

To: Board of Health
From: Susan Wheelan, M.B.A., Public Health Director
Date: Month 2022 (reflects activity April 27, 2022 to date)
Re: Director's Report

COVID-19 Status and Response

Case Monitoring

COVID-19 data trends for the last 14 days as of Tuesday, May 10:

- **Cases:** 1,014
- **Hospitalization:** 22
- **Deaths:** 1

Vaccine Data

El Paso County vaccine data through Sunday, May 8, including federal estimates:

- **Total doses administered:** 1,130,103
- **People vaccinated:** 492,240 (71.8%)
- **People fully vaccinated:** 443,636 (64.7%)
- **People boosted:** 186,394 (27.2%)

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, hospitalizations, data dashboard updates, and vaccination sites, in addition to coverage on fentanyl, air quality, rabies prevention, and data on sexually transmitted infections. The total estimated viewership for these television interviews is more than 128,000 and the estimated earned media value is more than \$10,800.
- On April 20, the Office of Communication—working closely with expertise across communicable disease, agency leadership and medical direction—sent a [news release on rabies prevention](#). This was part of proactive efforts to raise public awareness around zoonotic diseases—which tend to be more common in the spring and summer months—with the goal of equipping residents with the knowledge and prevention measures needed to help protect themselves and their pets against rabies.
- The Office of Communication—working closely with agency leadership and medical direction—published several new resources on the EPCPH website to raise awareness and educate the public on the dangers of fentanyl:
 - An educational article on the EPCPH news page entitled, [What you need to know about fentanyl and opioids](#). This article features information about fentanyl, in addition to how EPCPH is responding and how to get involved in community prevention efforts. On this webpage, there is also a link to an educational presentation given by the medical director at the March Board of Health meeting.
 - A webpage entitled, [Drug Take-Back Resources](#), which features detailed

information and maps on local resources and locations where residents can safely dispose of medications.

- On April 23, the bilingual public health communications specialist partnered with EPCPH care coordinators to provide outreach on EPCPH programs, services and resources at *Para Ti Mujer*'s health and community resource fair for Latino community members. In addition to providing information on care coordination and agency resources, staff also handed out COVID-19 rapid tests, and COVID-19 vaccinations were made available through the state mobile vaccination bus.
- The agency's website www.elpasocountyhealth.org had 21,741 new visitors in April, with 56,086 unique pageviews.

Environmental Health (EH)

Environmental Health saw a total of four COVID-19 inquiries during the month of April 2022. These inquiries were for public health guidance (two inquiries) and positive case/outbreaks (two inquiries). The limited inquiries are likely due to the decrease in COVID-19 cases in El Paso County.

- The lead environmental health specialist for the Air Quality program attended the Environmental Protection Agency Region 8 Radon Conference in Moab, Utah on April 7 and 8 as part of the radon grant through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. A uranium mine tour, as well as topics such as lung oncology, implementing radon mitigation systems and updates to the state of Colorado legislation provided EH with increased knowledge in radon systems and testing in order to better educate the public through future grants and educational opportunities. Environmental health staff across multiple program areas, including program managers, attended the annual One Health and Zoonoses Conference—held virtually this year—on April 14, 2022. This conference provides an opportunity for EH and CD staff from across Colorado to join together and learn about several emerging zoonotic diseases and how they may affect humans and/or animals as well as receive an update from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) on previous year's data and lessons learned in preparation for the next year's season.
- Several staff members from the Air Quality program attended visible emissions and opacity training and became certified visible emissions evaluators, which consists of the ability to read the percentage of smoke and/or dust in the air emitted from a source. This is required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to conduct Method 9 observations which is commonly used during EH complaint investigations for excess smoke or dust in the air.
- Staff from the Air Quality program attended and successfully completed the Odor Intensity Rating and Observation Certification Course hosted by CDPHE and became certified to determine and grade odor emissions in terms of Regulation No. 2 of the Colorado Air Pollution Control Commission, which is required to conduct odor readings during complaint investigations.
- The Air Quality program held a virtual webinar, hosted by CDPHE, for real estate professionals in El Paso County regarding Radon education, testing and mitigation on April 19, 2022.

- **Other EH Activities**

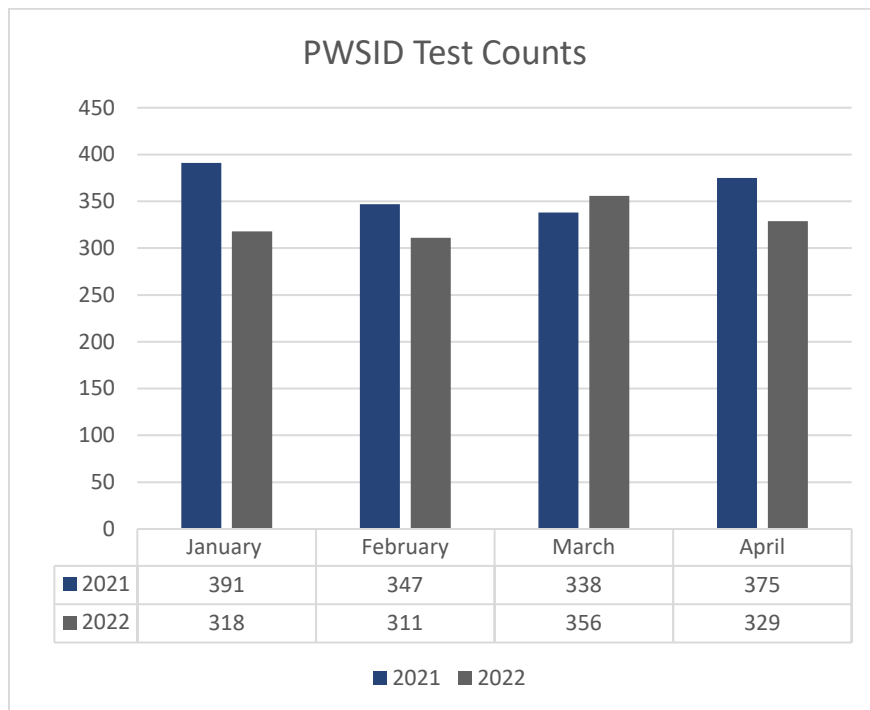
- The table below captures a snapshot of activities across the Environmental Health Division in a number of areas. This work—which is critical to the development of a healthy, economically vibrant and safe community—is accomplished through science-based risk assessment and policy development, inspections, 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 4/40/2022	2021 Total
Air Quality Construction Permits	64	129
Air Quality Open Burn Permits	6	15
Air Quality Complaints	14	50
Animal Bites Reported	272	1385
Body Art Inspections	11	85
Body Art Follow-up Inspections	2	6
Body Art Complaints	6	21
Child Care Regular Inspections	61	214
Child Care Follow-up Inspections	6	0
Child Care Complaints	4	4
Land-Use Planning Review	88	162
Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) Pumper Truck Inspections	40	72
OWTS Final Inspections	137	516
OWTS Partial Inspections	48	170
OWTS Application Design Reviews	201	703
OWTS Design Revision Requests	50	272
OWTS New Permit Applications	130	387
OWTS Repair Permit Applications	85	282
OWTS Modification Permit Applications	1	11
OWTS Acceptance Doc for Title Transfer	298	1048
OWTS Soil and Site Evaluations	134	518
OWTS Complaints	10	29
OWTS O&M Systems	21	179
Recreational Water Safety Inspections	88	320

Recreational Water Follow-up Inspections	5	28
Environment Health Activity	2022 Total As of 4/40/2022	2021 Total
Recreational Water Complaints	1	13
Retail Food Establishment (RFE) Regular Inspections	377	2960
RFE Re-Inspections	12	119
RFE Complaint Investigations	114	153
RFE Plan Reviews	63	153
School Safety Regular Inspections	1	0
School Safety Complaints	3	6
School Safety Self-Certification Audits	8	9
School Safety Self-Certifications Returned	0	295
Waste Tire Facilities Regular Inspections	28	117
Waste Tire Follow-up Inspections	0	5

Laboratory: Public Water System Test Counts

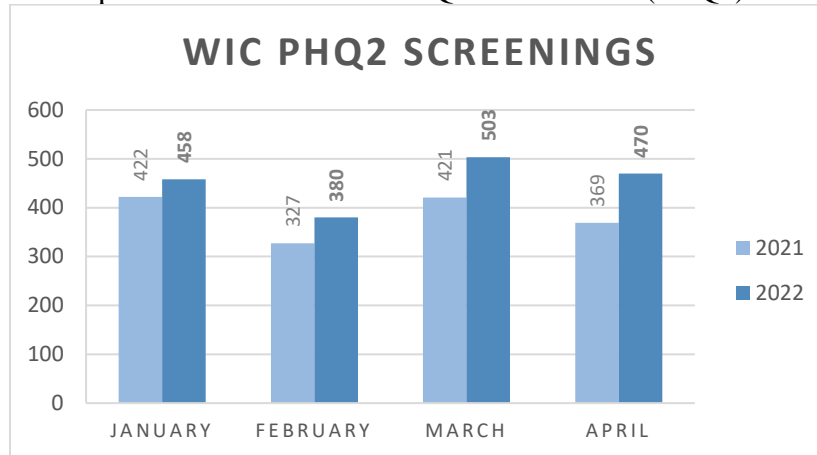
The graph below shows data for public water system identification (PWSID) counts for public water system tests.



Health Services

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program

The WIC caseload for April 2022 was 12,047, a decrease of 55 from March. 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 470 Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ2) screenings:



The screenings led to the following outcomes:

- Sixteen referrals to Diversus Health.
- Two referrals to Colorado Community Health Alliance (CCHA) for further evaluation and connection to meet their specific behavioral health needs.
- Four 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-one clients were already receiving services and declined a referral for that reason.

WIC's Breastfeeding Workgroup worked to set up train-the-trainer sessions with various partners who interact with breastfeeding women such as childcare providers, the library, and high schools. They prepared a presentation to review the basics of breastfeeding, community resources, and how to best support breastfeeding women. The meetings will take place throughout May and June. The goal of this collaboration is to improve breastfeeding rates in El Paso County, which can lower babies' risk of infections and diseases. Breastfeeding can also help mothers recover more quickly from childbirth, assist with bonding, and reduce risk for certain breast and ovarian cancer.

Client Success Story: The EPCPH WIC mobile clinic continued at several locations, including Tri-Lakes Cares, Catholic Charities, CPCD HeadStart, and Hillside Community Center. The project enrolled and completed an appointment with a pregnant woman and her two children at Tri-Lakes Cares. The family had just moved to Colorado and was experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the educator re-enrolled a single father of three children at Catholic Charities into the program. It is highly unlikely these individuals would have been able to enroll in WIC without the outreach provided by the mobile WIC educator. Planning activities took place with Fort Carson Army Community Service and Calhan Community Outreach Center. The

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

Family Planning

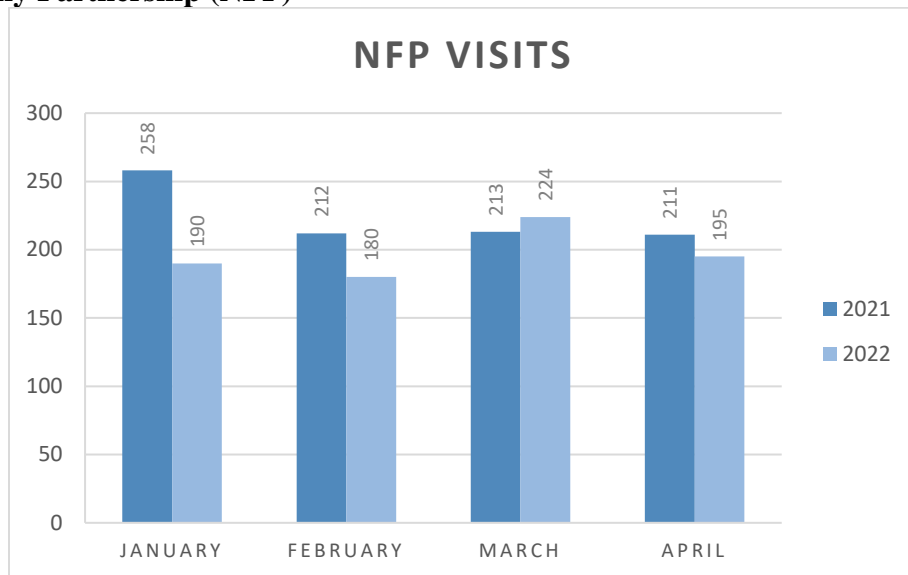
Family Planning worked with CDPHE’s data team to obtain the most current data on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in El Paso County, as well as Colorado. This information helped the Office of Communication provide accurate data to a local reporter, as well as updating the information for local community providers. Accurate data assists providers and media with understanding the magnitude of health issues and the need for prevention and treatment.

Family Planning delivered three educational presentations regarding sexually transmitted infections (STI) in April, including the Southern Colorado Health Network, medical students at the University of Colorado, and providers at Centura’s Grand Rounds. The presentations offer education and resources regarding STIs and HIV testing and treatment to medical providers in the community with the goal of improving diagnosis and treatment of STIs, resulting in the reduction of incidence and transmission of disease.

The program manager for Family Planning met with Dr. Rahaman, Vice President of Medical Services at Peak Vista Community Health Center’s Women’s Health Clinic, to follow up on referral and treatment of pregnant women who test positive for syphilis with the goal of reducing negative health consequences for pregnant women and their babies.

Family Planning is working with CDPHE on an HIV and STI awareness event for the summer aimed at reaching target and priority populations within El Paso County.

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)



In April, Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) nurses, WIC dietitians, and staff from the EPCPH Family Planning clinic held a joint training to discuss family planning services available to NFP and WIC clients. This joint meeting represents an increase in internal collaboration between EPCPH programs that promote health across the lifespan with a specific focus on maternal and child health.

NFP nurse visits were conducted via telehealth in April. The EPCPH NFP nurses served 135 families, enrolled six new clients to the program, and graduated two clients who had participated in the NFP program for a full two and a half years.

Client Success Story: Currently, NFP nurses are graduating clients who enrolled in the NFP program at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and who have only known their NFP nurse through virtual/video platforms. A recent NFP graduate was one of the first clients to deliver her child during the initial days of the pandemic when hospital protocols were quickly changing and unpredictable. During delivery, the client was not allowed to have her family or partner with her in the room and delivered her baby alone with hospital staff. The experience was challenging and frightening for the client. One of the client's goals was to successfully breastfeed her child but she worried that her fears around COVID-19 and her negative childbirth experience would keep her from being able to breastfeed. The client's NFP nurse was aware of the client's goal of breastfeeding and, through video, was expertly able to provide postpartum support to the client, providing encouragement, education, and troubleshooting for breastfeeding challenges. The client breastfed her child for a full year and attributes much of her child's current robust health at age 2 to the support of her NFP nurse in encouraging her to initiate and continue breastfeeding throughout her child's infancy.

Immunization Program

The Immunization program continued COVID-19 vaccinations in the month of April, as well as increased routine immunization activities. Seven COVID-19 vaccine clinics were held by the EPCPH mobile van team including clinics at schools that requested support, a low-income housing complex, and a predominantly Spanish-speaking church. These continued COVID-19 vaccination activities help reach those who have barriers to vaccination, increasing COVID-19 vaccine coverage rates, which further increases community-level protection. The Immunization program supported other vaccine activities such as Operation House Call and long-term care facilities, helping to once again decrease barriers to COVID-19 vaccine and support our partners like Colorado Springs Fire Department.

The Immunization Program serves refugees seeking vaccination upon arrival, and children and adults needing routine vaccines. This program is working to increase immunization rates for routine vaccines that were missed over the previous two years. The vaccines administered help protect children and adults from vaccine-preventable illness, and aids in protecting our community from future disease outbreaks.

The Immunization program manager and assistant program manager continue to work to hire for several open nurse and support positions.

Community Health Promotion

Maternal Child Health (MCH)

- COVID-19 care coordinators completed the Health Navigation Fundamentals course of the Patient Navigator Training to gain skills in health promotion, professional conduct, and motivational interviewing.
- Newly onboarded COVID-19 care coordinators and MCH program manager participated in a one-day StrengthsFinder workshop facilitated by a Gallup-certified coach to build team rapport and increase productivity through identification and knowledge of personal and team strengths.

- School liaison is participating in Social Justice Approach to Youth Engagement Training. The course applies practices, tools and resources to enable participants to be an advocate for and with young people.

Mental Health and Substance Use Prevention

- Fountain Valley Communities That Care (FV-CTC):
 - FV-CTC participated in the Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) Drug Takeback Day on April 30 at the Fountain Library. Residents of the Fountain Valley were invited to dispose of their household medications at a drive-thru location. Additional resources were available inside the library. The Fountain Police Department collected 87.2 pounds of household medication and expressed interest in participating in the event again in October.
 - Youth substance use prevention policy and prevention specialist conducted training for Security Public Library and Fountain Library on lockbox distribution, an initiative of the FV-CTC. Libraries will be the point of distribution for lockboxes to safely store prescription pain medication. This training empowered library staff to discuss the importance of keep prescription pain medication locked up.
 - Youth substance use prevention policy and prevention specialist convened a group of youth and adults to plan a training opportunity for young people who want to make a difference in their communities. The goal of this training opportunity is for groups of young people to learn to mobilize their communities for change and walk away from the training with a plan to do so. The training will be conducted June 9-11.
 - Widefield School District 3, a partner of the FV-CTC, will provide opioid prevention and Narcan training to safety officers working inside schools.
 - A data workgroup was convened to develop logic models regarding cannabis and prescription drug use by youth in the Fountain Valley. The data workgroup is planning to seek additional data to support the logic models through qualitative sources. Technical assistance is provided to the coalition from the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America due to the coalition's participation in the [National Coalition Academy](#).
 - Youth substance use prevention planner participated in Technology of Participation training, Secrets of Implementation and Approaches to Environmental Scanning. These trainings teach leaders new methods for the following:
 - Implementing plans
 - Building and sustaining momentum,
 - Activity follow through
 - A way to quickly understand community perceptions and needs
 - How to delve into relevant data
 - How to get groups on the same page to work through environmental scanning.
 - Youth substance use prevention planner partnered with El Paso County Justice Services and Southern Colorado Health Network (SCHN) to bring information on fentanyl to community corrections ("halfway houses") residents and staff. SCHN

presented “Fentanyl, the Community, and You” to over 75 residents and staff at ComCor on April 14 and over 160 residents and staff at Community Alternatives of El Paso County (CAE) on April 20. The DEA provided fact sheets regarding fentanyl. ComCor and CAE will display the “One Pill Can Kill” campaign from the DEA. These sessions were well received, informative, and residents requested continued partnership as they navigate this problem in their communities. In attendance were Pete Carey, executive director of El Paso County’s Justice Services Department, Christine Burns, division manager of El Paso County’s Justice Services Department, and Angel Medina, program manager of Community Corrections at El Paso County Sheriff’s Office.

- Three in-home childcare providers received feedback and assistance on grant ideas from the grant trainer provided by FV-CTC. These child care providers will be applying for [Community Innovation and Resilience for Care and Learning Equity \(CIRCLE\) grants](#) from the Colorado Department of Human Services-Office of Early Childhood, for innovative strategies to increase childcare in the Fountain Valley.

Youth Suicide Prevention (YSP)

- The youth resilience and suicide prevention planner attended the American Association of Suicidology annual conference. Some of the key learnings from the conference included mental health and Asian Americans, substance use as a co-occurring diagnosis, and supporting caregivers in the military and Veteran community.
- A shortened version of the Protecting Youth from Suicide handout, authored by local parents in the YSP Workgroup, was developed in response to a request by the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office Behavioral Health Connect Unit (BHCON). The BHCON team utilizes the resource regularly when responding to behavioral health calls in the community.
- The Child Fatality Review Team met to continue reviewing 2021 infant fatalities and develop prevention recommendations. Findings and prevention recommendations identified by the team will be shared with community partners who work with expectant and parenting young families in the community for refinement and implementation.
- Child Fatality Review Team findings and recommendations from 2021 youth suicide case reviews and other local data sources were presented to the YSP Workgroup. Community members provided feedback on the proposed prevention recommendations and will later utilize these recommendations to inform community action.

Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (TEPP)

- TEPP staff provided a presentation on tobacco, nicotine, and vaping to approximately 75 fifth graders at Academy Endeavor Elementary School. Students were presented with true and false questions to engage critical thinking and determine knowledge base. Subtopics included: cigarettes, health effects, smoke exposure, nicotine, vaping, and chemicals. TEPP provided a vapor versus aerosol demonstration and discussed the reasons why vaping is not a safe alternative to smoking, especially for youth.
- TEPP staff participated in the Manitou Mustang Strong and Safety Day for Manitou Springs High School students. The event was scheduled prior to prom to provide safety information and resources to the teens regarding driving, staying sober, not vaping, teen

domestic violence, and preventing sexual assaults. Approximately 125 students attended the event.

- TEPP staff attended the third annual Teaching Cannabis Awareness and Prevention Conference: A Focus on the Triangulum of Cannabis, Tobacco and Vaping. The training was provided by Stanford University. The training provided the latest research on youth, cannabis, and tobacco, including products being used, reasons for use, health effects, and the latest available education and prevention to middle school and high school aged youth.
- TEPP staff attended the Policy and System Change Network's: Local Tobacco Policy Spring Training for A35 Tobacco Grantees, with keynote speaker Dr. Terri Richardson from the Colorado Black Health Collaborative. This year's training was a policy refresher, grounding grantees in the what, where, and why behind equitable local tobacco policy.
- TEPP resumed in-person meetings for the Tobacco-Free Alliance of El Paso County. The Tobacco-Free Alliance typically meets every other month to bring together more than 30 community partners to discuss a variety of tobacco-related topics, address gaps in tobacco prevention in El Paso County communities and take action to implement change. At the April meeting April, TEPP provided updates on several critical topics, including:
 - The local implementation and enforcement of Tobacco Retailer Licensing (TRL) ordinances in Fountain and Manitou Springs
 - Efforts to pass TRL in Colorado Springs
 - The passage of Colorado House Bill 20-1001 that requires all tobacco retailers to be licensed through the Colorado Department of Revenue
 - The passage of Colorado Proposition EE by statewide voters to increase taxes on nicotine products and place a new tax on vaping products and new federal regulation of vaping products by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
 - TEPP then led a group discussion and activity for how to locally address health equity through the lens of tobacco use and identify gaps and opportunities for youth prevention, adult cessation and the elimination of secondhand smoke exposure.
- TEPP staff collaborated with statewide tobacco prevention peers and leadership from Archway Communities, a non-profit focused on affordable housing, food security, and supportive social services, to assist them with the implementation of a smoke-free policy across their portfolio of properties. TEPP will be working directly with their Fountain location, Fountain Ridge, to provide resources and technical assistance as needed.

Community Partnerships

- Healthy environment planner attended the City of Colorado Springs Project Chartering Meeting for geographic area 3A (including several West Side communities) to discuss infrastructure, planning, and process for this second planning committee. The consultant for this area will incorporate access to parks and open spaces, health and safety concerns, and other related content areas to build an environment which promotes health into their plan development.
- Healthy environment planner met with a representative from the Northern Colorado Foodshed to learn about their regional food system partnership grant. Their U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded project focuses on regional assessments,

building equitable collaboration and coalition work, and strategizing for action steps after data collection.

- A partnership grant application titled, Central Colorado Foodshed Partnership, was submitted for the USDA 2022 Regional Food Systems Partnership . If awarded, funding would begin October 2022 and end October 2024. Partners in this application included EPCPH; University of Colorado Extension, El Paso County; Jenileigh Harris Consulting, LLC; University of Colorado, Colorado Springs; and the City of Colorado Springs, Office of Innovation.
- Public health planner attended the second meeting for the community health needs assessment (CHNA) for Penrose-St. Francis Health Services. Health priority results were reviewed along with framework options for the CHNA, in addition to existing and planned community engagement opportunities. EPCPH engages in Penrose-St. Francis' CHNA process to assure alignment between their plan and our community health assessment (CHA) and community health improvement plan (CHIP) processes, increase efficiency, and reduce duplication of efforts across the community.
- School liaison attended district wellness committee meetings for Harrison District 2 and Academy District 20. The committees discussed priorities for the upcoming school year, as well as the importance of the data collected from the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey to guide health and wellness goals for the 2022-23 school year.
- School liaison and communicable disease education team convened meetings with school nurses and COVID coordinators to share case and vaccine data, updates to the outbreak definition, and best practices for spring celebrations and gatherings. Numerous resources were offered to schools, including mobile childhood vaccine clinics, at-home test kits, and an opportunity for young people to seek behavioral health resources.
- School liaison attended the Colorado Healthy Schools Collaborative. The collaborative is convened by the Colorado Department of Education, Office of Health and Wellness to collaborate and cultivate partnerships between community partners, districts, and schools, to strengthen the health and wellness of school communities, utilizing a *Whole Child* approach. The focus of this meeting was using the *Whole School Whole Child* framework to address health and educational inequity.

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 April 2022 meeting, the HCC reviewed data indicators related to community descriptors and population outcomes, including those for total population, population change, demographics, languages spoken at home, school enrollment, life expectancy, causes of death, mortality by age cohort, excess deaths, and chronic condition prevalence. Sources for these data indicators include Colorado Health Information Dataset (CoHID) mortality statistics, the Colorado Violent Death Reporting System (COVDRS), American Community Survey, Department of Labor and Employment, State Demography Office, and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). The data shared highlighted the similarities and differences among us that determine

the health of our community, and the variation in life expectancy and leading causes of death for El Paso County citizens. Attendees utilized a Google Jamboard to capture reactions to the data shared and document further information that would be helpful.

Board of Health Email Inquiries

The Board of Health email (boardofhealth@elpasoco.com) received eleven (11) unique emails during the month of April 2022. The majority of the emails were solicitations (five emails) and COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine comments (five emails). One other email was a concern regarding homeless camps in El Paso County.

