

To: Board of Health

Date: March 2022 (reflects activity February 23, 2022, to date)

Re: Director's Report

COVID-19 Status and Response

El Paso County is experiencing its lowest disease incidence since September 2020, with a seven-day reported incidence rate of 23.5 per 100,000 people on March 7. While there is a high level of population-level immunity because of the high levels of vaccination and previous infection, it is important to note that not all at-home test results are reported by users, which may be artificially lowering incidence rates.

Case Monitoring

COVID-19 data trends through Tuesday, March 8:

- **Seven-day incidence:** 23.4
- **Seven-day positivity:** 3.29%
- **Hospital admissions and deaths in the last seven days (March 1 – 8):** 5 and 0

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

Vaccine Data

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

- **Total doses administered: 984,342**
 - 1,093,800 with federal estimates
- **People vaccinated: 429,472 (63.2%)**
 - 488,000 (72.8%) with federal estimates
- **People fully vaccinated: 384,466 (56.6%)**
 - 435,400 (65.0%) with federal estimates

As of Tuesday, March 8, **52.4 percent of 12–17-year-olds and 24.8 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](#).

Dashboard Updates

As of Feb. 23, 2022, both the COVID-19 data dashboard and the COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard will be updated on weekdays, Monday through Friday. Data will no longer be updated on weekends and holidays.

- For the COVID-19 data dashboard, the first page will now feature a summary of cases, hospitalizations and deaths, including rolling average for cases and customizable date range. Outbreak data, location/zip code-level data, data disclaimer on reporting days, and the seven-day average graphs for deaths and hospital admissions have been removed.
- The vaccine dashboard no longer displays the vaccinations and cases page, or the doses per 100 people.

El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) will continue to refine and improve the data dashboards to reflect the most relevant and accurate data possible, with the goal of keeping the community informed.

Testing Updates

The number of people seeking services at community-based testing sites continues to decline. In line with the [state's roadmap to moving forward](#), we anticipate a scale-down of community-based sites in the near future, as part of statewide efforts to transition these services to traditional health care settings.

- EPCPH has been distributing at-home test kits to the community. As of March 9, we have distributed approximately 5,000 test kits into the community.
 - The goal of these distribution efforts is to make the free test kits easily available to community members who may be at risk and/or who may not otherwise have easy access to at-home test kits.
- To support these efforts, EPCPH partnered with Pikes Peak United Way to distribute test kits at a mobile food distribution at Sierra High School. Our agency also provided test kits to numerous partners, including Mission Medical, Pikes Peak Community College, Family Promise, Hillside Community Center, Solid Rock Community Development Corporation, and more.
- The EPCPH Lab maintains the ability to process PCR tests for COVID-19 and will continue to be available to assist with outbreak testing for high-risk populations and settings.
- The CUE testing platform (a rapid molecular test) was recently purchased and is intended as a targeted mitigation strategy to offer point of care testing in high-risk settings as the need arises.
- EPCPH Lab processed 331 PCR tests and 40 CUE tests in February for outbreak management.

Agency Operations

Communications

- The Office of Communication managed television media inquiries pertaining to emerging issues related to COVID-19 numbers and trends, with a focus on the significant decrease in cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. The total estimated viewership for these television interviews is more than 144,000 and the estimated earned media value is more than \$14,700.
- The Office of Communication also managed several print media inquiries on similar topics, with the addition of articles specific to COVID-19 hospitalizations and trends.
- The awareness campaign for National Radon Action Month—launched in January—ended in February, with the successful completion of paid social media ads in addition to paid television PSAs which ran on KKTV. In total, the social media ads

yielded the following aggregate metrics across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter:

- 176,088 impressions
- 40,676 engagements
- The Office of Communication hired and onboarded a new bilingual public health communications specialist (Spanish). This new position—which was made possible by funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant to address COVID-19 health disparities—will help increase communication and outreach to monolingual and bilingual Spanish-speaking communities.
- The agency’s website www.elpasocountyhealth.org had 27,183 new visitors in February, with 106,569 unique pageviews.

Environmental Health (EH)

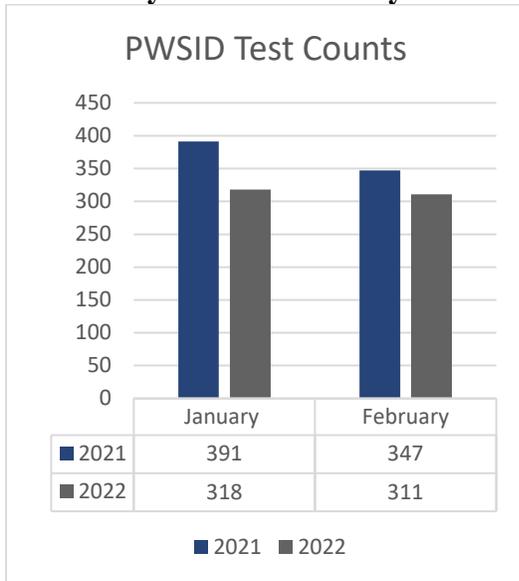
Environmental Health saw no inquiries specific to COVID-19 in February 2022. This was a significant decrease from the 40 inquiries during the month of January 2022.

Other EH Activities

Environmental Health Activity	2022 Total as Of 2/28/2022	2021 Total
Air Quality Construction Permits	28	129
Air Quality Open Burn Permits	0	15
Air Quality Complaints	4	50
Animal Bites Reported	117	1385
Body Art Inspections	2	85
Body Art Follow-up Inspections	0	6
Body Art Complaints	3	21
Child Care Regular Inspections	14	214
Child Care Follow-up Inspections	1	0
Child Care Complaints	1	4
Land-Use Planning Review	47	162
OWTS Pumper Truck Inspections	5	72
OWTS Final Inspections	59	516
OWTS Partial Inspections	14	170
OWTS Application Design Reviews	86	703
OWTS Design Revision Requests	13	272
OWTS New Permit Applications	65	387
OWTS Repair Permit Applications	42	282
OWTS Modification Permit Applications	0	11
OWTS Acceptance Doc for Title Transfer	103	1048
OWTS Soil and Site Evaluations	61	518

OWTS Complaints	3	29
OWTS O&M Systems		179
Recreational Water Safety Inspections	0	320
Recreational Water Follow-up Inspections	0	28
Recreational Water Complaints	1	13
RFE Regular Inspections	11	2960
RFE Re-Inspections	7	119
RFE Complaint Investigations	54	153
RFE Plan Reviews	34	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	2	117
Waste Tires Follow-up Inspections	0	5

Laboratory: Public Water System Test Counts

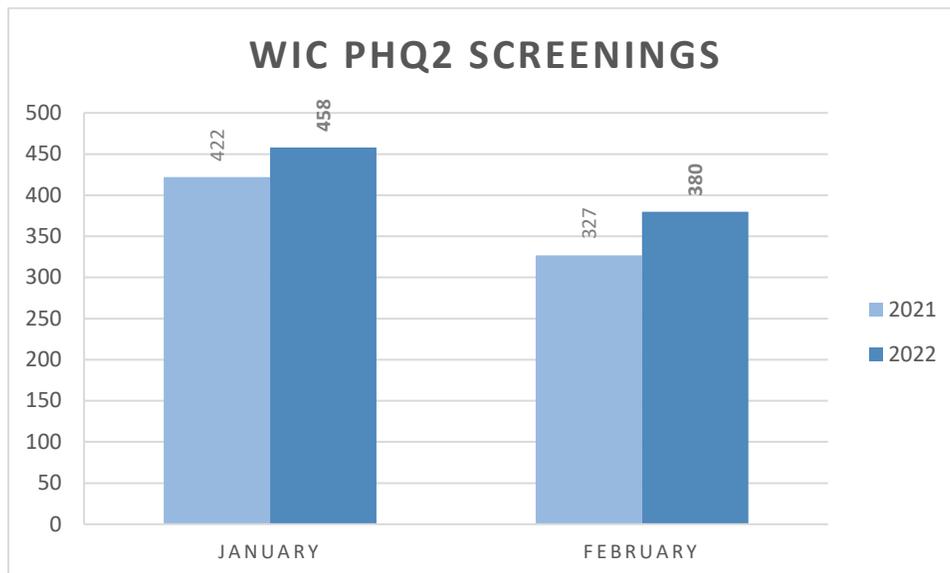


Health Services

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program

The WIC caseload for Feb. 2022 was 11,878, an increase of six from January. EPCPH’s WIC caseload has been consistent with the state’s numbers each month. 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. WIC staff completed Patient Health Questionnaire-2 screenings:



These screenings led to the following outcomes:

- Five referrals to Diversus Health
- Four referrals to Colorado Community Health Alliance (CCHA) for further evaluation and connection to meet their specific behavioral health needs.
- Two clients requested a phone number to reach out themselves.
- Three clients on Tricare were either referred to non-active-duty case management or active-duty resources on base.
- Thirty-seven (37) clients were already receiving services and declined a referral for that reason.

WIC continues to utilize an internal referral form for client-facing services across EPCPH. Throughout the month of February, 14 referrals were made to and from WIC, Nurse-Family Partnership, HCP (a Program for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs), Family Planning, and the Colorado Quitline.

In late February, WIC staff worked through the Abbott infant formula recall and various formula shortages, communicating with multiple area health care providers to quickly and efficiently re-issue physician authorization forms for specialty formula and determining formula stocking at local retailers. WIC staff continue to partner with multiple organizations such as CPCD HeadStart, SafeCare, Fort Carson Public Health Nurses, and Pikes Pikes Peak Library District to provide appropriate community referrals and assistance to connect clients to critical community resources.

Additionally, with the launching of the WIC mobile clinic project, WIC expects to conduct enrollment and full appointments in at least three community partner spaces in March. The goal

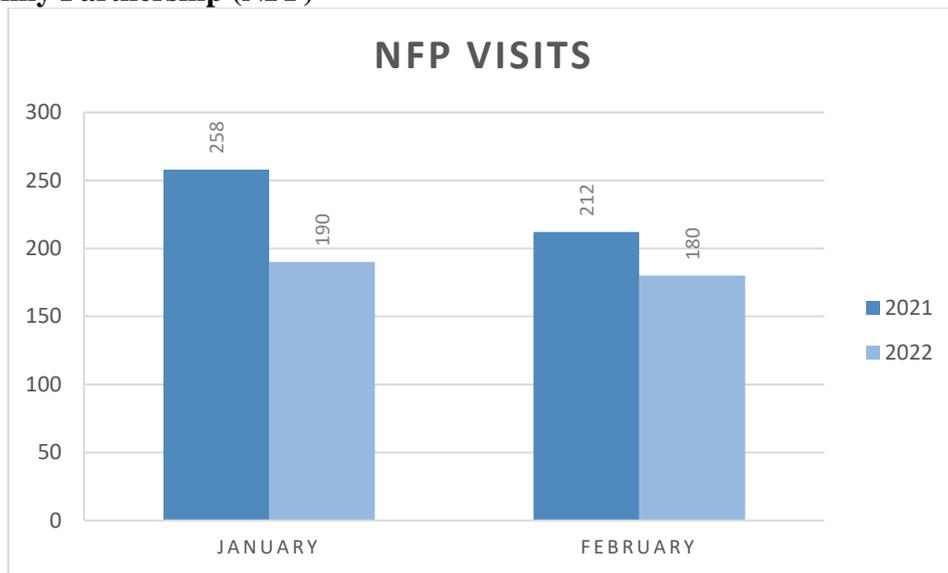
of the project is to improve accessibility and awareness of WIC, especially in populations facing the most barriers to service.

Family Planning

Family Planning delivered sexually transmitted infection (STI) education outreach in February, providing community partners with education and outreach/resources on STIs and HIV testing and treatment. The number of STIs has been increasing in El Paso County and the education and outreach to providers are intended to assist in diagnosis and treatment, reducing disease transmission.

The Family Planning Program Manager also attended the Colorado Congenital Syphilis Review Board and discussed case studies and treatment opportunities. The board’s objective is to reduce and eliminate congenital syphilis in Colorado.

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)



Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) nurse visits were conducted via telehealth in February. The six EPCPH NFP nurses served 140 families, enrolled 17 new clients to the program, and graduated four clients who had participated in the NFP program for a full two and a half years. Currently, NFP is hiring for nurse vacancies; therefore, capacity for visits is lower than the same time last year (2021).

An example of the impact that an NFP nurse can have on a family is depicted in the following story. In early October 2021, a child was removed from her mother’s custody because of the mother’s substance abuse and reports of neglect of the child. This mother had been a client of NFP for the first eight months of her child’s life and continued to meet every one to two weeks with her NFP nurse throughout the experience of having her child removed from her home. The NFP nurse tailored her education with this client around increasing attachment with her child, reading infant cues, and goal setting. The client was connected to drug treatment and therapy with support from both DHS and NFP. In February 2022, the client was reunited with her child

and was able to regain full custody. The client plans to continue participation in NFP until her child turns 2 and has shared her gratitude for her NFP nurse's support through a difficult experience.

Immunization Program

The Immunization Program continued to prioritize COVID-19 vaccinations in the month of February. Five COVID-19 vaccine clinics were held by the ECPH mobile van team at community locations, including clinics at schools that requested support. The Immunization Program supported other vaccine activities such as Operation House Call and long-term care facilities, helping to decrease barriers to COVID-19 vaccine. The Immunization Program continued to serve refugees seeking vaccination and offered limited clinic appointments for routine vaccines including flu vaccines.

Community Health Promotion

Maternal Child Health (MCH)

MCH activities during February:

- Onboarded three care coordinators for the COVID-19 response. These staff work closely with partners from the El Paso County Criminal Justice Center, the homeless isolation shelter, and southeast Colorado Springs to coordinate services for members of the community disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 as well as continuing to provide services to children, youth and families in El Paso County.
- HCP care coordinator program for Children and Youth with Special Health Care needs, during February 2022:
 - HCP new referrals: 37
 - HCP active clients: 61

Mental Health and Substance Use Prevention

Youth Substance Use Prevention team activities during February:

- Hired and onboarded a prevention and policy specialist. This new position was added following receipt of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Drug-Free Communities grant. This position will increase the coalition capacity to reach parents, youth, and implement evidence-based programs in schools.
- The youth substance use prevention planner, prevention and policy specialist, and two community partners from Widefield Parks and Rec and the Salvation Army Fountain Valley attended the National Coalition of Anti-Drug Coalitions of America Forum in National Harbor, MD. This opportunity was funded by the Drug-Free Communities grant to build the capacity of Fountain Valley Communities That Care community partners to implement prevention work in the community through the collective impact model.

Youth Suicide Prevention

- Youth Suicide Prevention Workgroup is spending the next six months focusing on updating the group's vision, mission, and objectives. This will be accomplished by engaging youth voice and perspective in an ad hoc planning group that is a 50/50 split of youth and adults. The goal is to have an updated vision, renewed momentum, and clear direction for this community work by the start of the 2022/2023 school year, as we shift from COVID crisis response mode to recovery and upstream prevention.

Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (TEPP)

TEPP activities during February:

- Staff provided a training entitled, *Start the Conversation: How to Talk with Young People about Vaping, JUULs, and Other Electronic Nicotine Devices* at the Falcon School District 49 Sand Creek Parent Academy. The training focused on how to be a trusted adult for youth.

Community Partnerships

- Youth Substance Use Prevention team participated in the Joint Initiatives (JI) Collective Impact initiative and will offer a presentation on the successes of Fountain Valley Communities That Care at the next JI meeting.
- A new representative from Fort Carson Family Advocacy Program joined the Child Fatality Review Team to share data and participate in case reviews and prevention planning discussions aimed at reducing child fatalities at the local, state, and national levels.
- The El Paso County Child Fatality Review Team continued to refine its recommendations to address the unsafe sleep environments where infant fatalities are occurring. Findings from the team will be shared with community partners, including those involved in the Safe Kids Colorado Springs Coalition, and will be integrated into community education efforts.
- MCH prevention and policy specialist provided trauma-responsive training to school staff in D11 and D49.
- School liaison and EPCPH COVID-19 education team maintained and strengthened partnerships with the Education Alliance of Colorado, district and school level COVID coordinators, school nurses, and directors of child care centers to discuss changes to school guidance and COVID-19 response efforts.
- TEPP held a Tobacco-Free Alliance meeting with community partners and shared the 2019 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey data. The data shows that El Paso County (EPC) youth are still using e-cigarettes at alarming rates; however, there was a significant increase in risk perception. The number of youth who believe vaping is harmful increased from 46.5 percent in 2017 to 70.6 percent in 2019. Another area of concern is that one out of every five EPC youth are exposed to secondhand smoke while riding in the car with their parent or guardian.
- Healthy environment planner coordinated meetings with food systems partners and additional key stakeholders to discuss opportunities and barriers within our food system. New conversations included the director of Rocky Mountain Farmer's Union Cooperative Development Center, the owner of Ranch Foods Direct, and the owner of Good Steward Farms. Collectively, the group is gathering both historical and current information to develop a path forward that improves connections among our partners and strengthens our community's food system.

Health Equity

- TEPP staff and school liaison are participating in a series entitled, *Health Equity: A Guide for Public Health Practice* offered by the Rocky Mountain Public Health Training Center. The series aims to prepare participants to close gaps in health status that result

from systemic, avoidable, and unjust policies and practices that create barriers to opportunity for certain people.

- MCH COVID-19 care coordinator was able to assist a family who has been experiencing homelessness for three years by helping the family to get on multiple housing waitlists, including public housing. Care Coordinator was also able to help a few families to obtain rental assistance to help alleviate financial burden.

Community Health Assessment and Planning

The public health planner is convening the Healthy 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). The HCC consists of over 60 representatives from schools, hospitals and health systems, non-profit organizations, city and county government agencies, public health, medical providers, and interested citizens. HCC has been convening monthly since July 2021 to inform the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and CHIP processes.

EPCPH utilizes the [Colorado Health Assessment and Planning System \(CHAPS\)](#) as well as guidance from the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) to carry out the CHA and CHIP processes every five years. This ensures our agency meets the requirements of the Colorado Public Health Act while also developing strategies to address public health issues in our community. CHAPS is utilized by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and local public health agencies (LPHAs) throughout Colorado. CHAPS has eight phases to guide LPHAs through the assessment and planning process.

Phase six of CHAPS involves developing a planning process to include scope and resources, engaging stakeholders, collecting relevant materials, developing a workgroup and action plan for each priority area, developing a process to monitor and revise action plans, designing an evaluation plan, and creating a final CHIP. EPCPH will present the CHIP to the El Paso County Board of Health for approval, as required by CDPHE, before submitting the final CHIP to CDPHE.

- The public health planner will collaborate with the Public Health Data and Analytics Office (PHDA), Office of Communication, and other key internal partners in this process.
- Workgroup and action plan development will occur within HCC based on the priorities identified for inclusion in the CHIP.
- Tools to monitor and evaluate CHIP efforts will be developed in conjunction with PHDA. We currently utilize data dashboards through [Thriving Colorado](#) to monitor progress toward current CHIP goals and objectives but will be seeking a more meaningful platform to track and display that information for the next CHIP.

At the February 2022 meeting, the HCC reviewed data indicators related to the physical environment, including those for the built environment (recreation, food access, transportation), environmental quality (housing, water, air), and safety. Sources for these data indicators include County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Office of the El Paso County Assessor, the Healthy Kids

Colorado Survey, Colorado Department of Transportation, the American Community Survey, the El Paso County Food System Assessment Phase 1 Report, the Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems, Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The data shared highlighted how the neighborhoods people live in have an impact on their health and well-being, and that work in this area focuses on improving health and safety in places where people live, work, learn, and play. We also hosted a panel of community partners to discuss the work they are doing in El Paso County to address health and safety in our physical environment. Representatives from Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, The Trust for Public Land, and Greccio Housing participated in the panel discussion and spoke about how their work supports the health and well-being of the community, the barriers and drivers of their work, and reactions and feedback on the data shared.

Public Health Accreditation

EPCPH's public health planner completed the annual reporting requirement for the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). All accredited health departments must submit an annual report to PHAB attesting to their continued conformity to PHAB standards and measures and describing their quality improvement efforts. EPCPH was recognized for strategic and specific steps to advance our culture of improvement, deliberate actions to address health equity, efforts to track performance management data, leadership support for quality improvement work, and responsiveness and adaptability in gathering and responding to customer feedback. Areas of focus in the coming months include increasing staff understanding of performance management, enhancing our quality improvement work throughout the agency, and raising awareness among staff about agency-wide plans and how their work aligns with agency goals and objectives.

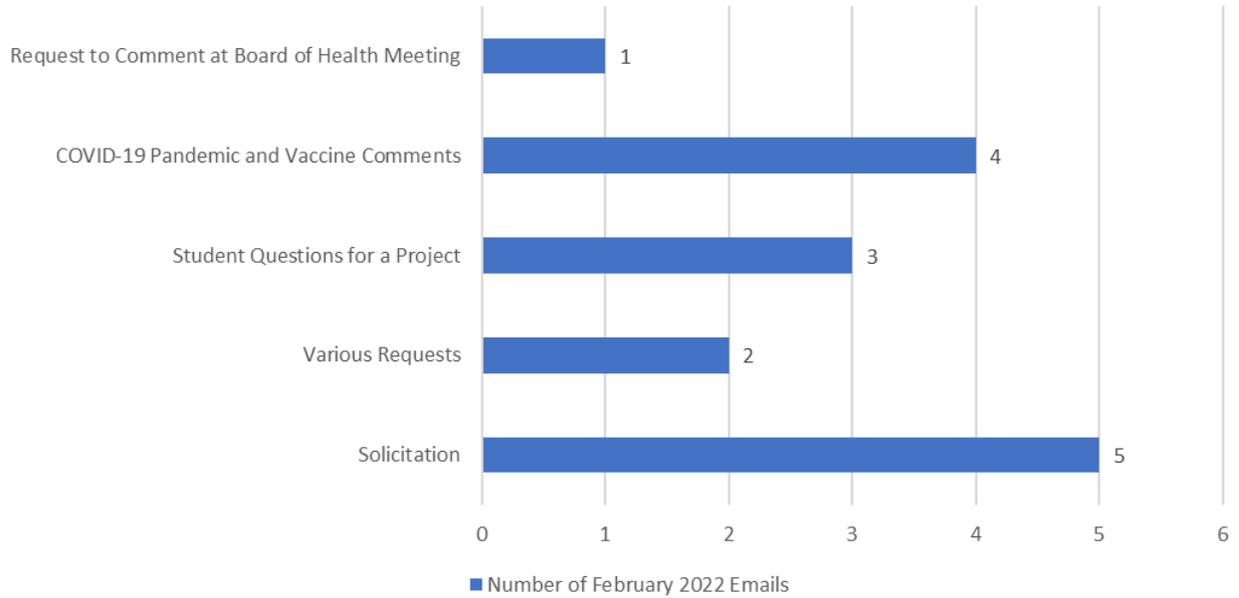
Upcoming Events

National Public Health week will be celebrated the week of April 4 - 10, 2022. This year's theme is "Public Health is Where You Are". We look forward to taking this time to celebrate our team and community achievements and invite others to join in recognizing the important work of public health

Board of Health Email Inquiries

The Board of Health email (boardofhealth@elpasoco.com) received 15 unique emails during the month of February 2022. The majority of the emails were solicitations (five emails). Other emails included: students emailing questions for a school project (three emails); a request for better access to parks (one email); a request for the Board to announce the pandemic is over (one email); vaccine and vaccine mandate comments (four emails); and one request to comment at the March Board of Health meeting.

February 2022 Board of Health Emails



February 2022 Board of Health Emails by Percent

