

To: Board of Health

Date: February 2022 (reflects activity January 27, 2022, to date)

Re: Director's Report

COVID-19 Status and Response

El Paso County has entered a new, hopeful phase of the pandemic, buoyed by improving disease metrics. After the county reached a record seven-day incidence level of 1,784 cases per 100,000 people on Jan. 15, disease levels have fallen quickly to an incidence of 360.7 as of Feb. 8. This mirrors trends with the Omicron variant across Colorado and the United States. Though we are optimistic about the positive trends, we remain cautious and focused on disease mitigation efforts, ensuring access to the vaccine for individuals in our community who want to receive it, and advocating for local access to therapeutics, which continue to be in short supply nationally.

Case Monitoring

COVID-19 data trends through Tuesday, Feb. 8:

- **Seven-day incidence:** 360.7
- **Seven-day positivity:** 12.57%
- **Hospital admissions and deaths in the last seven days* (Feb. 1 – 8):** 67 and 4
 - **Period subject to undercount due to data lag from the increased disease activity*

For more comprehensive local data, see the [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#).

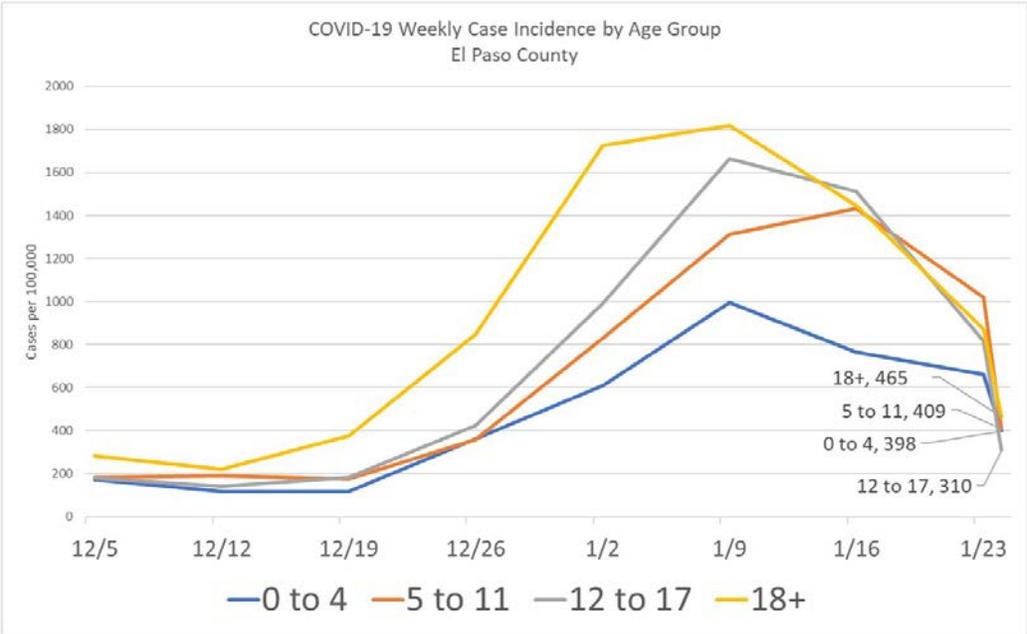
Children and Youth COVID-19 Data Brief

As of Feb. 7, the 0-17 age group accounts for:

- 6,963 of 34,094 (20.4%) total cases in the last 30 days
- 35 of 665 (5.3%) total hospitalizations in the last 30 days
- 0 of 42 total deaths in the last 30 days.

COVID-19 among children and youth in El Paso County

The graph below shows the case incidence among different age groups: 0-4 (blue), 5-11 (orange), 12-17 (gray) and 18 and older (yellow). All age groups are currently experiencing a significant decrease in the number of cases as compared to early to mid-January. For the week of Jan. 30 – Feb. 5, the 5-11 and 0-4 age groups have a higher incidence than the 12-17 age group.



Vaccine Access/Management

Recent vaccination activity shows there has been a consistent number of people receiving their booster doses, with 156,696 people in El Paso County receiving a booster. Providers continue to see new patients start their vaccination series, as 72.3 percent (484,000 people) have received at least one dose. More than 431,600 people (64.4 percent) have completed their vaccination series.

Among El Paso County residents 60 and older, who are among the most at-risk for serious complications from COVID-19, more than 85 percent have been vaccinated. All figures include information from the Colorado Immunization Information System and totals with federal estimates for El Paso County residents. View the complete [data dashboard online](#).

Vaccine Data

Vaccine data through Tuesday, February 8, 2022, including federal estimates:

- **Total doses administered: 967,950**
 - 1,077,400 with federal estimates
- **People vaccinated: 425,696 (62.7%)**
 - 484,200 (72.3%) with federal estimates
- **People fully vaccinated: 380,762 (56.1%)**
 - 431,700 (64.4%) with federal estimates

As of Sunday, Feb. 6, **51.7 percent of 12–17-year-olds and 23.5 percent of 5-11-year-olds** in El Paso County have been vaccinated (received at least one dose).

To access the latest vaccine numbers for El Paso County, see the [COVID-19 vaccine dashboard](#).

The Food and Drug Administration gave its full approval to Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine on Jan. 31, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices gave its endorsement of this recommendation on Feb. 4. The Moderna vaccine will carry the brand name Spikevax. It is approved for individuals 18 and older. Pfizer received its full FDA approval on Aug. 23, 2021, for ages 16 and older with the brand name Comirnaty.

On Feb. 1, [Pfizer and BioNTech asked the U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\) to amend the Emergency Use Authorization \(EUA\) of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to expand its use to children under 5](#). The FDA is meeting on Feb. 15 to discuss the request for the authorization of the Pfizer vaccine for children 6 months through 4 years of age. Once approved, pediatricians and other providers will be able to administer vaccine within a matter of days.

Recognition

Marigny Klaber, regional epidemiologist, was selected to receive the Civilian Achievement Award by the El Paso County Sheriff's Office (EPSO). She was recognized for her substantial contributions in support of the El Paso County Criminal Justice Center throughout the COVID-19 response. In particular, EPSO noted, "It is due to her knowledge and dedication that we have demonstrated such a strong response to the many situations we have encountered."

Agency Operations

Communications

- The Office of Communication managed television media inquiries pertaining to emerging issues including COVID-19 numbers and trends, the Omicron variant, increase in volume at testing sites, and radon. The total estimated viewership for these television interviews is more than 115,500 and the estimated earned media value is more than \$19,700.
- The Office of Communication also managed several print media inquiries on similar topics, with the addition of articles on COVID-19 hospitalizations and contact tracing.
- The Air Quality Program and Office of Communication launched several communication and education initiatives as part of a grant to raise awareness about radon during National Radon Action Month, which is recognized in January each year. These efforts included a [news release](#), which garnered earned media coverage through an interview provided by the air quality program manager. In addition, the campaign—which focuses on educating residents about the dangers of radon and connecting people to mitigation resources—featured paid social media ads, in addition to paid television PSAs which will be running on KKTU through the month of February. The social media ads yielded the following aggregate metrics across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter:
 - 130,116 impressions
 - 24,492 engagements
- The Office of Communication worked with agency leadership and communicable disease subject matter experts to disseminate a digital newsletter to the business community.
 - The newsletter was sent to approximately 3,500 partners across various

businesses, sectors and industries, and yielded high levels of engagement, with an open rate* of approximately 60 percent.

- *Open rate shows what percentage of the audience opens the newsletter, and typically anything above 20 percent is considered successful.
- The newsletter featured information on Omicron trends and best practices for businesses during times of disease surge, updated isolation and quarantine recommendations, testing and treatment resources, and local resources from the Pikes Peak Workforce Center and the Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center.
- The agency’s website www.elpasocountyhealth.org had 81,847 new visitors in December, with 243,227 unique pageviews.

Environmental Health (EH)

EH COVID-19 Activity

Environmental Health saw an increase in inquiries in retail food establishments and health care facilities. Out of the 40 inquiries during the month of January 2022, 21 inquiries were to report positive COVID-19 cases and outbreaks; 13 inquiries were regarding public health guidance and four inquiries were regarding mask guidelines.

Other EH Activities

Environment Health Activity	2022 Total as of 1/31/2022	2021 Total
Air Quality Construction Permits	13	129
Air Quality Open Burn Permits	0	15
Air Quality Complaints	3	50
Animal Bites Reported		1385
Body Art Inspections	0	85
Body Art Follow-up Inspections	0	6
Body Art Complaints	0	21
Child Care Regular Inspections	6	214
Child Care Follow-up Inspections	0	0
Child Care Complaints	1	4
Land-Use Planning Review	22	162
OWTS Pumper Truck Inspections	3	72
OWTS Final Inspections	41	516
OWTS Partial Inspections	7	170
OWTS Application Design Reviews	51	703

OWTS Design Revision Requests	9	272
OWTS New Permit Applications	30	387
OWTS Repair Permit Applications	25	282
OWTS Modification Permit Applications	0	11
OWTS Acceptance Doc for Title Transfer	59	1048
OWTS Soil and Site Evaluations	35	518
OWTS Complaints	2	29
OWTS O&M Systems		179
Recreational Water Safety Inspections	0	320
Recreational Water Follow-up Inspections	0	28
Recreational Water Complaints	0	13
RFE Regular Inspections	4	2960
RFE Re-Inspections	3	119
RFE Complaint Investigations	33	323
RFE Plan Reviews	17	153
School Safety Regular Inspections	0	0
School Safety Complaints	1	6
School Safety Self-Certification Audits	0	9
School Safety Self-Certifications Returned	0	295
Waste Tires Facilities Regular Inspections	0	117
Waste Tires Follow-up Inspections	0	5

Laboratory: Public Water System Test Counts



Health Services

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program

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. Throughout the month of January, WIC staff completed 458 Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ2) screenings. Staff completed 10 referrals to Diversus Health and three referrals to Colorado Community Health Alliance (CCHA) for further evaluation and connection to meet specific behavioral health needs. Six clients declined a referral but requested a phone number to reach out themselves. Four clients on Tricare were either referred to non-active-duty case management or active-duty resources on base. Thirty-one clients were already getting services and declined a referral for that reason.

The WIC caseload for December was 11,872. To continue services while maintaining necessary social distancing, WIC educators continued phone appointments. The clinic remained open and available to clients for new benefit cards and breast pump issuance and returns. WIC continues the practice of making follow-up calls for new certifications with the goal of increasing customer service and satisfaction. Due to federal congressional action, the increased fruit and vegetable benefit was extended through March 2022. During January, 28 referrals were made to and from WIC, Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), HCP, a Program for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs, Family Planning, and the Colorado Quitline.

Family Planning

Family Planning is working with multiple community health care providers to plan educational outreach regarding sexually transmitted infection prevalence, diagnosis, treatment and best practices.

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) nurses conducted 190 visits during January. All visits were conducted through telehealth. NFP nurses served 120 families and enrolled 19 new clients to the program in the past month. NFP nurses provided 22 referrals to community resources, with a majority of the referrals going to mental health services and early childhood intervention. Meeting clients through telehealth and video conferencing has helped continue client engagement as well as meet the needs of the most vulnerable by helping to remove barriers to health care. NFP is actively seeking a Spanish-speaking nurse to add to the team to further enhance our community reach and enhance access to services.

Immunization Program

The Immunization Program continued to prioritize COVID-19 vaccinations in the month of January. Eight COVID-19 vaccine clinics were organized by community host partners and the EPCPH mobile outreach team. The Immunization Program supported other vaccine activities such as Operation House Call, Long-Term Care Facilities, and Colorado Springs Fire Department's efforts to vaccinate individuals experiencing homelessness. EPCPH continues to work to fill several open nurse and support positions. The Immunization Program continued to serve refugees seeking vaccination and offered limited clinic appointments for routine vaccines including flu vaccines.

Community Health Promotion

Healthy Eating and Active Living

Healthy environment planner activities during January:

- Met with several key partners including CSU Extension, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Colorado College, and a private consultant working to develop a more resilient and sustainable local food system. Additional meetings were held with two local farmers' market coordinators who are committed to supplying locally-sourced produce, meat, and dairy. These new relationships may help incorporate healthy food incentive programs, such as WIC and Double Up Food Bucks, into local markets.
- Attended the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments' Tri-county Advocate Transit Focus Group to discuss mobility needs and barriers within El Paso County. The Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments' Air Quality Technical Committee meeting was also attended. Results and implications from high ground-level ozone largely due to external factors (such as wildfire smoke) were discussed.

Maternal Child Health (MCH)

MCH activities during January:

- MCH prevention and policy specialist (PPS) provided a training on trauma-responsiveness at two elementary schools and continued collaboration with School District 11 to provide Neurosequential Model in Education (NME) training to staff district-wide. A new collaboration was formed with School District 49 which will result in NME training provided to D49 staff moving forward.
- Conducted a community services scan and a review of current data for the HCP decision tool process, which is occurring throughout 2022. The review will be used to identify and address the needs of Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) in El Paso County.
- HCP is a care coordination program for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs. Throughout the month of January 2022:
 - HCP new referrals: 36
 - HCP care coordination active clients: 77
 - HCP information-only clients: 10
 - Community outreach activities as of Jan. 31, 2022: 4
- Hired and onboarded two COVID care coordinators whose sole focus will be to address the health disparities of individuals and families disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, through the provision of resource navigation services. Data from their work will be collected and included in the social determinants of health data dashboard which is currently being developed in collaboration with our Data and Analytics Office.

Mental Health and Substance Use Prevention

Youth substance use prevention planner and prevention and policy specialist activities during January:

- Formed a working group of community members and community partners to plan a Drug Takeback Day and lockbox distribution in Fountain. The Fountain Police Department has been recruited as a partner to support the upcoming Drug Takeback Day.

- Facilitated a Fountain Valley Communities That Care community board meeting, “Fountain Valley Communities That Care 2022 Kickoff” online. The community outreach coordinator created a visual representation of the sectors that are represented in the coalition for their review.
- Attended the National Leadership Forum for Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA).

Youth Suicide Prevention

- The Colorado Child Fatality Prevention System assigned 35 child fatality cases to El Paso County for review in 2022. Youth health and development (YHD) planner convened the Child Fatality Review Team and conducted three multidisciplinary case reviews.
- In consultation from the Youth Suicide Prevention (YSP) Steering committee, the YSP Community Action Plan will move its timeline to a school year calendar, instead of a calendar year. This adjustment to planning will better align with the schedule that is typical for students and creates space for the Child Fatality Review Team to conduct their reviews, and report to the YSP Workgroup on their findings. The result of this move should be an Action Plan that is more responsive to the emerging trends and needs of the students.
- In the last four months, the YSP Workgroup has onboarded 15 new community members to our collaborative efforts. These new members represent entities who were not previously associated with the work, and new staff members of organizations represented in the work over the years.

Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (TEPP)

TEPP activities during January:

- Public health planner and TEPP team met with representatives from CityHealth, which is an initiative of the de Beaumont Foundation and Kaiser Permanente aimed at advancing evidence-based policy solutions that will help people live longer, better lives in vibrant, prosperous communities. CityHealth is expanding their focus to Colorado Springs soon and we discussed potential partnerships related to advancing various policy efforts.
- TEPP met with city leaders from Manitou Springs to discuss tobacco retailer license (TRL) compliance. The Fountain Police Department offered to complete quarterly TRL inspections in the City of Manitou Springs. The Fountain and Manitou Springs police departments met Feb. 14 to discuss the process and procedure and finalize memorandums of understanding. They will also discuss retailer education needs and give retailers 30 days’ notice before enforcement will begin. TEPP is also convening a workgroup with the city’s finance staff to ensure proper policies and procedures are in place regarding administrative needs and requirements. Overall, the Manitou Springs City Administration, Police Department and school district are pleased that these efforts are coming to fruition.
- TEPP held a Tobacco-Free Schools task force meeting with representatives from Calhan Middle School, Welte Education Center, James Irwin Charter, North Middle School, and Doherty High School. TEPP provided technical assistance and resources for schools that are working on comprehensive tobacco-free school policies.

Community Partnerships

Public Health Planner and Community Outreach activities during January:

- Met with the senior project manager from the Hospital Transformation Program (HTP) at UHealth to discuss leveraging the Healthy Community Collaborative (HCC) to participate in their required Community and Health Neighborhood Engagement (CHNE) process. HTP is a five-year Medicaid value-based program focused on improving quality, demonstrating meaningful community engagement, and improving health outcomes over time. UHealth will be surveying HCC members to identify individuals interested in participating in the CHNE process.
- Met with the group director for Community Health Improvement at Centura to discuss community health indicators and the upcoming Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) process for Penrose-St. Francis. The health indicators they will share as part of their CHNA presentation to the community were reviewed and opportunities for alignment with the Community Health Assessment (CHA) process we are currently undergoing with HCC were discussed.
- Participated in a focus group as part of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) work for Community Health Partnership (CHP). The focus group centered on our experiences with JEDI and our perception of CHP in relation to JEDI practices.
- EPCPH's Community Outreach Coordinator convened and facilitated a RISE VIP (Very Involved People) monthly meeting focused on 2021 achievements and upcoming events, trainings, and opportunities. The coordinator also co-convened and participated in a two-day "Crucial Conversations" workshop with community members and leaders.
- The School Liaison attended district wellness meetings for Harrison District 2 and Academy District 20. Discussions focused on student and staff wellness gaps, and changes for district wellness policies. Also, the school liaison, in addition to agency leadership and the EPCPH COVID-19 education team met with the Pikes Peak Area Superintendents Association, COVID Coordinators, and school nurses to discuss changes to school guidance and response efforts.

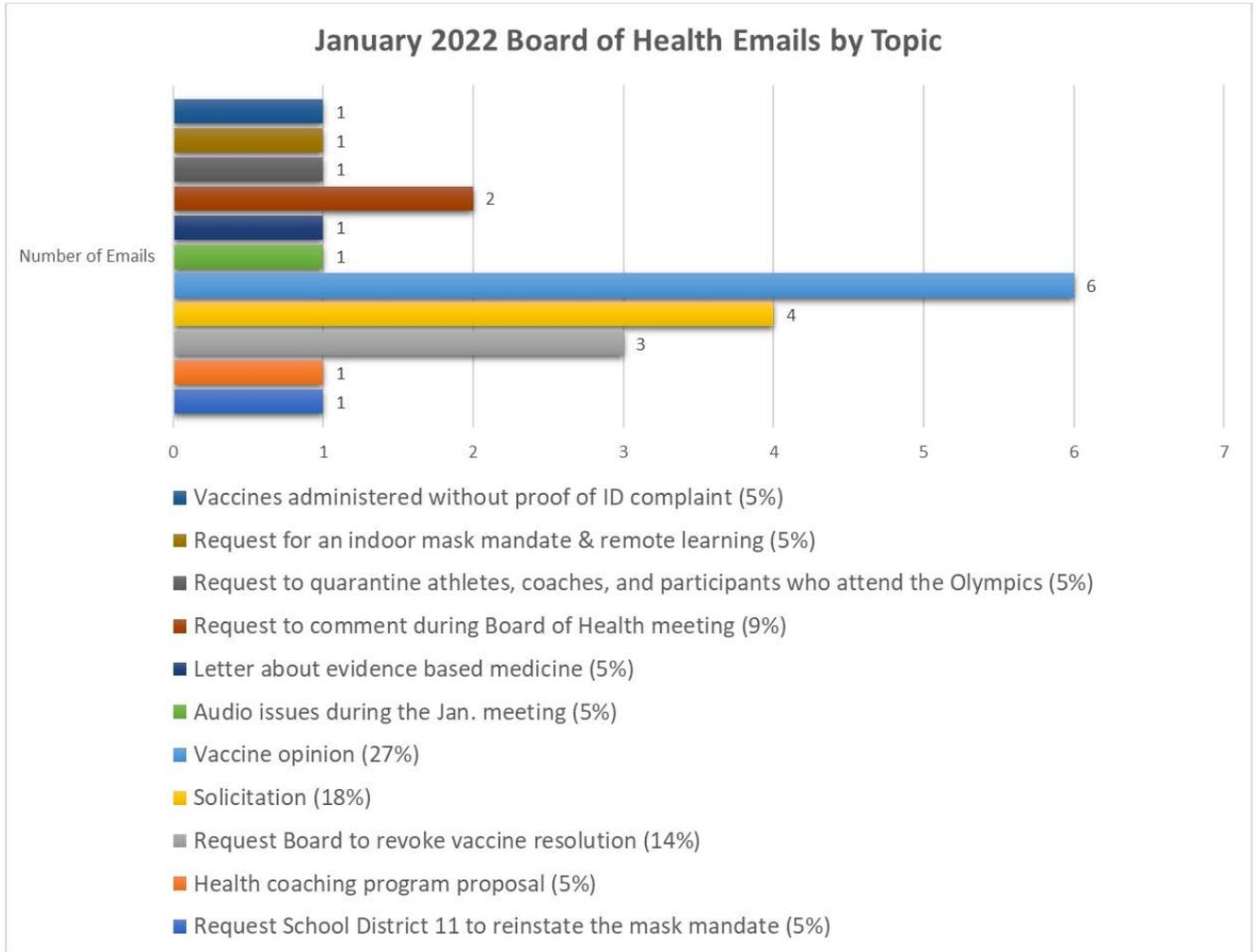
Health Equity

- EPCPH's community outreach coordinator participated in the Southeast Strong Steering Committee. The group reviewed a health assessment provided by the City of Colorado Springs Comprehensive Planning Department to compare data from the health assessment to perceptions and individual experiences.
- The youth substance use prevention planner and prevention and policy specialist participated in "Navigating Equity Conversations in Communities Organizing for Prevention (COFP)" monthly meeting for Communities That Care (CTC) grantees. The youth substance use prevention planner also participated in the COFP Equity Planning meeting to discuss next steps of Rocky Mountain Public Health training center offering a suite of equity trainings specifically for COFP.

Board of Health Email Inquires

The Board of Health email (boardofhealth@elpasoco.com) received 22 unique emails during the month of January 2022. The majority of the emails were to express opinions on COVID-19 vaccines (six emails). Four emails were solicitations on the topics of: requesting a review for

organic homebirths; offering website assistance; request to link the EPCPH website to a mental health and addiction treatment center website; and a lab informing EPCPH they have extra capacity for PCR testing. Three emails were to request the Board of Health to revoke the vaccine resolution. Other topics are noted in the chart below:



January 2022 Board of Health Emails by Percent

