Letter from the Director

In 2015, El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) continued seeking innovative ways to collaborate with community partners to provide quality services and programs aimed at keeping residents healthy.

Our population-based approach assures that everyone, regardless of where they live, work, learn and play, has access to healthy food, safe water, and clean air. Numerous collaborative efforts have strengthened our ability to address many other public health priority areas including emergency preparedness, disease investigation/prevention, no cost vaccine clinics, and activities to reduce youth access to tobacco products. These are but a few program areas that EPCPH excelled in because of strong community partnerships.

In January for example, EPCPH investigated the county's first case of measles in more than 20 years, culminating in the need to quarantine several individuals as a precautionary step in preventing its spread. During the investigative process, EPCPH partnered with Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Penrose Hospital, and other local agencies to identify nearly 300 people who were potentially exposed to the disease.

We embarked on new programs such as the Community Resource Navigators to connect people to medical providers and other important social services; we also provided convenient, on-site vaccines to refugees and school-age children.

Moving forward, we plan to expand services in the areas of substance abuse, suicide prevention, and behavioral health. EPCPH will also be conducting a Community Health Assessment, and developing a Community Health Improvement Plan to address the most pressing public health issues in our county. Addressing the diverse public health needs of county citizens, the success of past activities, and robust plans for 2016 would not be possible without our partners throughout El Paso County.

Finally, thank you to El Paso County Board of Health members and public health staff. Their commitment and dedication to improving the community's health is second to none. All of us look forward to the privilege of serving you in 2016.

Dan Martindale, M.P.A., Public Health Director

Mission

Our mission is to promote and protect public health and environmental quality in the community through people, prevention, and partnerships.

Our Public Health agency serves all residents and visitors of El Paso County, which includes the cities of Colorado Springs, Manitou Springs, the towns of Calhan, Fountain, Monument, Palmer Lake, and Ramah. Public Health is defined by the Institute of Medicine as, “fulfilling society’s interest in assuring conditions in which people can be healthy.” Programs are targeted toward the general population and specific populations with higher health risks or poorer health outcomes to aid in making healthy choices, and provide interventions to prevent spread of disease.

Vision

Our vision is to provide the highest level of customer service and to be recognized as the healthiest county in the nation.

Governance

El Paso County Public Health is governed by a nine-member Board of Health. Members serve five-year terms.

Strategic Plan

View our strategic plan online at www.elpasocountyhealth.org. Please provide your feedback at healthinfo@elpasoco.com.
The Board governs El Paso County Public Health through the establishment of policy, approval of budgets, and appointment of the executive director. The nine members of the Board of Health serve as volunteers and are appointed by the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners. Members are an essential link between public health services and a healthy community. Board of Health members are engaged in the community, and dedicate hours of volunteer time in their role on the board.

Kari Kilroy, President
Memorial Hospital

Dr. James Terbush, Vice President
Martin Blanck and Associates

Victoria Broerman, Board Member
Penrose-St. Francis Health Services/Centura Health

Dr. Robert C. Bux, Board Member
El Paso County Coroner

Sallie Clark, Board Member
El Paso County Commissioner

Tom Strand, Board Member
Colorado Springs City Council Member

Dennis Hisey, Board Member
El Paso County Commissioner

C.J. Moore, Board Member
Kaiser Permanente

Coreen Toll, Board Member
Manitou Springs Mayor Pro-Tem

Accreditation

El Paso County Public Health celebrated its second year as an accredited health department in 2015. EPCPH was the first public health agency in Colorado to become accredited. Each year, accredited departments must submit reports to the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) to demonstrate ongoing performance to meet accreditation standards. The goal of the voluntary national accreditation program is to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of Tribal, state, local, and territorial public health departments.
Public Health Receives 2015 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award

El Paso County Public Health was recognized with an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo) in June 2015. The awards honor innovative, effective county government programs that enhance services for residents.

NACo recognized EPCPH’s medical student training program in the Health category. In January 2015, EPCPH partnered with medical students from Rocky Vista University to provide public health training to future physicians in El Paso County. Students gain hands-on experience in various public health practices, including infectious disease, emergency preparedness, clinical services, and tobacco use prevention.

The new program, coordinated by Dr. James Terbush, Vice President of the Board of Health, is the first such partnership with medical students at EPCPH. Rocky Vista University is an Osteopathic Medical School in Parker, Colorado, graduating 150 new physicians per year.

Communication Efforts Earn National Award

The National Public Health Information Coalition presented El Paso County Public Health with a 2015 Excellence in Public Health Communication Award for measles communication. In response to a measles case in El Paso County, EPCPH successfully communicated to the public about the risks of measles exposure, the steps for prevention, and the importance of measles vaccine. Providing information about prevention was important in stopping the spread because measles is a highly contagious disease.
In early January, El Paso County Public Health investigated its first measles case since 1992, underscoring the overall importance of vaccines.

The case was part of a large, multi-state measles outbreak linked to Disneyland in California, where public health officials believe the patient was exposed to the virus.

The patient was hospitalized at Penrose Hospital in Colorado Springs. As a result, visitors and patients in identified areas of the hospital were potentially exposed to the contagious disease. Measles virus is spread when a person sneezes or coughs and sprays droplets in the air or on surfaces.

Measles symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, red watery eyes, and a rash that usually begins on the face two to four days after the onset of other symptoms. Measles typically spreads downward to the rest of the body. Complications of measles include pneumonia and encephalitis (brain inflammation).

EPCPH, in partnership with Penrose Hospital, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and other local public health officials, identified nearly 300 people who were potentially exposed. EPCPH officials provided guidance to those individuals, and assured that those who were most at risk were appropriately monitored or quarantined, due to the contagiousness of the disease. In addition, staff promoted measles prevention by reminding everyone to make sure they were on measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine. No additional cases were reported in El Paso County.
Plague and Tularemia in El Paso County

In June, El Paso County Public Health reminded residents to take precautions after confirming plague in west Colorado Springs, and tularemia in eastern El Paso County.

Plague was found in a mule deer June 19. Plague is a bacterial disease transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected flea, or by handling an infected animal. Taking steps to avoid flea exposure will help prevent spread of the disease. No human cases of plague were reported in El Paso County; the last case occurred in 1991.

In late June, public health officials confirmed that a wild rabbit in Yoder, in eastern El Paso County, died of tularemia infection.

The rabbit was tested after a resident noticed a large number of dead rabbits in the area. Tularemia is a bacterial infection most commonly transmitted to humans by the handling of sick or dead animals infected with tularemia.

According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, there were 12 human cases of tularemia in Colorado in 2015, none of which occurred in El Paso County. El Paso County’s last reported human case of tularemia occurred in 2010.
Environmental Health

Convenient Online Access to Records

El Paso County Public Health launched a new service that gives people access to septic system records online.

The information is available on the El Paso County Assessor’s Public Record Real Estate Property Search site at http://land.elpasoco.com. This allows septic permit and record-drawing information to be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Public Health inspects, reviews designs, and regulates on-site wastewater treatment systems, commonly known as septic systems. Public Health prevents exposure to sewage and the contamination of groundwater by ensuring the proper placement, design, installation, and maintenance of septic systems. There are 29,650 operating septic systems in El Paso County. Of those, approximately 95 percent have records available online.

Transfer of Title Program

In 2015 El Paso County Public Health completed 1,057 Transfer of Title home inspections. This new program allowed home and property buyers to receive a detailed report of their septic system. As a result of these inspections, 151 septic systems (13 percent) had significant items that required repair, which resulted in greater protection to public health and water quality.

This project was recognized in 2016 by the National Association of County & City Health Officials as a “Model Practice.” Model practices are those that demonstrate exemplary and replicable qualities in response to a local public health need.

Heavy Rains Prompt Increase in Well Water Tests

Due to the heavy rains experienced in late spring 2015 the laboratory recorded a 30 percent increase in the number of water tests positive for coliform bacteria. Unmaintained well heads may have contributed to the increase.

The increased presence of harmful bacteria in the water prompted public health to remind well owners to keep their drinking water safe by conducting regular well maintenance.
Pilot Program Connects Clients to Community Resources

In 2015, Community Resource Navigators helped nearly 2,000 people find resources to stay healthy and safe. El Paso County Public Health received a grant in December 2014 to hire the navigators and begin the pilot program.

The program focused on Medicaid and Medicaid-eligible clients of El Paso County Public Health and the El Paso County Department of Human Services (DHS). The grant was from Community Health Partnership, the Medicaid Regional Care Collaborative Organization serving El Paso County, and was one of the first such collaborations in the state. Navigators connected EPCPH and DHS clients to a primary care provider, behavioral health provider, a dentist or to other social service resources that support health, including transportation, food, and income assistance programs.

BUILD Health Challenge Recognizes Colorado Springs Partnership as National Leader in Promoting Health

Project ACCESS – a Colorado Springs collaboration involving El Paso County Public Health – was selected to receive a $75,000 grant to improve community health from the BUILD Health Challenge, a national awards program.

Partners include the YMCA of the Pikes Peak Region, LiveWell Colorado Springs, Penrose-St. Francis Health Services, EPCPH, Colorado Community Center Collaborative, Youth Violence Prevention (YVP) Initiative, Community Care of Central Colorado, Peak Vista Community Health Centers, and Kaiser Permanente.

The partnership will seek opportunities to engage residents and leaders of Southeast Colorado Springs – an area with rising poverty levels, high unemployment, and violence – to build capacity and develop resources for change.

From left to right: Members of the Project ACCESS collaborative were honored at the BUILD Health Challenge Award Ceremony on June 9 in Washington, DC. Pictured left to right: Elisabeth Almond, Penrose-St. Francis Health Services; Susan Wheelan, El Paso County Public Health; Mina Liebert, LiveWell Colorado; Aubrey Day, LiveWell Colorado; Mia Ramirez, Kaiser Permanente; Amy Latham, The Colorado Health Foundation.
Public Health Trains for Emergencies with Business Partners

In May 2015 El Paso County Public Health collaborated with United Services Automobile Association’s (USAA) Colorado Springs campus to hold a closed point of dispensing exercise. A closed point of dispensing exercise is a way for EPCPH to practice dispensing medication or vaccines to large groups in the event of a public health emergency. This full scale exercise tested EPCPH’s capacity to respond to an anthrax exposure, train staff to utilize the strategic national stockpile and transport medication to USAA staff. The exercise also tested USAA’s capacity to dispense medication to 150 of their 1,700 staff and family members.

Public Health Partners with Community to Provide Free Back-to-School Vaccines

El Paso County Public Health partnered with Harrison School District 2 and the Southeast Armed Services YMCA to host a free Back-to-School Summer Festival in August.

One of the goals of this event was for EPCPH to have the ability to provide convenient public health services to underserved, low-income populations in collaboration with key community partners. Public Health offered no-cost back to school vaccines to children who have Medicaid, no insurance, or whose insurance does not cover vaccines. This event was a strong display of community partnerships providing tools and resources for a healthy life.

Free Flu Vaccines Offered at Annual “Feed the Children” Holiday Event

The Annual Feed the Children event in December 2015 marked 15 years of community collaboration to serve families in need. More than 7,000 individuals attended the event and received food, toys, coats, toiletries, and important health screenings.

El Paso County Public Health partnered with Colorado Springs Fire Department and seven nursing students from the Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences to provide no-cost flu and Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) vaccines to adults and children at the event.
Promoting Health and Preventing Disease

Clinical Services
Medical staff provide male and female clients with family planning information, health education, disease prevention guidance, and health referrals. In 2015, 51 percent of the clients were age 20-29, and 56 percent of clients served were uninsured. As a Title X clinic, the Clinical Services program provides women and their families access to affordable family planning services.

Public Health Providing Vaccines to Refugees
El Paso County Public Health's Immunization Clinic began a partnership in 2015 with Peak Vista and Lutheran Family Services to provide vaccines to refugees living in Colorado Springs. EPCPH served 108 refugees from many areas of the world, including Cuba, China, areas of the Middle East and Africa.

Breastfeeding Peer Counselors Help New Mothers
Pregnant and breastfeeding participants in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program are now eligible to participate in the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program, which is funded by a grant through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Breastfeeding peer counselors provide education and mom-to-mom support in group settings and through individual telephone calls and texts. Research shows that the use of breastfeeding peer counselors improves breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity, thereby enhancing the overall health of the community. The average monthly contacts have increased significantly - from 37 contacts a month to 175 contacts a month.

WIC Expands to Increase Services
El Paso County Public Health’s WIC program served nearly 15,000 individuals each month in 2015, with many of those clients being served at the Fountain Valley clinic.

This clinic, located at 97 Widefield Blvd., was in high demand and had reached capacity after two WIC clinics were consolidated due to federal budget cuts. In 2015, the program received an increase in funds, allowing the hiring of additional staff at the clinic to better meet the community’s needs.

The WIC program provides vouchers for nutritious foods to supplement the diet of pregnant women, new mothers, infants and children under the age of 5 years, who both meet the income guidelines and qualify as “nutritionally at risk.” Purchases made with the redeemable vouchers put $9.6 million into the community last year.
Preventing Youth Tobacco Use

The Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership’s (TEPP) goal is to reduce all forms of tobacco use and exposure through education and policy. In 2015 the TEPP team used a multifaceted approach to build support for tobacco retailer licensing in Colorado Springs. Efforts included a multi-media campaign, a resolution to the Board of Health, and a community-wide event.

The multi-media campaign, “Tobacco Targets Youth,” included television, radio, digital advertisements, social media, and news coverage. The campaign focused on increasing awareness of the problem of tobacco use among youth in El Paso County.

The TEPP team engaged key community leaders, partner agencies, and law enforcement to continue to build the Tobacco Education Coalition. In April 2015, youth and adult coalition members presented detailed accounts to the Board of Health on how tobacco has impacted their lives. Coalition members presented a resolution in support of tobacco retailer licensing in Colorado Springs to the Board of Health, which unanimously passed.

Following the Board of Health resolution, the TEPP team, along with Kaiser Permanente, hosted a community event to ignite discussion about youth tobacco use. La Tanisha Wright, a former tobacco industry insider, exposed industry retail marketing tactics, and discussed how individuals can take action to protect their communities.

Colorado Quitline

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. To address this issue, El Paso County Public Health has remained committed to reducing tobacco use in our community by referring interested clients to the Colorado QuitLine for tobacco cessation assistance. The Colorado QuitLine is a free telephone-based tobacco cessation coaching program that utilizes nicotine replacement therapy to significantly increase one’s chances of successfully quitting tobacco. In 2015, El Paso County referred 202 people to the Colorado QuitLine, a 60 percent increase from 2014.
### Activities & Individuals Served

#### Infectious Disease Control and Prevention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ill Persons from Outbreaks</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Infectious Disease Cases Reported</td>
<td>773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported Outbreaks</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis – TB Skin Tests Completed</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis – Case Referrals</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis – Latent TB Cases</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis – Active TB Cases</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

#### Environmental Health Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality Permits Issued</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Art Establishments – Inspections</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Center Inspections</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Safety Education</td>
<td>773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land-Use Reviews</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiology Tests for Public Water Systems</td>
<td>3,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site Wastewater Permits Issued</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Well Water Tests</td>
<td>2,613</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail Food Establishments – Inspections</td>
<td>5,336</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail Food Establishments – Plan Reviews</td>
<td>113</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Safety Inspections</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Recreation Inspections (Public Pools)</td>
<td>455</td>
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</table>

### Education and Health Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIV Tests Performed</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunizations Provided</td>
<td>7,982</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reproductive Health Visits</td>
<td>3,029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Family Partnership Visits</td>
<td>2,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIC Program Average Monthly Caseload</td>
<td>14,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIC Food Vouchers Used in Community</td>
<td>$9,612,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated Care for Children with Special Needs</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Tobacco Quitline Calls from El Paso County Residents</td>
<td>2,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vital Statistics – Birth Certificates Issued</td>
<td>21,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vital Statistics – Death Certificates Issued</td>
<td>33,905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Total Budgeted Revenue: $14,346,352*

*subject to audit

#### Budget Distribution

- **Program Specific Grants:** $7,314,106
- **Licenses, Fees:** $2,801,275
- **State of Colorado Per Capita:** $905,729
- **Miscellaneous Revenue:** $39,438
- **El Paso County Funding:** $3,285,804