To: Board of Health  
From: Susan Wheelan, M.B.A., Public Health Director  
Date: February 2020 (reflects January 2020 activities)  
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 state law 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. 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, Infant and Children (WIC) caseload for January was 12,657, an increase of 71 clients from December 2019. WIC staff continue efforts to reach those in our community who are eligible but not enrolled through social media and consistent follow-up with the online WIC referral form. WIC staff work diligently to retain client caseload by reaching out to all who miss their scheduled appointments, by providing phone and on-line education options, and by assisting clients to fully utilize their food benefits.
- Maternal Child Health (MCH) Early Childhood Obesity Prevention (ECOP) Prevention and Policy Specialist (PPS) completed on-site I Am Moving, I Am Learning (IMIL) training with 10 Fort Carson childcare providers, forging a new collaboration with the military. IMIL is a direct education and policy, systems and environmental (PSE) Change intervention designed to increase daily moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, improve the quality of movement activities, and promote healthy food choices among preschool children.

Mental Health and Substance Use Prevention
Decrease the incidence of poor mental health and substance use and misuse
- The Women, Infants and Children (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. WIC staff completed 277 two-question Patient Health Questionnaires (PHQ-2s) and made 13 referrals to AspenPointe for further evaluation and connections to meet their specific behavioral health needs.
- The Fountain Valley Communities That Care Community Action Plan was approved by CDPHE and CU Boulder. The action plan includes implementation and evaluation plans for three community and societal-level strategies for the prevention of adolescent substance abuse, a funding plan, and a health and behavior outcomes evaluation plan.
- Youth Substance Use Prevention (YSUP) Planner assisted Community Health Partnership with the hiring of a new Project Manager to oversee the Coalition for
Prevention Education, Addiction and Recovery (CPAR) by serving on an interview panel and supporting the decision on a final candidate who started his role in January. YSUP continues to serve on the Communication Education work group for CPAR.

- Maternal Child Health (MCH), in collaboration with District 11’s Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Coordinator, provided an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Neurosequential Model in Education (NME) training for 50 educators and staff. This is the first of a series of training modules that will be provided to McAuliffe Elementary through an EPCPH and D11 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The NME book study also began this month with 10 participants. This 6-week long book study focuses on the book *Help for Billy* as a supplement to the ACEs and NME training.

**Surveillance, Epidemiology and Emergency Preparedness**

**Covid-19 (Novel Coronavirus)**

- In response to the COVID-19 outbreak that initiated in Wuhan City, China in December 2019, EPCPH is working with CDPHE and the CDC to conduct monitoring of travelers returning from China. To date, there have been no returning travelers in PEC with illness that required testing for COVID-19. Statewide, eight people have been tested for COVID-19. All tests have been negative.
- In response to the growing concern about novel Coronavirus, the Emergency Preparedness and Response team, the Communicable Disease team, and the South Central Healthcare Coalition hosted an informational session for community health and emergency management partners. The meeting, which was held at El Paso County Public Health, informed our partners of the current state of the outbreak and the steps EPCPH is taking to prepare and communicate on this topic.
- Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinator met with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) Medical Director to provide an overview presentation on closed points of dispensing. CSU is a partner with EPCPH in planning for an event that would require medication dispensing to their staff and families.

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

- El Paso County Public Health conducted 127 vaccine outreach events from October 2018 through January 2020. El Paso County Public Health, in coordination with community partners including the El Paso Sheriff’s Office, Penrose St. Francis parish nurses, UC Health/Memorial Emergency Department, and Peak Vista, have administered 7,164 Hepatitis A vaccine as of January 31, 2020. There were 132 positive Hepatitis A cases in El Paso County through January 2020.
- There were no new cases of hepatitis A in El Paso County with symptom onset in January 2020. If no new cases occur, the outbreak end date will be April 6, 2020.
Influenza Season 2019-2020
Influenza surveillance for the 2019-2020 season began on September 29, 2019. As of February 8, 2020, 278 people in El Paso County have been hospitalized for influenza. Three pediatric deaths have occurred in Colorado.

Rabies
The communicable disease program responded to 9 calls regarding possible rabies exposures. Two animals were tested for rabies. Both specimens were negative.

Foundational Public Health Services
Foundational public health services include: communicable disease prevention, investigation and control, environmental health, maternal, child, adolescent, and family health, chronic disease and injury prevention and behavioral health promotion, and clinical care.

Environmental Health
- EPCPH promoted “Radon Action Month” in January, and the Environmental Health (EH) Program Manager conducted two television interviews to promote public health education and awareness about radon. Additional details on EPCPH’s Radon Action Month media campaign are outlined in the Communication report on page 4.
- EH Program Manager attended the Colorado Directors of Environmental Health quarterly meeting in Weld County. This group meets to discuss timely and relevant EH issues in Colorado and is working to develop a more streamlined mission and vision to better serve LPHAs throughout the State.

Laboratory
- Performed 529 Bacteriological water tests, 321 for public water systems and 208 for private wells. Eighty-three water samples were assayed for inorganic anions.
- Laboratory staff has transitioned both public and private water samples test documentation to an electronic format.

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.
- The Immunization nurses conducted an interactive training for El Paso County Public Health nurses across the agency. Common questions and myths
surrounding vaccination were discussed. This training equips our nurses with the information they need to educate our clients and community members.

- Emergency Preparedness and Response program manager taught Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP) class to 20 students from across the South Central Region, representing fire, police and public health.

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

- The Development and Strategic Initiatives staff, in collaboration with the County’s Information Technology team, is in the process of establishing governance policies for sharing data and working with the Coroner’s Office to conceptualize a data architecture for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of public health data.

**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 managed media inquiries pertaining to radon, alcohol and botulism. The total estimated viewership for these television interviews is 74,171 and the estimated earned media value is $6,500.10

- In partnership with Environmental Health, the Office of Communication implemented a multi-media campaign to raise awareness about National Radon Action Month and encourage testing. A total of 106 public service announcements ran on KOAA during the month of January, with a net reach of 135,218. A paid social media campaign on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram had an estimated 99,316 impressions (the number of times a post from our social media page is displayed). As a result of the campaign, there was increased web traffic to the radon information page on the EPCPH website, with a 398 percent increase in page views over the previous month.

- The agency’s website [www.elpasocountyhealth.org](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org) had 10,484 new visitors in January, with 28,765 page views.

- YSUP Planner and PPS created a presentation and talking points on Communities that Care (CTC) for the City of Fountain’s Mayor Gabriel Ortega, who was invited by the Mayors Innovation Project (MIP) to speak about CTC at its annual meeting in Washington, D.C. on January 24th. This meeting brings together 80-100 mayors, city leaders and partner organizations from around the country to talk about pressing issues and innovative approaches to addressing challenges. MIP exists to help its member participants lead by example and share their experiences with peers.

- TSP Planner and Public Health Director participated in a conference call with the Broomfield County Public Health Director and Director of Human Services to discuss strategies for addressing a youth suicide cluster in Broomfield County. Resources developed by EPCPH were shared and ongoing support was offered.
Community Partnerships: develop and maintain strong relationships with key community partners to support public health or assure the provision of health care services.

- On January 16, EPCPH Director and Population Health Epidemiologist offered a presentation to approximately 50 participants in Leadership Pikes Peak’s (LPP) Signature Program. The Signature Program is LPP’s flagship community leadership program to introduce established professionals to an in-depth study of the issues and opportunities facing the Pikes Peak region, and to meet and learn from community leaders. EPCPH’s presentation, “Life Expectancy, What Makes us Healthy, and why Health Equity Matters”, oriented participants on EPCPH’s role in the County and local communities, how EPCPH aims to address social determinants of health, and the agency’s current initiative to build a data infrastructure to support community efforts that are upstream, using data and evidence-based best practices to further community health improvement measures. Following the presentation, the EPCPH Director moderated a panel discussion on a range of healthcare issues. Panelists included representatives from Peak Vista, Penrose-St. Francis, and CU School of Medicine.

- The Immunization Program Manager attended the Pikes Peak Flu and Immunization Coalition meeting. At this meeting, the new adult vaccine recommendations were discussed including the extended age recommendations for HPV vaccines, and the upcoming changes in Tdap recommendations.

- In January, the Nurse-Family Partnership Community Advisory Board joined with Prenatal Network to collaborate on community resources and referrals. These community partners include the Colorado Springs Pregnancy Center, Healthy Communities, Bloom Recovery House, Safe Care, Colorado Springs Breastfeeding Coalition, CCHA, Peak Vista, and local midwives. The Nurse-Family Partnership Community Advisory Board works to maintain strong community relationships to facilitate client referrals and expand resources for the program.

- The Family Planning Program Manager attended the local Coordinated Access to Community Health (CATCH) meeting on January 22nd where EPCPH resources were discussed, including current family planning services, influenza vaccine, and Hepatitis A vaccine. The CATCH clinics offer medical care to individuals in our community who are uninsured/underinsured.

- YSUP PPS and CTC’s Teen Advisory Board (TAB) facilitated a meeting with Fountain Valley’s Regional Recreation Center Advisory Group to brainstorm ways that TAB can increase teen involvement in the recreation center program planning process. Actionable items for TAB’s support were discussed.

- YSUP was invited to join Widefield School District 3’s Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) Advisory Council (YSUP also serves on D8’s CPP Council).

- The Teen Suicide Prevention Planner (TSP) and Youth Health and Development (YHD) Planner participated in a panel discussion at the 1st Annual El Paso County Suicide Prevention Task Force: Call to Action with nearly 600 people in attendance. Both spoke about youth suicide prevention efforts in El Paso County.
The TSP and YHD Planners met with the suicide prevention program manager at Community Health Partnership (CHP) to discuss next steps related to a county-wide collaborative aimed at reducing suicides by 20% by the year 2024. CHP is serving as the backbone organization for this effort, and EPCPH will contribute its expertise on this type of collaborative work.

TSP and YHD Planners met with representatives from COSILoveYou, a city gospel movement in Colorado Springs, regarding opportunities to collaborate and connect local churches with youth suicide prevention resources.

YHD Planner led four multidisciplinary local child fatality case reviews and provided data and prevention recommendations to local, state, and national partners.

MCH has engaged Heart-Centered Counseling, CASA, District 14 nurses and social workers, Midland Elementary, and Fort Carson early childcare providers in its continued outreach efforts.

The Bullying and Youth Suicide (BYS) PPS and HCP Care Coordinators offered a presentation about program services to the Community Partnership for Child Development (CPCD-Head Start) family advocates at a Community Resource Day.

MCH has forged a collaboration with Resilient Futures in Aurora, Colorado to promote trauma-responsiveness in early childcare centers.

MCH HCP nurse care coordinator has been selected to sit on the board of a newly developed non-profit, Disabling Barriers, which will review and approve grants to fund population-based work in the community geared towards improving the overall health and well-being of children and youth with special healthcare needs.

**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.

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2019-2020 Grant Applications

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- The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) opened the contracting process for Title X funding to a competitive process for the upcoming funding period (July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021). The application (listed in the chart above) was submitted and we will be notified in early March if we are awarded with federal and state funding for the upcoming contract. EPCPH has been the Title X services provider in El Paso County since its inception fifty years ago. We are confident that EPCPH will be funded, and we have requested increased funding based on the 8% increase in qualifying visits to the Family Planning program during 2019.

**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.

- The Immunization clinic served 184 “walk-in” clients, and Family Planning clinic served 102 (27% increase over the 2019 average) “walk in” clients in January. Offering the public walk-in clinic times at different locations helps to break down barriers and improve access to healthcare for those who have difficulty coordinating a traditional scheduled appointment.
- Nurse-Family Partnership made 203 home visits during the month of January. Meeting clients at their desired location helps to reduce barriers to health care. Nurse-Family Partnership hosted two playgroups during the month of January at the Southeast WIC clinic. Hosting client community events helps our moms build a healthy support network and remove barriers to community resources.
- The Family Planning team exceeded (by 125 visits) the 2019 goal of 1571 qualifying visits for a total of 1696 visits. The team saw a total of 2915 appointments in 2019, a 10% increase from 2018.
Goal 5 Strive to Ensure a Safe, Secure, Resilient and Healthy Community

*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 reporting back to the BoCC.*

At the January 9th Board of County Commissioners meeting, an update was provided on the Groundwater Quality Study, which is currently in year two (of four) of Phase III, which is resampling the original 50 wells to determine if concentrations have changed. Ultimately, this comprehensive study will be used to evaluate existing water quality data on nitrates and other potential contaminants, fills data gaps, provides analysis of the data and explores land use and infrastructure planning implications.