

To: Board of Health
From: Susan Wheelan, M.B.A. Public Health Director
Date: April 2019 (reflects March 2019)
Re: Director's Report

Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Priority Areas

El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) and all public health agencies in Colorado are required by Senate Bill 194 to complete a CHIP for the community each serves. The CHIP defines the vision for the health of the community through a collaborative process with over 60 partner agencies who participate in the Healthy Community Collaborative. Community input of progress on these goals can be viewed on a data dashboard at www.ThrivingColorado.com.

These are EPCPH's activities:

Healthy Eating and Active Living

Reverse the upward trend of obesity across the lifespan by addressing its root causes

- The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) March 2019 caseload was 12,616. Program staff continue to reach those in our community who are eligible but not enrolled. These include social media advertising, our local "Refer a Friend" campaign (funded by the Colorado Health Foundation), monthly outreach at the Deerfield Hills food pantry, and media opportunities during March National Nutrition Month.
- Early Childhood Obesity Prevention (ECOP) Community Health Educator delivered two one-hour presentations on Healthy Eating and Active Living for parents at two preschools. Parents were instructed on a variety of topics including physical activity and Nine Ways to Grow Healthy Colorado Kids.
- ECOP Community Health Educator applied for a specialty credential under the Colorado Shines Professional Development System in order to provide professional development opportunities for early childhood educators.
- Southeast Colorado Springs improvement project for the Panorama Park held the kickoff meeting with collaborative partners.
- Public Health Planner (PHP) convened the Resilient, Inspired, Strong, Engaged (RISE) Coalition to provide updates related to the RISE Action Plan. Topics discussed included opportunity zones in southeast Colorado Springs and review of the Prospectus, launch of the [Southeast Express newspaper](#), need for health care in southeast being addressed with Value Care Health Clinic merging with Matthews-Vu Medical Group, the opening of the new Peak Vista location in the 80916 zip code, and the Panorama Park Improvement Project.

Mental Health and Substance Use Prevention

Decrease the incidence of poor mental health and substance use and misuse

- The WIC program works with pregnant and post-partum women to identify depression and refer to behavioral health treatment. During March 2019, WIC completed 224 two-question Patient Health Questionnaires (PHQ-2s) and 9 referrals to AspenPointe for further evaluation and connections to meet their

specific behavioral health needs. These activities positively impact the health and wellbeing of our clients and reduce the stigma of seeking behavioral health services.

- Teen Suicide Prevention Planner and Youth Health and Development Planner led the March Youth Suicide Prevention Workgroup meeting with 50 partners in attendance. The agenda provided an overview of the various evidence-based suicide prevention trainings available in El Paso County, such as:
 - Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
 - Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)
 - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
 - Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS)
 - Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM)
 - Positive Youth Development (PYD)
- Youth Substance Use Prevention (YSUP) Planner and Community Health Educator facilitated quarterly meetings of the Fountain Valley Communities That Care (CTC) Key Leader Board and Community Board, and strategy team meetings that are creating implementation and evaluation plans for the selected programs and strategies.
- The Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (TEPP) facilitated four education and support sessions at four Colorado Springs Housing Authority low-income public housing buildings. These sessions informed residents about the dangers of smoking and resources available in the community to help them quit using tobacco.
- TEPP provided electronic cigarette, also known as vaping, presentations to students and staff in District 20, District 11, and District 2. The presentations focused on dispelling commonly heard myths around vaping. Presentations reached 305 fifth through ninth grade students. In addition, TEPP presented on youth vaping and school policy to school staff at Colorado Military Academy and Launch High School in District 11, reaching 50 staff members.
- The City of Fountain Police Department conducted 25 tobacco retail store inspections with an underage operative attempting to purchase a tobacco or e-cigarette product. Two retailers were found in violation of making an illegal sale to a person under age 18. The store clerks were cited and the store owners or managers were referred to the City Clerk's office for violation of the town's non-cigarette tobacco retailer license ordinance.
- Promoting Connectedness, Resiliency and Life Skills (PCRLS) Community Health Educator presented information regarding community assets for children and youth as well as BrainWise to 78 community partners. Analysis was completed of hospitalization and emergency department visits for suicide-related injury. Presentation scheduled to Youth Suicide Prevention (YSP) Community Workgroup May 21, 2019.

Surveillance, Epidemiology and Emergency Preparedness

Hepatitis A Outbreak (2018-2019)

- Emergency Preparedness and Response Team (EP&RT) continues to support a public health response to a hepatitis A outbreak, which is affecting people experiencing homelessness and/or using street drugs within El Paso County. Specifically, the EP&RT is facilitating the development of the Incident Action Plan and conducting meetings in accordance with the principles of the Incident Command System. The EP&RT is also providing technical support and guidance to the command and general staff on incident management principles.
- We continue to partner with agencies across the county to provide hepatitis A vaccine to at-risk populations (the El Paso County Sheriff's Office (EPSO), Memorial Hospital, Westside Cares, Criminal Justice Center (CJC), University of Colorado, Colorado Springs Beth-El College of Nursing). These partners have been, and continue to be, crucial in our response to limit and stop this outbreak.
- As of March 31, 2019, the case count was at 22 in El Paso County, with additional cases reported in other Colorado counties.
- EPCPH staff have conducted or participated in 24 outreach clinics and have administered over 1,387 vaccines as of March 31, 2019.
- The Communicable Disease Team continues surveillance for new cases of disease.
- Staff provided hepatitis A vaccinations in the CJC March 22, 26, 27, and 28. In this outreach, 830 hepatitis A vaccines were administered to inmates in the facility.
- We trained more than a dozen clerical staff of EPSO on administrative duties for running a point of dispensing (POD). The help from EPSO was invaluable in the vaccination of 428 EPSO staff members. This effort helped protect the employees who work with at-risk populations.
- In addition to the CJC vaccine clinics, we supported four other outreach events at the Amarillo Motel, RJ Montgomery Shelter, Springs Rescue Mission and Crossroads (a substance abuse center). At these events, 89 people received the hepatitis A vaccine, preventing the spread of disease and protecting our community.

Influenza Season 2018-2019

- Hospitalized cases of influenza for this season (September 30, 2018 through March 30, 2019) include 347 adults and 99 children.

Rabies

- In March, two skunks and one domestic dog tested positive for rabies (2019 total: three skunks, one fox, and one dog).
- Communicable Disease (CD) Program Manager and Environmental Health (EH) Program Manager met with the military Rabies Advisory Board to provide surveillance information and offer guidance on decision algorithms.

Foundational Public Health Services

Foundational public health services include communicable disease prevention, investigation and control, environmental health (EH), maternal, child, adolescent, and family health, chronic disease and injury prevention, behavioral health promotion, and clinical care.

- The Public Health laboratory performed 504 bacteriological water tests, 317 for public water systems and 187 for private wells. Fifty-two water samples were assayed for inorganic anions. Laboratory staff began testing the interface that connects the current laboratory information system with the new electronic health record to streamline ordering and reporting of lab tests within the health department.
- HCP, a program for children and youth with special needs, is currently serving 29 active care coordinations and provided referrals to another 20 families and community partners in March. The Care Coordination team provided presentations to five community partners regarding HCP services resulting in 49 community partners receiving information regarding HCP referrals and services.
- The Healthy Children and Families (HCF) Community Health Educator conducted 15 home visits to DHS involved families for the purpose of providing education and resource to support at-risk families.
- Staff from HCP and HCF continue to participate in Department of Human Services (DHS) efforts to redesign services offered to families with children zero to three years of age. The purpose of this meeting is to increase collaboration with community partners and increase services available to at-risk families engaged with DHS.
- Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinator conducted an El Paso County Public Health staff call down drill. This drill resulted in a 75 percent response rate. The Emergency Preparedness and Response staff continues to conduct analysis as part of quality improvement in an effort to increase the response rate for future drills.

2018-2022 Strategic Plan Goals

The goals selected for each strategic plan topic area represent broad achievements EPCPH plans to reach by the end of 2022. The goals are expressed at a high-level in order to capture all possible forward movement across the agency and within specific programs. The strategies selected represent the most important ways in which EPCPH can focus its agency and programmatic objectives to meet each goal.

Workforce Development: strengthen EPCPH's workforce to improve public health and environmental quality.

- A full-day Public Health Emergency Law training session was led by Legal Counsel from the Centers for Disease Control. Event was attended by El Paso County (EPC) Counsel, EPCPH staff, board members and others from around the state.
- Two sessions on using Google Docs and Google tools were offered to staff by instructors from Pikes Peak Community College.

- The Family Planning clinic staff are collaborating with the Immunizations program staff to cross-train employees for a unified checkout process. We continue to work toward all staff being fully cross-trained to meet the needs of the front desk, strengthen our workforce, and gain efficiencies consistent with the workforce development goals in the EPCPH Strategic Plan.
- To increase capacity and expand resources, several EPCPH staff in programs outside of the Immunization program have completed Colorado Immunization Information Systems training. With this training, providers are able to check a patient's vaccination history and refer to the Immunization program when needed.
- Agency staff completed "Protect Against Cyber Threats" (PACT) training to help secure EPC's IT infrastructure.
- Staff attended the Colorado Public Health/Parks and Recreation Collaborative Conference to learn how built environment and community spaces affect community health. Members were able to form partnerships with other Colorado entities involved in these areas.
- The Disease Intervention Specialist for tuberculosis completed a one-week, tuberculosis case management intensive training offered through the Curry International Tuberculosis Center.
- Quality Improvement Committee reviewed findings from the Town Hall Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis.

Technology, Informatics, Data Analysis: strengthen EPCPH's capabilities to collect, analyze, share, and use data to make timely and information-driven decisions.

- The Disease Intervention Specialist for communicable disease attended a regional Geographic Information Systems (GIS) conference offered by Esri. This is helpful in tracking and trending disease information by location.
- Youth Substance Use Prevention (YSUP) Planner worked with Healthy Kids Colorado Survey* (HKCS) Specialist to send letters to superintendents and secondary school principals in Widefield/Security School District 3, and Fountain Ft. Carson School District 8, to recruit participation in the 2019 HKCS. D3 and D8 are partners in the Communities That Care (CTC) initiative and were targeted first as part of a statewide partnership between HKCS and CTC. Recruitment efforts are now underway for the remainder of the school districts in El Paso County. YSUP Planner will collaborate with other Program Managers and Planners in the Health Promotion Division on recruitment efforts. *The HKCS is the state's only comprehensive survey on the health and wellbeing of young people. The purpose of this survey is to better understand youth health and the factors that help young people make healthy choices. The survey is implemented every two years.
- The Communicable Disease program participated in the kick-off call for a pilot project testing online interviewing systems for reportable diseases led by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), the Colorado Integrated Food Safety Center of Excellence, and Denver Health. The pilot will test the concept on giardia interviews and may expand to other enteric diseases.

Communication: strengthen EPCPH’s capabilities to provide information on public health issues and public health functions to external partners, and strengthen EPCPH’s internal communication capabilities.

- The Office of Communication launched the agency’s first electronic newsletter, to provide timely information to community partners about agency accomplishments.
- March was National Nutrition Month. The Office of Communication staff arranged to have one of the WIC Registered Dietitians (RDs) give a live KRDO radio interview about National Nutrition Month and the WIC program, which included tips for making food budgets last longer and healthy grocery shopping.
- A WIC Registered Dietitian and the Office of Communication created a [YouTube video entitled “Eating Healthy on a Budget”](#) that included a food demonstration of an Asian Peanut Noodle recipe and tips to utilize WIC benefits.
- The Office of Communication managed media inquiries and response with key agency spokespeople on emerging issues – hepatitis A and rabies. The estimated earned media value for these television interviews is \$19,432.
- The Office of Communication managed all internal and external website functions and had 25,043 new visitors to www.elpasocountyhealth.org in March.

Community partnerships: develop and maintain strong relationships with key community partners to support public health or assure the provision of health care services.

- Environmental Health Program Manager became a member of and attended the Pikes Peak Area Council of Government Air Quality Technical Committee (AQTC) meeting. This committee began meeting again after being dormant for several years; the priority is around developing a communication plan and strategies to promote education and awareness in the community to minimize behaviors and reduce emissions that contribute to high ozone. EPC is currently in attainment for ozone (meeting safe levels of ground level ozone), but is approaching a non-attainment level. We are working with other stakeholders and community partners to prevent nonattainment status.
- Environmental Health staff provided Harrison School District 2 Nutrition Services program with a Basic Food Safety course. The course was requested to allow the employees to keep up with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) food code now required by State Food Code regulations.
- Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinators attended the Damage Assessment Plan review at the Pikes Peak Regional Emergency Coordination Center. This review brought key stakeholders together to ensure roles and responsibilities were clearly defined during an event requiring debris management within El Paso County.
- Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinators assisted Tri-County Public Health with the development of a Point of Dispensing video. This video will be used by local public health departments for just in time training for staff on POD during a public health emergency.
- Teen Suicide Prevention (TSP) Planner and Youth Health Development (YHD) Planner met with a representative from El Paso County Veteran Services to

discuss opportunities to collaborate around suicide prevention and the Man Therapy campaign.

- TSP Planner met with community partners to develop a plan for revitalizing the El Paso County team for the Colorado-National Collaborative (CNC). The CNC is a partnership of local, state, and national scientists and public health professionals working to identify, promote, and implement successful state- and community-based strategies for suicide prevention in Colorado. El Paso County is one of six counties across Colorado selected to participate in the CNC. EPCPH is working in collaboration with other local partners to bring key stakeholders to the table for this effort, including UCCS, Pikes Peak Suicide Prevention, Silver Key, Inside/Out Youth Services, Family Care Center, and Pikes Peak United Way, among others.
- Medical Director and CD Program Manager attended the UHealth Infection Prevention meeting to provide an update on the hepatitis A outbreak and notable trends in STI incidence.
- Public Health Planner (PHP) attended the PEAK Fair for the medical students from the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Colorado Springs Branch. The teams presented their community projects to peers and partnering organizations.
- Key informant interviews are underway to solicit feedback on homelessness from selected community organizations in El Paso County. This primary data will inform the Health Impact Assessment, a joint collaboration between El Paso County Public Health and Colorado School of Public Health.
- In a continuing partnership with Rocky Vista University (RVU), EPCPH staff proctored medical students on novel research projects to inform our programs and fill information gaps identified on our dashboard. Resultant research papers included, “Healthcare in the Homeless Women of El Paso County: An Approach to Pain Management” and “Improving Latent Tuberculosis Infection (LTBI) reporting to El Paso County Public Health by El Paso County Civil Surgeons.”

Funding for the Agency and Community Partners: increase funding for EPCPH from diverse sources to support core public health services, programmatic services, and innovative strategies, and provide technical support for funding to key community partners.

- Submitted a federal grant application to SAMSHA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) to address underage alcohol and marijuana use in El Paso County. If awarded, the grant will bring \$1.5 million over the next five years to EPCPH to address underage alcohol and marijuana use in El Paso County, build capacity within the community to implement a comprehensive prevention approach, and to address problems associated with underage use (unintended injury, involvement in the juvenile justice system, incidents on school property, and homelessness). The application process was a collaboration of both internal agency staff and external partners, to include 19 letters of commitment from partner agencies. There is no current expected date of when the awards will be announced.

- Participating in Public Health Transformation Steering Committee, and the Cost Assessment (CA) Planning Committee. Participated in the beta test to provide feedback on the tool being created. The CA will allow local public health agencies across the state to identify the current cost of providing core public health services, and what additional funding and resources are needed to be able to fully implement services.

Health Equity: increase public awareness of health equity issues, its systemic causes, and opportunities to foster health equity, and remove barriers to health care and community resources to improve health outcomes among health disparate populations.

- We continue to offer and see a positive community response to serving walk-in clients in Family Planning and Immunization clinics. Family Planning served 74 and Immunization Clinic served 113 walk-in clients in March in addition to scheduled clients. These walk-in clinic times help to break down barriers and improve access to health care for those who cannot make it in for a traditional scheduled appointment.
- Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) hosted two playgroups, both facilitated by a NFP client. This activity helps to promote social connectedness, addressing health equity. Additionally two NFP clients celebrated successes this month. One teenage client received straight A's this term while being in her third trimester. Another client finished her Medical Assistant certificate and was accepted to Pikes Peak Community College to begin pre-med classes.

Critical Needs Funding - Quarterly (Jan. – March) Report

- Recruited and hired two of the ten full-time employees with additional the 2019 (- 2023) funding plan provided jointly by the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and the Board of Health to meet the core—mandated services, health protection and safety needs of the County's growing population.
- Hired a Retail Food Team Lead to increase capacity for the Retail Food Safety Program. In process of training employee to serve in this role.
- Hired an Immunization Public Health Nurse. Employee is in the process of learning the complexities of vaccinations and will be helpful in serving the growing population of El Paso County, and assisting with the current hepatitis A outbreak response efforts.
- In process of developing job descriptions, recruiting and hiring other positions including the Chief Epidemiologist, Disease Prevention Epidemiologist, Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinator, On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems Inspector, Public Health Nurse Planner, and Administrative/Communication Specialists.
- The Teen Suicide Prevention Planner position is currently grant funded through the State Innovation Model (SIM), which will end June 2019. This position will sustain via core critical needs funding. This will allow our agency to continue activities related to teen suicide prevention in El Paso County.

El Paso County Strategic Plan Update: 2017-2021

Strategy D, Objective 3: Continue to work collaboratively with other stakeholders, via the Groundwater Quality Study Committee, to study and protect groundwater quality and identify emerging issues through periodic monitoring, sharing data among stakeholders, and report to the BOCC annually.

- The Groundwater Quality Study Committee (GWQS) continues to meet quarterly, which includes stakeholders from the United States Geological Survey (USGS), Upper Black Squirrel Creek Basin, water districts (such as Cherokee Metro, and Woodman Hills), and other county agencies. The current Phase III scope of work from USGS, which is spread over four years, includes a plan to re-test the original 50 wells in Phase II. This plan to revisit the original 50 wells will provide data to show the change in constituents over time and to identify emerging issues of concern. We are currently in year two of four for the Phase III study.