

To: Board of Health
From: Susan Wheelan, M.B.A., Public Health Director
Date: July 18, 2021 (reflects activity June 23, 2021 to date)
Re: Director's Report

COVID-19 Status and Response

Entering the second half of 2021, it is timely to reflect on the tremendous accomplishment in administering more than 690,700 doses of COVID-19 vaccines in El Paso County. The work could not have been achieved without strong inter-agency partnerships and collaboration among members of the El Paso County and Colorado Springs Vaccine Consortium, who worked diligently to make this achievement possible.

The El Paso County and Colorado Springs Vaccine Consortium has been focused on removing barriers to vaccine access. For example, Mission Medical Center was one of the first equity clinics to offer vaccines for individuals in underserved and low-income communities and has administered more than 2,200 doses since early March. Operation House Call, a partnership between Public Health, Colorado Springs Fire Department and Matthews-Vu, was able to provide the vaccine to 130 individuals who are homebound and not able to travel to a vaccine site. Overall, nearly 60 percent of people have been vaccinated locally and disease rates have decreased, demonstrating the effectiveness and safety of the vaccines.

Vaccine Data

Vaccine data through Sunday, July 18, including federal estimates:

- **Total doses administered:** 598,611
 - 694,600 with federal estimates
- **People vaccinated:** 319,771 (52.5%)
 - 371,900 (61.0%) with federal estimates
- **People fully vaccinated:** 292,300 (48.0%)
 - 336,200 (55.2%) with federal estimates

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

Vaccine Communications

The Citadel Mall and Chapel Hills Mall began to offer both COVID-19 vaccines and testing on July 1. The Citadel Mall drive-thru vaccination site opened in response to the closure of the state's drive-thru Community Vaccination Site at the Broadmoor World Arena late June. The mall drive-thru vaccination sites are two of the more than 100 locations throughout El Paso County where residents can receive free COVID-19 vaccines. Most locations offer same-day or walk-in appointments.

Ongoing COVID-19 Response Activities

Case Monitoring

COVID-19 data trends through Sunday, July 18

- **Seven-day incidence:** 69.5
- **Seven-day positivity:** 3.59%

- **Hospital admissions and deaths in the last seven days (July 11 – 18):** 26 and 1

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

Public Health Orders

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) issued a [fourth amended Public Health Order \(PHO\) 20-38](#) on July 1, 2021. Four major changes were included:

1. Face coverings are no longer required for unvaccinated and not fully vaccinated individuals within schools or the Division of Motor Vehicles. They remain mandatory for unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated people in homeless shelters, prisons, jails, and emergency medical and health care settings.
2. Released schools from following CDPHE outbreak guidance.
3. Added COVID-19 testing requirements for unvaccinated individuals in various settings.
4. Reduced hospital reporting requirement to five days a week, Monday through Friday, instead of seven days a week.

Communications

- The Office of Communication managed television media inquiries pertaining to emerging issues including COVID-19 data and trends, COVID-19 vaccination efforts and progress, as well as policy updates related to mask restrictions and public health orders. The total estimated viewership for these television interviews is over 341,000 and the estimated earned media value is nearly \$45,000.
- The Office of Communication also managed several print media inquiries on similar topics, in addition to the topics of grant funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and information on West Nile Virus in response to detection of the disease in Colorado mosquitos in early July.
 - The Colorado Springs Gazette featured an [in-depth article on a \\$2.2 million grant from the CDC](#) to address COVID-19 disparities in El Paso County.
- On June 22, Public Health presented a COVID-19 data and vaccination update to Fountain City Council as part of the larger roadshow/presentations given to local municipalities and elected bodies in recent months. This presentation featured hyper-local data specific to the 80817 (Fountain) zip code and is part of ongoing efforts to provide elected officials and leaders with real-time data and facts for informed decision making.
- Efforts continued on the “[Don’t Wait. Vaccinate!](#)” [multimedia COVID-19 vaccine outreach campaign](#), which was launched in late April in partnership with Public Health, El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs. The bilingual English and Spanish campaign recently finalized paid advertising on social media, radio, billboards, buses, and print advertising in the Southeast Express.
 - Social media metrics from April 23-June 28 - paid advertisements resulted in a total of 1,544,160 impressions, reached 413,916 people and led to 1,459 clicks to Public Health’s website via Instagram and Facebook.
 - Through critical interagency support, the organic (non-paid) social media posts shared by Public Health, El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs generated nearly 25,000 additional impressions, 1,216 engagements and resulted in 205 links to Public Health’s website via Facebook.

- The agency’s website www.elpasocountyhealth.org had 35,676 new visitors in June, with 118,039 unique pageviews.

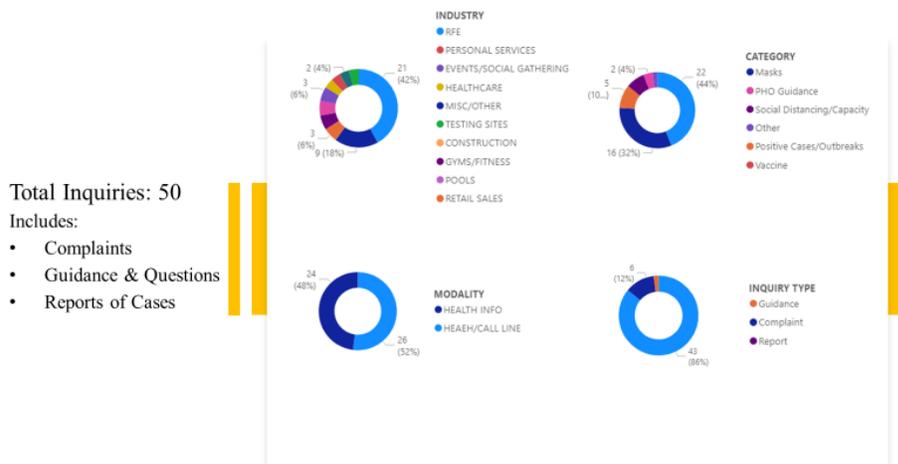
Continuity of Operations

Environmental Health (EH)

- In June, the Pool Inspection team conducted the annual routine inspections for all seasonal facilities. The inspections are conducted during the first month of operation to ensure each facility is in alignment with appropriate parameters.
 - It is important to note that all pool inspections have seen over a 400% increase in follow up or second inspections related to closures, specifically for pH and chemical disinfection discrepancies.
- On June 24th the Retail Food Program Manager presented a webinar on Food Safety Requirements for Food Trucks through the Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center. The webinar was recorded and is available online to be shared with Mobile Food Truck Partners to promote the importance of food safety and to share common licensing questions.
- The Retail Food Program Manager presented licensing data to the Regional Recovery Council on June 16th, 2021. The data demonstrated the recovery of full-service restaurants with a consistent increase in the number of establishments since 2019.
- The Retail Food Manger conducted a joint complaint investigation at a restaurant with the Colorado Springs Fire Department to resolve a severe fire safety hazard at the establishment. Joint inspections create an opportunity to strengthen community partnerships.

Emerging Topics/Questions from the Community

For the second month in a row, Environmental Health has seen a significant decrease in all inquiries compared to prior months.



This month, COVID-19 guidance requests greatly outnumbered complaints. 43 of the 50 inquiries were requests for public health order (PHO) specific guidance and compliance. Out of these 43, most inquiries were questions regarding mask usage and other general PHO related questions.

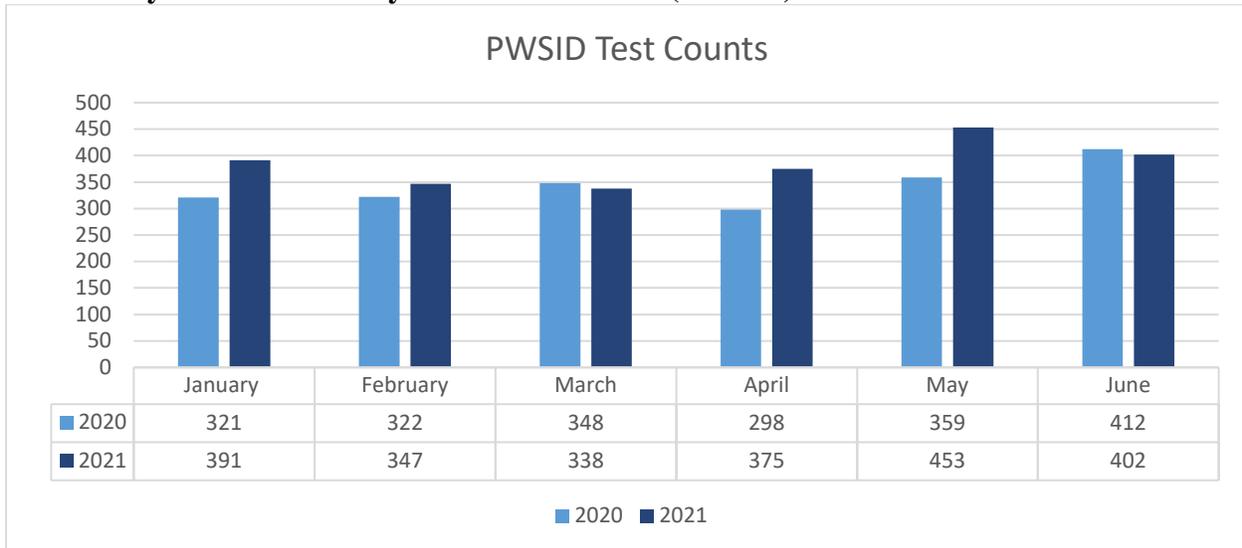
- Top sectors:
 - Retail Food Establishments continue to trend as #1 with 42% (21 total)
 - Personal Services 18% (9 total)
 - Slight increase in the following with 6% (3 total each)
 - Event/Social Gathering
 - Healthcare
 - Other
 - Testing Site Questions

Other EH Activities

Environment Health Activity	2021 Total as of 6.30.21	2020 Total
Air Quality Construction Permits	78	109
Air Quality Open Burn Permits	15	16
Air Quality Complaints	24	29
Animal Bites Reported	701	1397
Body Art Inspections	44	74
Body Art Follow-up Inspections	4	0
Body Art Complaints	12	13
Child Care Regular Inspections	145	91
Child Care Follow-up Inspections	0	0
Child Care Complaints	0	1
Land-Use Planning Review	99	166
OWTS Pumper Truck Inspections	36	88
OWTS Final Inspections	292	512
OWTS Partial Inspections	56	71
OWTS Application Design Reviews	481	687
OWTS Design Revision Requests	132	132
OWTS New Permit Applications	196	330
OWTS Repair Permit Applications	160	267
OWTS Modification Permit Applications	4	19
OWTS Acceptance Doc for Title Transfer	557	1009
OWTS Soil and Site Evaluations	259	464
OWTS Complaints	10	31

Environment Health Activity	2021 Total as of 6.30.21	2020 Total
OWTS O&M Systems	81	131
Recreational Water Safety Inspections	231	230
Recreational Water Follow-up Inspections	21	5
Recreational Water Complaints	5	3
RFE Regular Inspections	1381	846
RFE Re-Inspections	26	28
RFE Complaint Investigations	136	226
RFE Plan Reviews	80	142
School Safety Regular Inspections	0	5
School Safety Complaints	3	4
Waste Tires Facilities Regular Inspections	48	30
Waste Tires Follow-up Inspections	2	0

Laboratory: Public Water System Identification (PWSID)



Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program

The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) caseload for June was 12,621 an increase of 21 from May. 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.

During June, WIC staff completed 487 Patient Health Questionnaires (PHQ2) behavioral health screenings, an increase of 106 from May. Staff completed 20 referrals to Diversus Health and five referrals to Colorado Community Health Alliance (CCHA) – Colorado’s Medicaid Program -- for further evaluation and connection to meet clients’ specific behavioral health needs.

In June, 27 referrals were made to and from WIC, NFP, HCP, and Family Planning. The EPCPH Communications team assisted in planning social media posts for the summer to promote the increase of the cash value benefit for fruits and vegetables, development of the most recent prenatal video, and a client feedback survey. WIC and Environmental Health developed and began implementation of a new process to ensure continuity of care and wrap-around services for children who have an elevated blood lead level. This process will more effectively ensure that families in El Paso County receive both nutrition counseling and assistance with environmental lead exposure.

Colorado WIC funded twelve EPCPH WIC staff to attend the virtual National WIC Association conference. Sessions highlighted customer service, community relationships, and health equity. Staff are currently discussing ideas that could be implemented locally. WIC staff continued to participate in workgroups such as the Pikes Peak Breastfeeding Coalition, 0-3 Community Group Meeting, and the Prenatal Network. WIC continues to partner with organizations such as CPCD HeadStart and SafeCare to provide appropriate community referrals and assistance for clients.

Immunization Program

The Immunization Program is currently working to resume pre-COVID clinic operations. The clinic is now open five days per week, vaccinating children, adults, and international travelers. The clinic is focusing on the vaccination of clients who may be behind on routine vaccines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is also supporting the Operation House Call team and local long-term care facilities by providing COVID vaccines to individuals who are homebound and residents and staff in nursing homes.

The Immunizations team is working with COSIloveyou and Harrison School District to provide back-to-school immunizations at Sierra High School on July 31, 2021. Many children fell behind on their vaccination schedules during COVID, and the Immunizations team will be working to bring them up-to-date and help protect children from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Family Planning

The Family Planning program continued to provide a bilingual Medical Assistant at the EPCPH South vaccine Point of Dispensing (POD) to ensure language would not be a barrier to access the COVID-19 vaccine. Due to community need, the Family Planning clinic has now returned to offering services in the clinic five days per week as of June 4th.

Family Planning began receiving referrals from the new EPCPH internal referral system in June and will continue to utilize the internal health services referral system to refer clients to other programs. For example, a woman receiving a positive pregnancy test will be informed of the services provided by WIC and Nurse-Family Partnership. Family Planning worked with the

EPCPH Communications team to update the website and develop a video to promote Family Planning services and provide information about how individuals can access services.

The program expanded collaboration with the Southern Colorado Health Network (SCHN) to coordinate care for diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Family Planning will receive additional funding from CDPHE beginning in September through December 2021 to hire a part-time physician. The physician will provide community education to other medical providers regarding reducing the rate of STIs in our community.

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)

Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) nurses conducted 245 visits during the month of June. Of these, 181 visits were held via telehealth and 64 visits were conducted in-person. NFP graduated three clients and enrolled 12 new clients to the program. Meeting clients through telehealth and video conferencing has helped continue client engagement as well as meet the needs of the most at risk by helping to remove barriers to health care. NFP nurses have increased the number of in-person visits conducted and continue to offer telehealth as an option for their clients.

Workforce Development

In early June, several Public Health employees attended the Center for Creative Leadership's Community Leadership Program. This intensive three-and-a-half-day program focused on addressing leadership and performance development, leadership and team effectiveness, feedback, and goal setting, as seen through the lens of four critical leadership competencies: self-awareness, learning agility, communication, and influence. This formal leadership development opportunity provided extensive training, knowledge, and growth, which will aid those who attended in achieving more effective organizational leadership and community impact.

EPCPH participated in a food drive, donating 146 pantry items to Connections4Life. Connections4Life adjoins the Public Health South building location. This community organization serves the community's low income and homeless populations for Fountain and parts of southern Colorado Springs. They have seen an increased need in food services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Public Health employees enthusiastically supported this effort for this trusted organization.

Grant Updates

The CDC funding to address health disparities resulting from COVID-19 will support the hiring of more than five staff positions to focus on health equity, resource navigation for our most impacted populations, and to strengthen community partnerships.

Addressing the community's food insecurity is a priority as the grants team monitors funding that may become available. Public Health plans to partner with community organizations that address food insecurity to expand these organizations' services.

Special Recognition

- Public Health was one of four El Paso County departments to receive the 2021 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award at the Association's annual conference July 9-12. Public Health was recognized for our Teen Advisory Board

(TAB) and its role in amplifying youth voice in the community. TAB operates as a community-based board in the Fountain Valley area and is comprised of Public Health staff who serve as facilitators and work side-by-side with local youth representatives to address the issue of youth substance use. The overarching goal of TAB is to engage local youth in strategic planning, and most importantly action, to address the rise in youth substance behavior in Fountain Valley. Members of TAB work collectively to identify and understand the root causes underlying youth risk behavior related to substance abuse. Recognizing that connectedness is an important element, TAB is designed to foster productive relationships among adult mentors in the community, Public Health facilitators and other community members as we work collectively to address the issue. The program is designed to engage local teens, provide skills in facilitation and leadership, and ensure teens realize they have a powerful voice within the community. Outcomes are measured through participation, engagement, and leadership activities.

The other County departments honored by NACo were Economic Development, Public Works, and Department of Human Services. El Paso County Board of County Commissioners, some of whom attended the NACo conference, congratulated each of the programs for being recognized on a national scale and for their continued dedicated service to our community.