

**To:** Board of Health  
**From:** Susan Wheelan, M.B.A., Public Health Director  
**Date:** April 2022 (reflects activity March 23, 2022, to date)  
**Re:** Director's Report

## **COVID-19 Status and Response**

### **Case Monitoring**

COVID-19 data trends for the last 14 days as of Tuesday, April 19:

- **Cases:** 435
- **Hospitalization:** 5
- **Deaths:** 0

### **Vaccine Data**

El Paso County vaccine data through Monday, April 11, including federal estimates:

- **Total doses administered:** 1,111,543
- **People vaccinated:** 490,414 (71.5%)
- **People fully vaccinated:** 438,037 (63.9%)
- **People boosted:** 158,791 (23.2%)

To access the latest data dashboard, see the [COVID-19 data and vaccine dashboard](#).

### **Dashboard Updates**

El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) published a series of visual metric updates to its COVID-19 data and vaccine dashboards. Effective April 7, the COVID-19 data dashboard and COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard were combined into [one dashboard](#) and will be updated weekly on Tuesdays by 5 p.m. These updates make it easy for people to view trends in cases, hospitalizations, deaths and vaccination data in one convenient location. EPCPH will continue to provide updates on these disease metrics as part of the routine monitoring of COVID-19 in El Paso County communities.

EPCPH is committed to continuous quality improvement, and the latest iteration of the dashboard is part of ongoing efforts to refine and improve data visualizations. Additional dashboard changes are listed below:

- Death rates per 100,000 for the 10 most populated counties in Colorado are now available on page three of the data dashboard, to provide additional perspective on death data.
- Removal of the following pages from the data dashboard:
  - Incidence and test positivity pages
    - This is due to both the incidence and test positivity being heavily impacted by the increased utilization of at-home test kits, which ultimately yields less accurate information as it relates to these two metrics.
  - Regional hospitalizations page
    - At the direction of local hospitals, the regional hospital census data will no longer be available. This is primarily due to COVID-19 representing the same or less impact on hospital operations compared to other respiratory diseases circulating in the community.

- Note, hospitalization admissions data will still be available both as cumulative admissions and daily admissions on page two of the dashboard.
- Removal of the following pages from the vaccine dashboard:
  - Doses administered and daily average doses, including a breakdown by vaccine, provider, dose and demographics.
    - While this information offered helpful insight during the initial phases of the vaccine rollout, these data points are less impactful at this point in the response, as doses (including boosters) have been widely available for the past year.

## **Agency Operations**

### **Communications**

- The Office of Communication managed television media inquiries pertaining to emerging issues including COVID-19 numbers, trends and vaccination sites, in addition to coverage on the fentanyl/opioid crisis. The total estimated viewership for these television interviews is more than 186,318 and the estimated earned media value is more than \$28,900.
- The Office of Communication also managed several print media inquiries on similar topics.
- On March 4, the Office of Communication—in close partnership with agency leadership, medical direction, and subject matter expertise from numerous programs and divisions—launched a new feature article page called, “[El Paso County Public Health News](#).” The goal of the page is to increase timely communication to external partners and the public on key public health issues and functions, in addition to emerging and trending topics. During the month of March, the EPCPH team published a total of six articles on a wide variety of topics including:
  - [When does a pandemic become endemic? Have we reached the endemic phase?](#)
  - [Improving population health in El Paso County through community action](#)
  - [Public Health leaders honored in Women’s History Month celebrations](#)
  - [Public Health recognized for excellence in financial reporting](#)
  - [Local governments and governing bodies recognize 2022 National Public Health Week](#)
  - [Celebrating WIC during National Nutrition Month](#)
- The Office of Communication worked with agency leadership, medical direction, communicable disease and data and analytics to disseminate a digital newsletter to the business community.
  - The newsletter, sent on March 3, featured information on the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s \(CDC\) new COVID-19 community level framework](#), in addition to information on COVID-19 rapid tests, resources and tools for businesses and employers, and information on the [state’s roadmap to moving forward](#).
- The agency’s website [www.elpasocountyhealth.org](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org) had 25,077 new visitors in March, with 83,720 unique pageviews.

## **Environmental Health (EH)**

Environmental Health saw a total of seven inquiries during the month of March 2022. These inquiries were for public health guidance (four inquiries) and mask guidance (three inquiries). The limited inquiries are likely due to the decrease in COVID-19 cases in El Paso County.

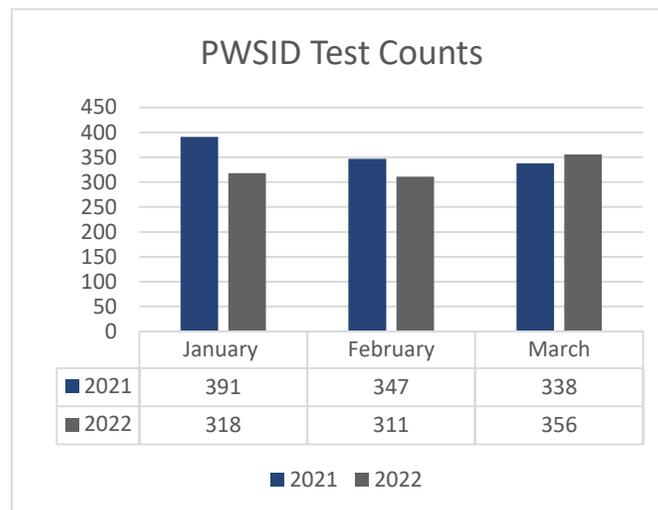
- Retail Food Education staff members conducted a food safety class to the Colorado Wildfire Academy on March 22, held at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs. This is an annual request from the Wildfire Academy for EPCPH to provide education on the importance of basic food safety when preparing and serving food to wildland firefighters during an active wildland fire response.
- **Other EH Activities:**
  - The table below captures a snapshot of activities across the Environmental Health Division in a number of areas. This work—which is critical to the development of a healthy, economically vibrant and safe community—is accomplished through science-based risk assessment and policy development, inspections, consultation, education, and regulations designed to protect the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the places we live, work and play.

<b>Environment Health Activity</b>	<b>2022 Total As of 3/31/22</b>	<b>2021 Total</b>
<b>Air Quality Construction Permits</b>	40	129
<b>Air Quality Open Burn Permits</b>	6	15
<b>Air Quality Complaints</b>	9	50
<b>Animal Bites Reported</b>	189	1385
<b>Body Art Inspections</b>	8	85
<b>Body Art Follow-up Inspections</b>	2	6
<b>Body Art Complaints</b>	5	21
<b>Child Care Regular Inspections</b>	47	214
<b>Child Care Follow-up Inspections</b>	3	0
<b>Child Care Complaints</b>	4	4
<b>Land-Use Planning Review</b>	66	162
<b>On-site Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) Pumper Truck Inspections</b>	30	72
<b>OWTS Final Inspections</b>	91	516
<b>OWTS Partial Inspections</b>	28	170
<b>OWTS Application Design Reviews</b>	143	703
<b>OWTS Design Revision Requests</b>	28	272
<b>OWTS New Permit Applications</b>	99	387
<b>OWTS Repair Permit Applications</b>	63	282
<b>OWTS Modification Permit Applications</b>	0	11

Environment Health Activity	2022 Total As of 3/31/22	2021 Total
<b>OWTS Acceptance Doc for Title Transfer</b>	199	1048
<b>OWTS Soil and Site Evaluations</b>	97	518
<b>OWTS Complaints</b>	6	29
<b>OWTS O&amp;M Systems</b>	12	179
<b>Recreational Water Safety Inspections</b>	88	320
<b>Recreational Water Follow-up Inspections</b>	5	28
<b>Recreational Water Complaints</b>	1	13
<b>Retail Food Establishment (RFE) Regular Inspections</b>	59	2960
<b>RFE Re-Inspections</b>	12	119
<b>RFE Complaint Investigations</b>	80	153
<b>RFE Plan Reviews</b>	49	153
<b>School Safety Regular Inspections</b>	1	0
<b>School Safety Complaints</b>	1	6
<b>School Safety Self-Certification Audits</b>	4	9
<b>School Safety Self-Certifications Returned</b>	0	295
<b>Waste Tires Facilities Regular Inspections</b>	10	117
<b>Waste Tires Follow-up Inspections</b>	0	5

### Laboratory: Public Water System Test Counts

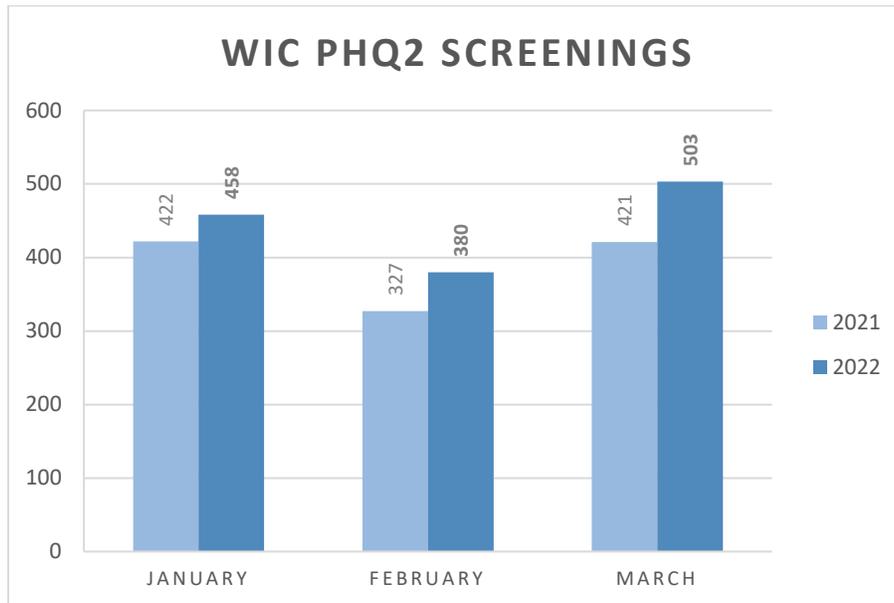
The graph below shows data for public water system identification (PWSID) counts for public water system tests.



## Health Services

### **Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program**

The WIC caseload for March 2022 was 12,102, an increase of 224 from February. The WIC program works with pregnant and post-partum women to identify depression, refer for behavioral health treatment, and reduce the stigma of seeking behavioral health services for this at-risk group of women. WIC staff completed 503 Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ2) screenings:



The screenings led to the following outcomes:

- Ten referrals to Diversus Health.
- Four referrals to Colorado Community Health Alliance (CCHA) for further evaluation and connection to meet their specific behavioral health needs.
- Eight clients requested a phone number to reach out themselves.
- Two clients on Tricare were either referred to non-active-duty case management or active-duty resources on base.
- Forty-four clients were already receiving services and declined a referral for that reason.

WIC continues to utilize an internal referral form for client-facing services across EPCPH. Throughout the month of March, 21 referrals were made to and from WIC, Nurse-Family Partnership, HCP (a Program for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs), Family Planning, and the Colorado Quitline.

Through funding from Nourish Colorado, Ahavah Farms will be providing Community Support Agriculture (CSA)/produce shares to 100 WIC clients. This will be a weekly summer pick-up of Colorado-grown produce at no cost to the client. This partnership leveraged Nourish Colorado's funding and Ahavah Farms growing capacity to enhance the food security of WIC clients. In March, WIC clients were randomly selected through the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program for access to the CSA/produce shares.

The EPCPH WIC mobile clinic started in March at Tri-Lakes Cares in Monument, Catholic Charities, and various outreach activities with surrounding partners. CPCD HeadStart and Hillside Community Center will be added in April. Planning activities took place with Fort Carson Army Community Service and Calhan Community Outreach Center. The goal of the project is to improve accessibility and awareness of WIC, especially in populations facing the most barriers to service, including geographic and transportation barriers. The mobile clinic includes enrollments and full appointments at partner locations. Partners are selected based on geography, service to WIC’s target audience, and interest.

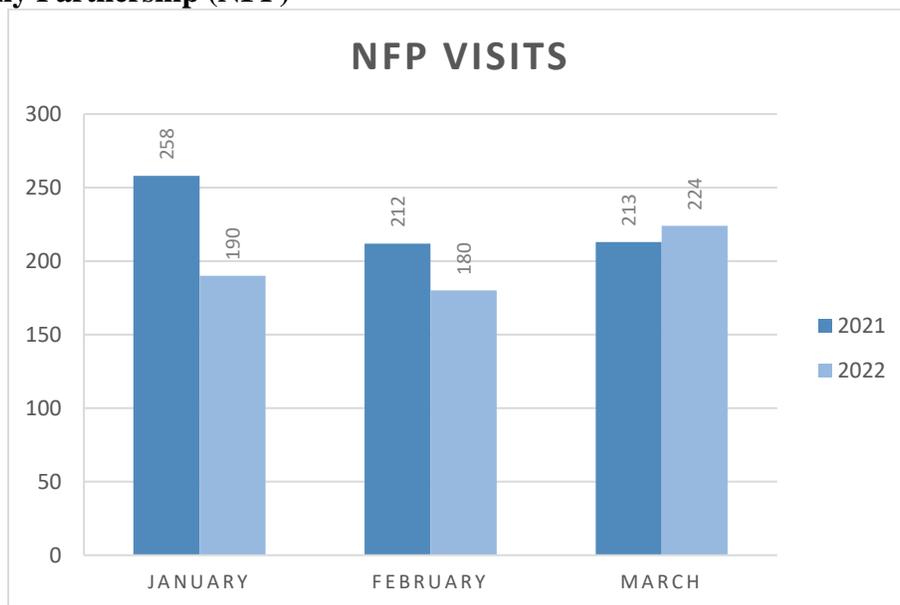
### **Family Planning**

In March, the Family Planning program manager and the EPCPH medical director met with the medical director of Peak Vista Community Health Centers to coordinate referrals and care for pregnant women who test positive for syphilis, with the goal of reducing negative health consequences for pregnant women and their babies.

Family Planning delivered two educational presentations regarding sexually transmitted infections (STI) in March, including primary care providers at Peak Vista Community Health Centers. The presentations offer education and resources regarding STIs and HIV testing and treatment to medical providers. Education and outreach to providers are intended to assist in diagnosis and treatment, with the goal of reducing disease transmission.

The Family Planning program utilized a Lean Six Sigma process to analyze current clinic workflow, inventory, and other processes to improve efficiency and client experience in the clinic.

### **Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)**



In March, Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) and the Colorado Community Health Alliance (CCHA) jointly hosted a quarterly Community Advisory Board meeting, bringing together a variety of health care professionals and community resources that serve women and children in El Paso County. Presenters included a representative from Pikes Peak Library District (PPLD) to

introduce a new community prenatal class being co-facilitated by PPLD and NFP, offering a series of free weekly prenatal classes to NFP clients and the larger community. This class will fill a community-wide need for free and easily accessible prenatal education.

NFP nurse visits were conducted via telehealth in March. The EPCPH NFP nurses served 127 families, enrolled 10 new clients to the program, and graduated four clients who had participated in the NFP program for a full two and a half years.

Over 40 years of research demonstrates the impact of the NFP program, including: 48 percent reduction in child abuse and neglect, 56 percent reduction in ER visits for accidents and poisonings, 50 percent reduction in language delays of child age 21 months, 67 percent less behavioral/intellectual problems at age six, 79 percent reduction in preterm delivery for women who smoke, 32 percent fewer subsequent pregnancies,\* 82percent increase in months employed, 61 percent fewer criminal arrests of the mother, 59 percent reduction in child arrests at age 15 (source [nursefamilypartnership.org](http://nursefamilypartnership.org)).

\*NFP calculates subsequent pregnancies as any second pregnancy that occurs prior to the first child's second birthday.

### **Immunization Program**

The Immunization Program continued COVID-19 vaccinations in the month of March, as well as increased routine immunization activities. Four COVID-19 vaccine clinics were held by the EPCPH mobile outreach team, including clinics at schools that requested support, and a family homeless shelter. The continued COVID-19 vaccination activities help reach those who have barriers to vaccination, increasing COVID-19 vaccine coverage rates, which further protects our community from the risk of severe illness. The Immunization Program supported other vaccine activities such as Operation House Call and long-term care facilities, helping to decrease barriers to COVID-19 vaccine and support our community partners such as the Colorado Springs Fire Department.

This program is working to increase immunization rates for routine vaccines that were missed over the previous two years. The vaccines administered help protect children and adults from vaccine-preventable illness, and aids in protecting our community from future disease outbreaks. The immunization program manager and assistant program manager continue to recruit for several open nurse and support positions critical to accomplishing this work.

### **Community Health Promotion**

#### **Maternal Child Health (MCH)**

- MCH care coordinators received 59 referrals in the month of March to assist individuals and families with resources and reduce barriers to accessing care.
- The MCH prevention & policy specialist provided training and education to current University of Colorado Colorado Springs student teachers on the topics of trauma and Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs).
- MCH health equity planner assisted with the coordination of 2,700 COVID-19 home testing kits. These kits were distributed to numerous community organizations, including:
  - Hillside Community Center received 270 kits
  - Solid Rock received 1,350 kits,

- Mission Medical received 1,080 kits In partnership with RISE coalition, the health equity planner presented to 20 students at Sierra High School on March 3 on the social determinants of health and EPCPH’s ongoing work to promote a healthy community.

### **Mental Health and Substance Use Prevention**

- Fountain Valley Communities That Care (FV-CTC):
  - Coalition partners, Widefield Parks and Recreation and Security Public Library provided opioid prevention and Narcan training to their staff on March 2, 2022. Widefield Parks and Recreation and Security Library now have Narcan onsite.
  - FV-CTC provided a 16-hour grant writing training to coalition members. In addition to this training, coalition members will be able to utilize 55 hours of technical assistance provided by the trainer. At least one member from each FV-CTC strategy team participated in the training.
  - FV-CTC finalized plans for a Drug Takeback Day at the Fountain Library on April 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- CDC Drug-Free Communities:
  - Youth substance use prevention team onboarded a new prevention and policy specialist, made possible through additional from the CDC’s Drug-Free Communities grant.
  - Youth substance use prevention planner and prevention and policy specialist attended week one of the National Coalition Academy, a comprehensive training program developed by Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America’s National Coalition Institute to teach leaders about how to establish and maintain a highly effective anti-drug coalition. This week of training allowed space to create and update the following products required for CDC Drug-Free Communities Coalitions: (1) community assessment; (2) logic models.

### **Youth Suicide Prevention**

- The Youth Suicide Prevention (YSP) Workgroup is focused on empowering youth voice and integrating youth in the next Community Action Plan for the 2022-2023 school year.
- The YSP Workgroup was awarded a \$5,000 mini-grant from the Colorado Springs Health Foundation to support restructuring the Workgroup by prioritizing youth leadership and updating the group’s vision, mission, and objectives.
  - The YSP Workgroup convened their first strategic planning group meeting. The group is comprised of five adult leaders and seven young leaders from Pikes Peak Suicide Prevention Partnership’s Teen Board. These updates will position the Workgroup to serve young people more effectively by assuring their ideas, perspectives, strengths, and skills guide community action.
- The Child Fatality Review Team met to review 2021 youth suicide fatalities and develop prevention recommendations. Findings and prevention recommendations identified by the team will be shared with the YSP Workgroup and will inform the work outlined in the community action plan.
- Prevention recommendations identified by the El Paso County Child Fatality Review Team in 2021 were reviewed by the Colorado Child Fatality Prevention System (CFPS)

for inclusion in the CFPS 2022 Legislative Report. This report is published annually, shared widely throughout the state, and informs policymakers about current trends and opportunities to reduce child fatalities in Colorado.

### **Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (TEPP)**

- Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (TEPP) staff attended the Colorado Public Health, Parks and Recreation Collaborative Summit. The theme of this year's summit was, *For the Sake of Mental Health: How built environment, recreation, parks and public health are creating hope, change, and optimism in the midst of a pandemic.*
- TEPP staff completed a tobacco-free schools policy training focused on how schools can enhance the communication of their policies to students and stakeholders.
- TEPP distributed the bi-monthly *Nicotine News* e-newsletter to community partners to share resources, updates and current events happening at the local, state and federal levels.
- TEPP staff and the school liaison participated in a six-week series entitled, *Health Equity: A Guide for Public Health Practice* offered by the Rocky Mountain Public Health Training Center. The sessions focused on values, structural inequality, and strategies for advancing health equity, which meets the overarching goal set by the State Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (STEPP). STEPP is the funder for TEPP, focused on reducing smoking prevalence levels among populations targeted by the tobacco industry to below 20 percent by 2030.

### **Community Partnerships**

- Healthy environment planner and the grants coordinator collaborated with El Paso County Parks to apply for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's "Active People, Healthy CO" funding to support El Paso County's "Trailability Program." If awarded, this funding will support two Hoyer lifts to work with all-terrain wheelchairs at Bear Creek Nature Center and Fountain Creek Nature Center, increasing overall mobility and accessibility for users in those locations.
- Healthy environment planner attended a focus group hosted by Lotus Consulting and the City of Colorado Springs to discuss agriculture and food production. The results of this and other focus groups will develop a forthcoming sustainability action plan for the city.
- EPCPH's school liaison participated in District 14 Partners for Healthy Choices Committee Meeting. This committee is reassessing the mission, vision, and goals for the future.
- The school liaison attended the Colorado Springs Business Journal Superintendent's Panel Luncheon, which included representation from Harrison District 2, Widefield District 3, District 8, District 12, Manitou Springs District 14, and Falcon District 49. The school liaison connected with area leaders and agencies working with schools in our community such as the Pikes Peak Business and Education Alliance and school liaisons supporting our military families.
- EPCPH's public health planner met with strategic initiatives coordinators from Jefferson County Public Health to discuss performance management and quality improvement systems. Ideas were shared around the elements and infrastructure of our performance management and quality improvement models at EPCPH, as well as opportunities for improvement and helpful resources. We will continue to stay connected to each other's

work through the Colorado Public Health Quality Improvement Community of Practice (CO PHQI CoP).

### **Community Health Assessment and Planning**

The public health planner is convening the [Health Community Collaborative \(HCC\)](#) and the HCC Steering Committee to inform and support the community health assessment process. The HCC is a stakeholder group of community partners who have been working together since 2011 to implement strategies identified in the El Paso County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The HCC consists of over 60 representatives from schools, hospitals and health systems, non-profit organizations, city and county government agencies, public health, medical providers, and interested citizens. HCC has been convening monthly since July 2021 to inform the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and CHIP processes.

At the March 2022 meeting, the HCC reviewed data indicators related to health behaviors and conditions, including those for physical activity, nutrition, oral health, sexual health, low birth weight, tobacco use, asthma, diabetes, heart disease, weight status, skin cancer and protection, and injuries. Sources for these data indicators include the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), the Colorado Health Access Survey, National Youth Tobacco Survey, and the Colorado Health Information Dataset (CoHID). The data shared underscored the impacts of different health behaviors and conditions on individuals' overall health and well-being, and that health is not only determined by individual choice but a combination of influencing factors. Attendees utilized a Google Jamboard to capture reactions to the data shared and document further information that would be helpful.

### **Grants and Development**

The development team continues to monitor the CDC COVID-19 Health Disparities grant. The CDC recently released a no-cost extension for this grant, which was originally set to expire May 2023. Work has begun to forecast the extended timeline EPCPH will request for this funding opportunity.

### **National Public Health Week**

National Public Health Week is an annual recognition of the work conducted by public health agencies across the country. In El Paso County, local municipalities issued proclamations to recognize the work of public health staff to protect and promote community and individual health.

- During its April 12, 2022, regular meeting, the [El Paso County Board of Commissioners Unanimously passed a proclamation recognizing April 4-10, 2022, as National Public Health Week](#). EPCPH was joined by several partners at the proclamation, including the Board of Health President, Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management, National Alliance on Mental Illness, and the Medical Reserve Corp. Numerous Commissioners shared positive remarks highlighting the importance of local public health in supporting a strong and thriving community, in addition to critical public health efforts across core services such as youth resiliency, on-site wastewater treatment systems, retail food inspections, radon education, and much more.

- During its March 23, 2022, regular meeting, the [El Paso County Board of Health passed a proclamation declaring April 4-10, 2022, as National Public Health Week.](#)
- During its March 22, 2022, regular meeting, the [Colorado Springs City Council passed a resolution declaring April 4-10, 2022, as National Public Health Week.](#) Numerous Councilmembers shared laudatory comments expressing appreciation for the phenomenal work of El Paso County Public Health.
- Before its March 8, 2022, regular meeting, the [Fountain City Council passed a resolution declaring the first full week of April 2022 as National Public Health Week.](#)

### **EPCPH Achievements**

- [EPCPH recognized for excellence in financial reporting](#)
  - For the third straight year, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada recognized EPCPH with the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This is the highest form of recognition by the association in governmental accounting and financial reporting. The recognition is for the [annual comprehensive financial report of fiscal year 2020](#). The report included an independent audit by RubinBrown, which issued a clean opinion of the financial statements and no recommendations for audit adjustments or corrections.
- [Pikes Peak Women's heroines of the pandemic](#)
  - Pikes Peak Women's annual event this year focused on honoring and celebrating 'Heroines of the Pandemic.' Among the group of honorees were Director Susan Wheelan and Joyce Salazar, community outreach coordinator for El Paso County Public Health. Susan and Joyce were among a group of outstanding women recognized for their contributions and efforts in leading El Paso County communities through the pandemic over the past two years, modeling the way with innovative partnerships and strategies.

### **Board of Health Email Inquiries**

The Board of Health email ([boardofhealth@elpasoco.com](mailto:boardofhealth@elpasoco.com)) received eight (8) unique emails during the month of March 2022. The majority of the emails were spam (three emails). Other emails included: advertisements (two emails), website redesign offer (one email), and COVID-19 resolution and vaccine comments (two emails).

