

To: Board of Health
From: Susan Wheelan, M.B.A., Public Health Director
Date: June 2022 (reflects activity May 2022)
Re: Director's Report

COVID-19 Status and Response

Case Monitoring

COVID-19 data trends for the last 14 days from May 31 through June 14:

- **Cases:** 3,256
- **Hospitalization:** 38
- **Deaths:** 2

Vaccine Data

El Paso County vaccine data through June 11, including federal estimates:

- **Total doses administered:** 1,153,596
- **People vaccinated:** 494,320 (72.1% of the eligible population)
- **People fully vaccinated:** 445,573 (65.0% of the eligible population)
- **People boosted:** 190,819 (27.8% of the eligible population)

To access the latest data dashboard, see the [COVID-19 data and vaccine dashboard](#).

Agency Operations

Communications

- The Office of Communication managed television media inquiries pertaining to emerging issues including COVID-19 trends, vaccines, and boosters, in addition to coverage on monkeypox. The total estimated viewership for these television interviews is nearly 120,000 and the estimated earned media value is more than \$26,000.
- The Office of Communication also managed several print media inquiries on similar topics, with the addition of articles on the national recognition of the El Paso County and Colorado Springs Vaccine Consortium and a spotlight on the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) mobile outreach efforts.
 - The Vaccine Consortium was featured in the Colorado Springs Indy's, "[6 stories making headlines this week](#)" for the week of May 25. The newsclip featured the recognition of the Vaccine Consortium with the 2022 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo).
 - Following the May Board of Health meeting, the Colorado Springs Gazette did an in-depth article about [EPCPH's mobile WIC outreach efforts](#). The article highlighted how the mobile WIC clinics aim to meet people where they are by reducing barriers and directly connecting people to the services they need.
- In late May, the Office of Communication released the [2021 Annual Report](#). This year's report features tremendous strides in addressing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, numerous agency and individual awards and accolades, and demonstrated progress around EPCPH's top priorities as outlined in the Community Health Improvement Plan: healthy eating, active living, mental health

and reducing substance use and misuse.

- The Office of Communication continues to publish articles on emerging and trending topics on its [EPCPH News webpage](#). The goal of this page is to provide timely, succinct, and easy-to-understand articles and information on a wide variety of public health topics for partners and the public. These articles are also shared on social media, with the goal of driving traffic back to the EPCPH website and helping to establish a trusted hub where people can go for reliable information.
 - On May 10, the Office of Communication—working closely with subject matter experts including the youth resilience and suicide prevention planner, youth health and wellness planner, data and analytics, and agency leadership—published an article entitled, “[Be an advocate for youth in honor of National Mental Health Awareness Month](#).” This article features information on how to support youth mental health and well-being, including tangible and actionable resources, handouts, trainings, and tips. It educates readers on the warning signs of mental illness and suicide, how to respond, and how individuals can get involved in community efforts to help prevent suicide.
 - On May 16, the Office of Communication—working closely with expertise across communicable disease, agency leadership and medical direction—published an article entitled, “[Reduce your risk of exposure to rabies by avoiding wild animals](#),” on the EPCPH News webpage. This is part of ongoing efforts to raise awareness around rabies and equip residents with the knowledge needed to help protect themselves and their pets against rabies.
- The agency’s website www.elpasocountyhealth.org had 21,690 new visitors in May, with 49,812 unique pageviews.

Environmental Health (EH)

Environmental Health had one COVID-19 inquiry during the month of May 2022. The inquiry was for guidance regarding the location of free community test kits.

- El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH), in partnership with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), has implemented a new data system that will lead to more consistent and unified data and reporting across the state, to include billing and licensing.
- The Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) program offered two classes to area realtors related to the OWTS program and drinking water. The intent of these classes was to communicate general OWTS education and operation information. Additionally, the communication of the needs, requirements, and reasons behind property sale inspections and operation and maintenance inspections was included.

Other EH Activities

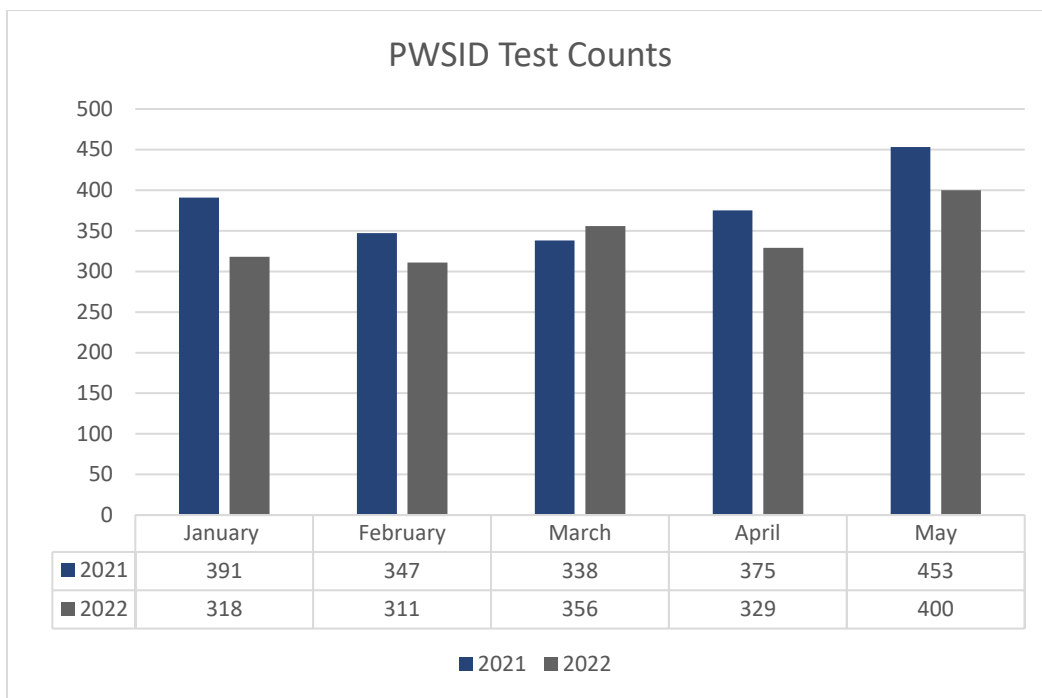
- The table below captures a snapshot of activities across the Environmental Health Division. This work—which is critical to the development of a healthy, economically vibrant, and safe community—is accomplished through science-based risk assessment and policy development, inspections, consultation, education, and regulations designed to protect the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the places we live, work and play.

Environment Health Activity	2022 Total As of 5/31/22	2021 Total
Air Quality Construction Permits	80	129
Air Quality Open Burn Permits	6	15
Air Quality Complaints	18	50
Animal Bites Reported	362	1385
Body Art Inspections	17	85
Body Art Follow-up Inspections	2	6
Body Art Complaints	8	21
Child Care Regular Inspections	73	214
Child Care Follow-up Inspections	7	0
Child Care Complaints	4	4
Land-Use Planning Review	116	162
Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) Pumper Truck Inspections	45	72
OWTS Final Inspections	175	516
OWTS Partial Inspections	59	170
OWTS Application Design Reviews	244	703
OWTS Design Revision Requests	63	272
OWTS New Permit Applications	173	387
OWTS Repair Permit Applications	112	282
OWTS Modification Permit Applications	2	11
OWTS Acceptance Doc for Title Transfer	394	1048
OWTS Soil and Site Evaluations	168	518
OWTS Complaints	13	29
OWTS O&M Systems	25	179
Recreational Water Safety Inspections	104	320
Recreational Water Follow-up Inspections	6	28
Recreational Water Complaints	1	13
Retail Food Establishment (RFE) Regular Inspections	636	2960
RFE Re-Inspections	31	119
RFE Complaint Investigations	156	153
RFE Plan Reviews	82	153
School Safety Regular Inspections	1	0

School Safety Complaints	3	6
School Safety Self-Certification Audits	13	9
School Safety Self-Certifications Returned	0	295
Waste Tire Facilities Regular Inspections	40	117
Waste Tire Follow-up Inspections	1	5

Laboratory: Public Water System Test Counts (PWSID)

The El Paso County Public Health Laboratory is certified to test drinking water and wastewater for naturally-occurring contaminants in which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has defined contamination limits. The laboratory performs testing for El Paso County and several surrounding county’s public water systems and private wells to assure safe water sources and protect public health. Testing includes bacteriological tests for pH, coliforms and E. coli, and inorganic anions such as nitrates, nitrites, fluoride, and chloride. The graph below shows data for public water system identification (PWSID) counts for public water system tests.

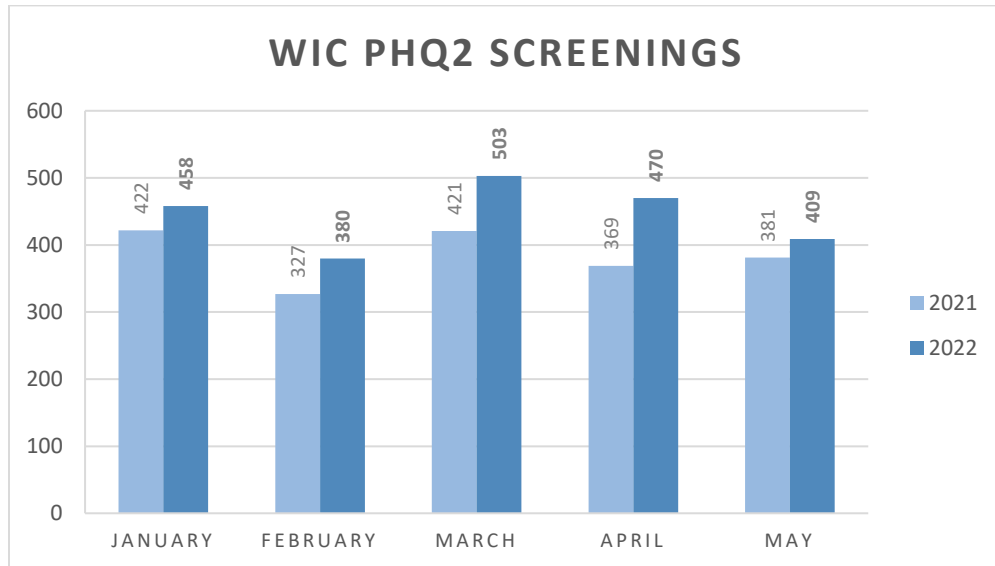


Health Services

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program

The number of currently active clients served by WIC is 11,893. Active clients are defined as those who have received WIC benefits and who have been seen within the previous three months. The 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 for this at-risk group of women. CDC research shows that about one in eight women with a recent live birth experiences symptoms of postpartum depression. Screening can provide a

referral and connection to treatment resources. WIC staff completed 409 Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ2) screening, as seen in the graph below.



The screenings led to the following outcomes:

- Fifteen referrals were made to local behavioral health resources.
- Three referrals to Colorado Community Health Alliance (CCHA) for further evaluation and connection to meet their specific behavioral health needs.
- One client on Tricare was referred to active-duty resources on base.
- Twenty-seven clients were already receiving services and declined a referral for that reason.

EPCPH WIC has over 2,600 infants on the caseload with over 1,600 receiving formula benefits from WIC. The national formula shortages continue to present challenges for families across the nation, state, and in El Paso County. The WIC team is dedicated to serving clients and spent significant time helping families locate formula and work on potential solutions to the ongoing national and local formula shortage with limited options for families. WIC staff were able to assist clients with changing food options as appropriate and as needed. In addition, WIC communicated the situation to local providers and worked collaboratively to update specialty formula prescriptions.

- WIC sent a letter regarding the current national formula shortage to local providers who frequently send in WIC Physician Authorization Forms (PAF), requesting that the providers select comparable formula options on the PAF so that the client would have more options to provide formula for their babies.
- If a client had a prescription on file for a specialty formula that was out of stock, WIC staff worked with the client and/or provider for a new prescription to indicate appropriate substitutions.
- There were federal and state waivers for package sizes and types of formula, for which EPCPH WIC staff were able to guide and explain those benefits to clients. When

appropriate and desired by the client, WIC was able to counsel individually on increasing breast milk supply including issuing hospital-grade breast pumps.

- From June 2021-May 2022, 81 percent of EPCPH WIC clients initiated breastfeeding, with 24 percent exclusively breastfeeding at six months. WIC educators and breastfeeding peer counselors work to support WIC clients and families in achieving their breastfeeding goals.

WIC staff continue to partner with multiple organizations such as CPCD HeadStart, SafeCare, Fort Carson Public Health Nurses, and Pikes Peak Library District (PPLD) to provide appropriate community referrals and assistance for clients.

WIC's Breastfeeding Workgroup gave a presentation to numerous community providers and partners on the basics of breastfeeding, community resources, and how to best support breastfeeding women. The workgroup offered each provider a toolkit that included tangible breastfeeding explanation tools. Multiple partners and providers expressed excitement to have the toolkit accessible to help them learn and teach about breastfeeding basics to benefit their clients. In addition, there was open discussion about future partnerships to best support breastfeeding caregivers across various sectors of the community. Breastfeeding support can have long-term impacts on the duration and success of breastfeeding at both an individual and community level.

Additionally, WIC prepared resume in-person client appointments in June. With federal waivers still in place due to the Health and Human Services Public Health Emergency, WIC will maintain a hybrid model and is required to offer phone/telehealth appointments. Preparations included increased signage to promote clinic flow and in-depth staff training.

The WIC mobile clinic continues to provide services at Tri-Lakes Cares in Monument, Catholic Charities, CPCD HeadStart, and Hillside Community Center. Lutheran Family Services (LFS) Refugee Services was added as a mobile clinic location in May. The mobile clinic enrolled several individuals within the Cuban entrant population at LFS. Planning activities took place with Fort Carson Army Community Service, Family Promise Shelter, and Calhan Community Outreach Center with the goal of improving accessibility and awareness of WIC.

Family Planning

Family Planning (FP) continues to provide educational presentations on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) to community providers, including information on STI rates, treatment guidelines, and community resources for care coordination. To address the need for diagnosis and treatment of STIs from multiple providers in El Paso County, the Family Planning program delivered four STI education outreach presentations in May:

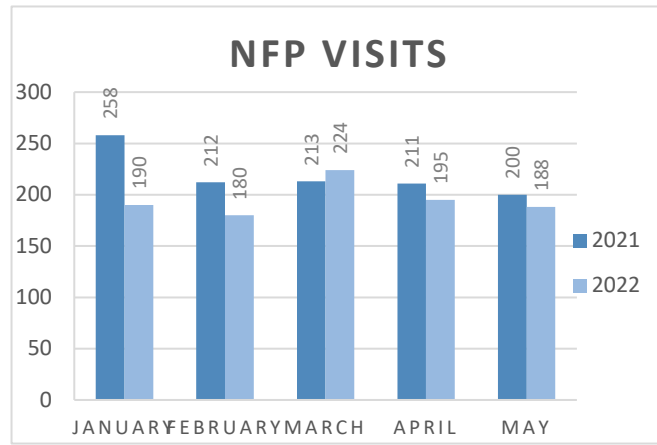
- May 12: UHealth Emergency Department Provider Group
- May 13: Infectious Disease Specialty provider group
- May 17: UHealth Urgent Care Provider Group
- May 19: UHealth Forensic Nurse Examiner group

Family Planning 2022 education impact includes:

- 13 STI education presentations conducted from February to May 2022
- 300 individuals who have attended educational presentations
- Four (two confirmed, two in development) future scheduled educational presentations

- 15 presentations are required to be completed by August 31, 2022 to meet the grant requirements. FP has completed 87 percent of grant requirements with three months remaining.

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)



Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) nurse visits were conducted via telehealth in May. The NFP nurses served 141 families, enrolled 13 new clients to the program, and graduated three clients who had participated in the NFP program for a full two and a half years.

NFP has three goals: to improve economic self-sufficiency for families, improve pregnancy outcomes, and healthy child development. NFP nurses are in a unique position to be able to affect all three of these areas when they support clients in setting and achieving their goals, educating clients about positive relationships, and encouraging clients to seek appropriate health care for themselves and their families.

Client Success Story: A current NFP client provides an excellent example of a client seeking and finding change that positively impacts herself and her child. This client came to the NFP program at 36 weeks of pregnancy with minimal knowledge of what to expect in parenthood and late enrollment in prenatal care. In order to support her baby’s health, the client stopped taking medications for depression and bipolar disorder. With the help of her medical team and her NFP nurse, the client welcomed a healthy baby. The client’s mental health, however, took a significant turn for the worse. The client continued to avoid her prescribed medications and spent the first six months of her child’s life frequently transitioning between jobs and suffering from significant depression. The client continued to meet with her NFP nurse every two weeks and due to the nurse’s diligence in promoting goal setting, the client was able to set a goal of improving her mental health by seeking treatment and re-starting her medications. By nine months post-partum, the client has successfully maintained a job, has joined a support group for new mothers, and has decided that she will postpone subsequent pregnancies until she has a mental health plan in place with a provider who will work with her to find appropriate medications to use through pregnancy and post-partum. With the help of her NFP nurse, the client is able to support herself financially, is taking strong actions to improve her mental health, and has found the resources she needs to pursue her goal of long-term health for herself and her child.

Immunization Program

The Immunization Program continued COVID-19 vaccinations in the month of May. Four COVID-19 vaccine clinics were held by the EPCPH mobile van team including clinics at a school that requested support and long-term care facilities. The immunization clinic also supported children ages 5-11 years old with COVID-19 vaccine boosters. The immunization program supported other vaccine activities such as Operation House Call and long-term care facilities, in collaboration with the Colorado Springs Fire Department.

Community Health Promotion

Maternal Child Health (MCH)

A care coordination program for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) received and triaged 43 referrals from a variety of sources including WIC, Department of Human Services (DHS), parents, and schools. Forty-two percent (18) of those referrals were related to a need for behavioral health resources. Families were then connected to the appropriate service or provider.

Care coordinators met with Clearview Psychological Services to establish a referral stream with their organization to better serve the behavioral health needs of CYSHCN and their families.

The Maternal Child Health (MCH) prevention & policy specialist provided trainings about toxic stress, developmental trauma, and resiliency to 51 youth-serving staff in our community at DHS, Carver Elementary, and the YMCA, as part of EPCPH efforts to improve the social and emotional well-being of children and youth.

The Maternal Child Health (MCH) health equity planner and CYSHCN care coordinator were invited to speak at an MCH learning session on the topics of data collection and analysis and EPCPH health equity efforts. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) MCH team invites representatives from local public health agencies to facilitate and speak about a variety of pre-selected topics at local learning community calls, which are held on a bimonthly basis. EPCPH presentations included our agency's efforts to address health disparities, including the creation of three COVID-19 care coordinator positions in response to needs that were identified through the Protect Our Neighbors survey (conducted late 2020). Additionally, the care coordinators highlighted the research and data analysis efforts conducted by the MCH team during October 2021-April 2022 to identify community needs related to serving the CYSHCN population.

The care coordinators attended a health equity public meeting organized by the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing (HCPF). The goal of this stakeholder meeting was to help inform health equity strategy and implementation at the state level, to improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities.

Mental Health and Substance Use Prevention

Fountain Valley Communities That Care (FV-CTC) launched a lockbox distribution campaign in the Fountain Valley. Lockboxes offer the following benefits:

- Secure household prescription medication.
- Allow residents to keep prescription medication out of the hands of people who are not prescribed it, especially youth.

- Prevent intentional or accidental misuse of prescription medication.

Residents of the Fountain Valley can pick up a lockbox from the Security Public Library or Fountain Library. FV-CTC partners posted the informational flyer about the lockbox distribution social media, and physical copies are on display in community spaces. The coalition decided to start with 60 lockboxes to determine the community need.

At this time, the preliminary 60 lockboxes have been distributed. Security Public Library will purchase 60 additional lockboxes for distribution, and the coalition will fund additional lockboxes for distribution at Fountain Library through Drug-Free Communities funding provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). All lockboxes are distributed with additional community resources and information.

Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (TEPP)

Eagle View Middle School in Academy District 20 reached out to the Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (TEPP) to deliver four presentations related to tobacco, nicotine and vaping. TEPP presented to approximately 450 seventh and eighth graders, and provided information about current trends, data, and cessation resources.

TEPP concluded seven mini-grants with schools from school districts 2, 8, 11, 49, and RJ-1. Funding is made available through Amendment 35 funds, or Colorado tobacco tax dollars. TEPP had \$21,000 available, and all middle and high schools in El Paso County were eligible to apply. Each awardee school received \$3,000 to collaborate with students to strengthen and communicate their tobacco-free school policies. Students, along with school leadership, completed a policy review at the beginning of the mini-grant cycle and identified areas of improvement. Some key accomplishments include updated tobacco-free school signage, implementation of tobacco cessation resources in the disciplinary structure, presentations to administration, youth engagement, and increased awareness of the dangers of tobacco, vaping and nicotine use.

Community Health Assessment and Planning

The public health planner is convening the [Health Community Collaborative \(HCC\)](#) and the HCC steering committee to inform and support the community health assessment process. The HCC is a stakeholder group of community partners who have been working together since 2011 to implement strategies identified in the El Paso County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

At the May 2022 meeting, the HCC completed a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat (SWOT) analysis to support capacity assessment for our CHIP. Assessing capacity is phase four of eight of the Colorado Health Assessment and Planning System (CHAPS), which provides guidance for local and state public health agencies to carry out community health assessment and community health improvement plan activities. A SWOT analysis allows us to map internal and external factors that may help or harm our CHIP and its chances for success, given current environmental factors. Results from the SWOT analysis will be paired with the results from a capacity assessment survey distributed to HCC to paint a full picture of our community's ability to address local priority health issues.

Workforce Development

The MCH program manager graduated from the Leadership Pikes Peak Signature Program, which is a 10-month community leadership program to educate participants on important issues in the Pikes Peak region and to build strength-based leadership skills. The coursework and team project required of this program have led to an increased understanding of the issues facing our community and the resources available and gaps in services, as well as improved teamwork and leadership skills.

Care coordinators attended the Rosenberry Conference: Risk and Resilience in Pediatric Chronic Illness, which was organized by Children's Hospital Colorado. This training covered topics such as chronic medical and psychiatric conditions and factors that support thriving in the light of a chronic illness. The course provided coordinators with the skills to utilize a family systems approach in working with their clients.

Community Partnerships

The COVID-19 care coordinators provide individualized assistance in navigating community resources for those who may have difficulty seeking access to COVID-19 resources, food, transportation, child care, housing, behavioral health, and more. There are three care coordinators, including a bilingual coordinator, who are available to provide resource navigation to individuals and families in our community. In the month of May, COVID-19 care coordinators provided outreach and information to over 180 community connections with flyers and e-mails in both English and Spanish. Ten new referrals were received through these efforts.

The COVID-19 care coordinators, in collaboration with the MCH health equity planner, finalized a comprehensive resource list that was distributed to internal programs such as WIC, HCP, and NFP to provide staff with an easily accessible and highly organized list of 180 local resources ranging from food to housing to transportation to behavioral and physical health. The resource list will be used by EPCPH staff to assist their clients in connecting with additional services such as transportation, housing, and food.

The MCH COVID-19 care coordinators collaborated with City of Hope housing shelter to provide 11 bins of toys, stuffed animals, board games, and an outdoor tetherball to families with children. These items will be provided to families with children that are staying at the shelter.

HCP care coordinators maintained a table at the D2 Community Resource Fair held at Otero Elementary School and provided information on EPCPH services to families in attendance.

The school liaison convened an internal Schools Collaborative meeting to strengthen internal communication and collaboration to better serve the school districts in our community. Fourteen employees came together from programs to include Immunizations, WIC, Communicable Disease, Environmental Health, Communities That Care, Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership, Youth Suicide Prevention, and Maternal Child Health. Participants shared past and present work they have done with school partners to establish a baseline of agency involvement. The Schools Collaborative brainstormed priority areas and opportunities for future engagement with our schools. The top priorities that emerged are around internal and external communication

of the programs and resources that our agency offers to our school partners, and community resources that are available.

Emergency Preparedness & Response

In May, staff from the Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) attended the McConkie Leadership Conference. The conference—which is an annual one-day event developed by the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs School of Public Affairs—brings together mid-level and senior managers from local government, industry, and non-profit to develop and enhance leadership skills.

EPR’s regional epidemiologist was able to virtually attend the annual Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) Disaster Epidemiology Conference. This year’s conference focused on how disaster epidemiology is evolving. The CSTE conference connects more than 2,500 public health epidemiologists from across the country and allows attendees to share their expertise in surveillance and epidemiology as well as best practices in a broad range of areas including informatics, infectious diseases, substance use, immunizations, environmental health, occupational health, chronic disease, injury control, and maternal and child health.

Board of Health Email Inquiries

The Board of Health email (boardofhealth@elpasoco.com) received two (2) unique emails since the last Board of Health meeting throughout the timeframe of May 23 – June 8, 2022. The two emails were solicitations.

