

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

**Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Priority Areas:**

El Paso County Public Health 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 on these goals can be viewed on a data dashboard at [www.ThrivingColorado.com](http://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

- Colorado WIC clinics remained open during the federal government shutdown and the 84,000+ statewide participants have been able to use their benefits without any disruption in services. Every month, Coloradans purchase more than \$4.5 million in nutritious WIC food at more than 457 authorized grocery stores around the state. That adds up to \$54 million/year, or \$150,000 per day that will not be going into our local economies every day of a shutdown.
- EPCPH is developing a WIC retention campaign geared towards parents of infants between 9 and 11 months old.
- EPCPH is orienting a new employee who will work with early childhood educators and community partners serving children zero to five to implement evidence-based strategies focused on reducing childhood obesity.

**Mental Health and Substance Use Prevention**

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

- Board of Health unanimously approved a resolution declaring teen vaping a "public health crisis" and laid the groundwork for addressing the problem in our community.
- Completed interviews to increase public awareness on teen vaping with KRDO and KOAA television news, The Gazette, Colorado Springs Independent, and Colorado Springs Business Journal.
- Conducted media interviews with Colorado Sun and The Gazette to raise awareness of teen suicide and the findings of the Attorney General's report on teen suicide prevention and public health's role in El Paso County. This report, released January 3, 2019, was initiated by El Paso County Public Health in partnership with the Coroner's Office, to obtain qualitative data in El Paso County to understand teen suicide.
- Presented on the Youth Suicide Prevention Workgroup at the first meeting of the El Paso School-Based Behavioral Health Resource Network. This network is intended to include behavioral health representatives from each school district in El Paso County, as well as education liaisons from community-based mental

health (CBMH) centers, and seeks to collect and identify best practices, identify gaps in school district services and trainings, and create a rubric for whole child mental health. The formation of this network was one of the goals in the Youth Suicide Prevention Workgroup's Community Action Plan.

- Led the January Youth Suicide Prevention Workgroup meeting with 40 partners in attendance. The agenda focused on finalizing and approving the strategy map for the Workgroup's data dashboard and facilitating quarterly reports on Community Action Plan goals.
- Presented education regarding vaping and nicotine to students and staff at four schools in three districts, reaching 525 students and 120 staff members.
- Director participated in a National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) monthly board meeting. EPCPH is partnering with NAMI to increase awareness and participation in Family to Family classes, a free, 12 class education program for family members of adults living with mental illness. These support groups are facilitated by trained individuals who have experienced mental illness within their own family, and classes utilize an evidence-based curriculum.

### **Surveillance, Epidemiology and Emergency Preparedness**

- In partnership with El Paso County Office of Emergency Management and the El Paso County Public Information Office, staff participated in a tabletop exercise to discuss activation procedures and roles and responsibilities for the Joint Information Center (JIC). The outcome will be a finalized JIC/Joint Information System (JIS) plan.
- Emergency Preparedness and Response Team attended the Colorado Springs Utilities Backflow Prevention Failure tabletop exercise. This exercise helped to reduce the public health risk related to backflow prevention failures and strengthen the partnership with Colorado Springs Utilities.

### **Hepatitis A Outbreak (2018-2019)**

- As of January 31, 2019, 13 cases of hepatitis A have been reported in people experiencing homelessness and/or people with substance use issues in El Paso County. Additionally, a case in Pueblo County is linked to an El Paso County case. Among these cases, the majority are men in their mid-thirties who report experiencing homelessness, and substance use issues. The majority were also hospitalized due to their illness.
- To date, EPCPH staff have conducted or participated in 20 outreach clinics and have administered 488 vaccines to the target population. This includes mobile outreach, clinics at events such as Feed the Community, and vaccine clinics at the shelters. The EPCPH lab is offering vaccine to individuals utilizing pre-trial services. Successful and ongoing partnerships include Westside Cares, Colorado Springs Police Department's homeless outreach team, the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, Penrose and Memorial Hospital Emergency Departments and the county jail. The communicable disease team continues active surveillance in this investigation. Staff completed media interviews on KRDO radio and television regarding these efforts. Restaurants and public libraries have received education information.

### Influenza Season 2018-2019

- Surveillance for the 2018-2019 influenza season officially began on September 30, 2018, and will run through May 18, 2019. All hospitalized influenza cases with a positive flu test after September 30 are considered confirmed cases. The geographic spread of influenza activity in the state of Colorado is at the widespread level. The highest hospitalization rate is among 0-4 year olds. The predominating strain is influenza A, H1N1. There have been 192 hospitalized cases associated with influenza reported in El Paso County for the 2018-19 influenza season. One pediatric death associated with influenza (H1N1) was reported for the 2018-19 influenza season, but this case was not in El Paso County.

### Rabies

- Communicable Disease continues to monitor rabies activity, and received 10 calls related to possible exposures, with two positive (one skunk and one fox).

### **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.

- Staff attended Basic Patient Navigation and Motivational Interviewing training. The skills learned at this training will be integrated into the work of Resident Cessation Connector recruits from low-income multi-unit housing.
- Cross-training administrative staff in Family Planning and Immunizations clinic to gain efficiencies and improve customer service
- First cohort of managers completed the El Paso County Professional Development and Leadership 12-week classes.
- Nurse Family Partnership nurses completed a two-day Motivational Interviewing training facilitated by the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT). The training helps clients set and meet their treatment goals.
- Administration Manager contracted with trainers to arrange for a series of Managerial and Administrative trainings over the next several months.

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

- EPCPH received the Applied Informatics Team Training (AITT) learning stipend. A team of five EPCPH and El Paso County Sheriff's Office employees will participate in trainings related to public health informatics.
- Coordinated and delivered a multi-agency presentation on Child Fatality Review Team background, data, and prevention efforts to the Not One More Child

Coalition. The prevention information focused on our collaborative approach to youth suicide prevention through the Youth Suicide Prevention Workgroup, as well as safe sleep efforts promoted by EPCPH.

**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.

- Conducted interviews about influenza for KRDO radio, KRDO, KOAA, and Colorado Springs Business Journal.
- Completed interviews about southeast Colorado Springs medical clinic for The Gazette.
- Completed interviews about how to keep a healthy workforce for Colorado Springs Business Journal.
- Completed interview with KOAA on teen marijuana use and brain development.
- Conducted a media campaign for Radon Action Month, including television and radio ads to improve community awareness about risks of radon exposure, and to encourage citizens to test their homes. In addition, we provided three television interviews about radon awareness. This outreach helps improve our capacity to reach regions with high need for this information.
- Total estimated earned media value for television interviews: \$9,966; estimated number of viewership: 133,950.

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

- To prevent infectious disease during international travel, Immunization (IZ) staff initiated and operated an off-site travel clinic for Fountain Valley School for the fifth year at the request of the school nurse. IZ staff served a group of 94 students and teachers traveling to several different countries.
- Environmental Health (EH) was able to fill one of the Public Health Critical Needs staff requests. Specifically the EH Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) position, which will help develop several industry outreach and collaborative initiatives; such as an OWTS Certified Inspector Audit program, an Operation & Maintenance oversight of OWTS systems program, and a resident education workshop and resource effort that enlists Colorado State University Extension as co-presenters.
- The Retail Food Program plan review team in coordination with Pikes Peak Regional Building Department began the process of providing plan review services to customers at Regional Building Department. This was necessary to provide a more efficient process and to improve customer services between the agencies and the public.
- Administered and collected Hospital Transformation Program (HTP) Community Inventory Tool for the hospitals. Questions related to organizational information and sector, region served and services provided. Used the Healthy Community Collaborative (HCC) as a convened group of diverse partners to provide additional information to all the hospital systems.

**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.

- Youth Substance Use Prevention (YSUP) Planner applied for and was selected to serve as a co-chair of the *Public Health Transformation Steering Committee*, and was selected to also serve as a steering committee representative to the Cost Assessment Management Team. This team was established to understand current statewide implementation and spending on core public health services, and to estimate the cost to fully deliver core public health services statewide based on the current service delivery paradigm.
- EPCPH applied for and received a donation of 250 books from the Lisa Libraries to create small libraries in the waiting room of each WIC office in order to promote early literacy.
- Researched grants to provide funding to The Resource Exchange (TRE)'s Research Center regarding tobacco use in adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). High numbers of this population use tobacco, however research is lacking as to the reasons why or the best ways to provide cessation tools and counseling. EPCPH's Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (TEPP) recently created a survey specifically designed for adults with IDD to gather this data. The grant is necessary to provide financial support for TRE to administer and analyze the survey, and determine next steps to reduce the rate of tobacco use in the IDD population.
- Partnering with the Colorado School of Public Health (CSPH) in their application of a research grant through the University of Denver to conduct a health impact assessment (HIA) regarding homelessness in El Paso County. EPCPH and CSPH staff recently met with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office and Colorado Springs Police Department to align thoughts and resources on this process and determine a plan to gather data and involve other community stakeholders in the process. The HIA focuses on mental health and substance abuse in this population.
- Researching and pursuing opportunities for workforce development grants to build leadership skills in EPCPH staff.
- Researching a potential grant opportunity to expand the Co-Responder unit of the Sheriff's Office, as it currently only serves unincorporated areas of the county Sunday through Wednesday.

**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.

- Family Planning and Immunization Clinics are removing barriers to accessing care with walk-in clinic days. Immunizations served 193 clients and Family Planning served 86 clients in January in addition to regularly scheduled appointments.
- Staff reviewed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications for underserved neighborhood projects for the second year in a row. This represents

an opportunity to expand EPCPH staff participation on key community collaborations, coalitions, committees, or other work groups that can influence health outcomes and policy, including those that address the social determinants of health. CDBG funds are provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and funneled through municipal governments to support local non-profits in efforts to improve housing, infrastructure and economic opportunities.

- Public Health Planner and Community Outreach Coordinator are partnering with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the City of Colorado Springs to conduct the master planning process for Panorama Park. TPL received a \$938,000 grant from The Colorado Health Foundation for this project that will improve the built environment in Southeast Colorado Springs.