

Microbe Monthly

Communicable Disease Report

El Paso County Department
of Health & Environment

January 2010

Healthy People 2020

With the beginning of this new decade, it's time for the nation and public health professionals to review the progress, and to update the public health goals focusing on achieving a healthier population. **Healthy People 2020** was developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide science-based, 10 year national objectives aimed at promoting health and preventing disease. Every 10 years, the HHS leverages scientific insights and lessons learned from the past decade, new knowledge of current data, trends, innovations, and broad-based public input to create a list of objectives for the next decade.



The newest Healthy People objectives are divided into a variety of focus areas and categories such as access to health care, adolescent, childhood and elder health, various chronic conditions, medical product safety, nutrition and weight, health communication, etc. Some of the categories are of special relevance to our Health Department's mission, such as infectious disease and immunizations, health care associated infections, food safety and environmental health. Some sample objectives from those categories:

- Reduce infections caused by key pathogens commonly transmitted through food
- Reduce tuberculosis (see graph below demonstrating use of **Healthy People 2010** data)
- Increase the proportion of all tuberculosis patients who complete curative therapy within 12 months
- Reduce or eliminate cases of vaccine-preventable disease
- Reduce the incidence of invasive methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infections
- Improve employee food preparation practices that directly relate to foodborne illnesses in retail food establishments
- Reduce waterborne disease outbreaks emerging from water intended for drinking among persons served by community water systems

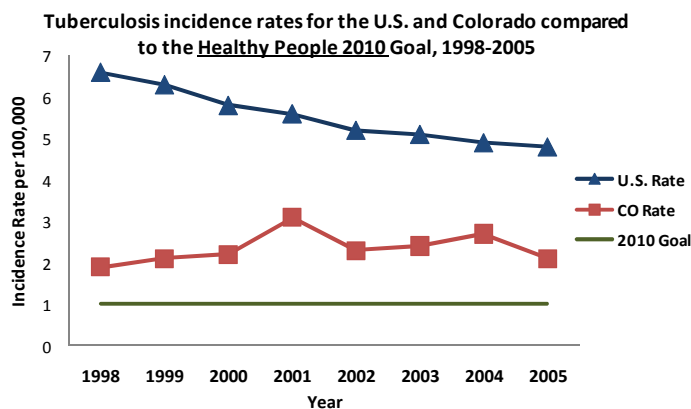
As an agency we will be reviewing these and other objectives, trying to do our part to help bring them to fruition during this coming decade. If other local providers and healthcare partners were to do the same in their areas of expertise, the chances of meeting the 2020 goals would increase. As stated on their Web site, "Healthy People 2010 challenges individuals, communities, and professionals, indeed all of us, to take specific steps to ensure that good health, as well as long life, are enjoyed by all." To read the proposed Healthy People 2020 objectives and learn more about this project visit: www.healthypeople.gov.

El Paso County Disease Trends

In December 2009, 37 communicable disease cases were reported and investigated: *Campylobacter* (3), cryptosporidiosis (3), *Giardia* (4), *Haemophilus influenzae* (1), chronic hepatitis B (3), influenza-related hospitalizations (9), invasive pneumococcal disease (7), pertussis (3), Varicella (1) and viral meningitis (3). Between August 30 and December 31, there have been 186 influenza-related hospitalizations, presumed to be due to H1N1 even if specific influenza typing was not completed.

We still have not detected circulating seasonal influenza this winter. Monitoring continues at the state and county levels.

Communicable Disease Program staff investigated 2 foodborne illness outbreaks in December: 1 related to a restaurant, and 1 in a jail.



Hot Topics—State and National

- **Use of the *Campylobacter* EIA test instead of culture:** The rapid enzyme immunoassay antigen (EIA) test was approved by the FDA early 2009. Since switching to this test 2 months ago, one lab reported >10 positive results, compared to an average of 0 previously. Data suggest symptoms of those with positive EIA tests are milder than those typically reported. A positive EIA test alone is not sufficient to consider a case "confirmed." CDPHE recommends: If using EIA to test for *Campylobacter*, clearly indicate that EIA was used. If using EIA to screen stool, confirm positive results by culture.
- **Rare gastrointestinal anthrax:** U.S. health officials have confirmed **anthrax** in samples from a pair of African hide drums used in a drumming circle attended by a New Hampshire woman who is severely ill and hospitalized with gastrointestinal anthrax. Investigation is continuing, and the drums are only one possible source.

Contact Information

CD/TB Program

Weekday Hours (M-Th)* 719-578-3220
After-Hours Emergency 719-385-9622

Immunizations 719-578-3272

Environmental Health 719-575-8636

*Note: Health Department regular hours are
Monday—Thursday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Weekday Hours (M-F) 303-692-2700
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