and will take the next person in the job another 5-8 years of study.	Pay us a competitive salary, get out of our way so we can do our jobs. \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
2021-08-11 16:16:12	Not well. Underprivileged people have very little access to mental health or substance use disorder help. There are a lack of detox facilities, state monitored sober living facilities, treatment facilities, homeless shelters. Psychiatrist and therapist are too expensive and it is extremely hard to get into state mental health facilities.	Lack of facilities and uninsured people do not have access to services.	Detox facilities Mental Health accessibility Programs to get individuals back into society
2021-08-11 13:13:47	not sure- so its not widely communicated	Engaging residents, businesses and community public officials in making a commitment to sustainability, health/wellness, equity and resiliency	make them accessible to more people
2021-08-11 12:45:32	I do not feel the state of South Carolina is doing enough. Currently, I live near the New Indy plant and its daily impact on my home and family is heartbreaking. We need to not tolerate this kind of behavior from large companies.	I hope that we can really address SC resident concerns. If we know something is not helping our environment we need to push to make sure it is addressed, no one wants to be the next Flint.	Please address the concerns about New Indy. If you drive around that area even the trees are dying. I don't understand how people can wake up each morning if they are not a part of the solution. The update needs help and we need it now.
2021-08-11 12:05:57	Mediocre. Most processes take too long, which is entirely a function of funding, staff retention, and hiring/retention of high capacity individuals.	Hiring and retaining qualified staff. Consolidating pay grades into a single EHM tier crippled the environment side's ability to hire and compensate highly educated and high capacity staff. Each program area should have its own paygrade based on the section's required skillsets and technical expertise.	Retain and justly compensate highly qualified and high capacity individuals.