

EL PASO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2021





# FROM THE DIRECTOR



In addition to balancing the ongoing demands of the COVID-19 response in 2021, our agency continued to fulfill its core services and statutory obligations to the community. Among the top priorities that guide our foundational work—as outlined in the Community Health Improvement Plan—are healthy eating, active living, mental health and reducing substance use and misuse. To support access to healthy, nutritious foods, over the past year, our Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program has maintained an average monthly enrollment of 13,308 clients. The amount of WIC food benefits redeemed in El Paso County has been over \$7.4 million, an impressive number to reflect upon.


We recognize the pandemic has taken a toll on many people's mental health across the nation, and El Paso County is no exception. With already stretched behavioral health resources in our county well before the pandemic, our agency has played a pivotal role in bridging gaps in mental health support for our community through strategic partnerships and creative strategies. Mental health resources for our youth, particularly in the area of youth suicide prevention, remains at the forefront of our agency's behavioral health efforts. Our agency continues

to convene the Youth Suicide Prevention Workgroup, with numerous partner agencies, community members and parents working together to address youth suicide through a collective impact model. The efforts of the Workgroup and community partners have yielded positive results, notably in 2021 when we've seen the lowest number of youth suicides since our county began mobilizing partners and resources to address this issue in 2014. I invite you to read more about these efforts and the positive impact of collaborative community action later in this report.

This core work continued while being conservatively staffed relative to other local public health agencies across the country that serve similarly-sized populations. With a growing population, our work has not slowed down, and has increased with the rapid growth of new housing developments and retail food establishments across the county. Despite the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 represents an all-time high number of licensed retail food establishments in El Paso County. At the close of 2021, our agency licensed and inspected more than 2,800 retail food establishments. During 2021, our agency issued 680 onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS) permits, the highest number in recent years and the highest number in the state. El Paso County continues to see a significant increase in new single family residential lots, especially in the eastern portion of the county, which are not on municipal water systems and require OWTS. 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, play and work.

In reflecting on the highlights and challenges we faced in ongoing pandemic response in 2021, it is important to take a moment to pause and celebrate the remarkable achievements over the past year. Without a doubt, this second year of pandemic response brought a fresh wave of new and uncharted challenges, but what stands out more to me is the tireless and innovative spirit with which we rose to meet each unique challenge. We continued to address the urgent and emerging needs of El Paso County, while looking ahead at long-term needs to continue to support the health and well-being of our community.





Our deeply rooted community partnerships have only been strengthened over the past year, convening traditional and non-traditional partners to gain collective insight and strategic input to drive the most effective solutions in improving community health. A little more than a year ago, we were launching our COVID-19 vaccination efforts, with the first El Paso County resident vaccinated on Dec. 14, 2020. Over the past year, much progress has been made in making this essential tool in our mitigation arsenal available to our community. On Dec. 21, 2021, we achieved the incredible feat of one million doses administered to El Paso County residents. This work would not have been possible without the monumental efforts of the El Paso County and Colorado Springs Vaccine Consortium, with partners across health care, hospitals, military, Veterans Affairs and numerous others quickly building the infrastructure needed to serve the most populous county in the state.

Keenly focused on reducing barriers and increasing easy access to the vaccine, we also worked with partners to launch Operation House Call, an innovative partnership between our agency, Colorado Springs Fire Department and Matthews-Vu Medical Group. This model program delivered COVID-19 and flu vaccines to homebound individuals, reducing barriers to access and bringing services directly into communities. Through 2021, Operation House Call vaccinated more than 170 homebound individuals with the COVID-19 and/or flu vaccine.

This year also saw new therapeutic options for COVID-19, and our agency quickly mobilized to expand access to these essential resources to our residents. In fall 2021, our agency worked closely with the state to advocate for El Paso County to be a priority region for one of the state's first monoclonal antibody (mAb) treatment buses. The bus, which was centrally located at the Citadel Mall, provided critical treatment to more than 500 individuals in just a few short months. We also worked diligently to expand easy access to COVID-19 testing, with more than one million PCR tests completed in El Paso County.

Drawing on volunteer capacity and local expertise, our agency was able to utilize volunteers from the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) to strengthen core response efforts. As of the end of October 2021, these volunteers have contributed more than 25,000 hours of time, with an estimated cost value of more than \$1.4 million.

The challenges we faced in 2021, and well before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic response, we will continue to face in the foreseeable future. They are multifaceted and clearly demonstrate the critical need for consistent, reliable and sustainable investment in our agency's infrastructure and workforce in order to protect and promote the health and well-being of all El Paso County communities. Time and again, our public health team has gone above and beyond to support El Paso County, and I thank you for being part of this with us! We enter 2022 stronger, smarter, and perhaps more connected because of these challenges, and that fills me with a sense of hope for El Paso County and for the future health of our community. For good reason, we are a proud community and that has not changed.

*Susan Wheelan*

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Vaccinators at a second dose clinic.



# 2021 BOARD OF HEALTH

El Paso County Public Health is governed by a nine-member Board of Health, which establishes policy, approves the agency's budget and appoints the Public Health Director. Each member serves in a voluntary capacity for a maximum of two consecutive five-year terms upon appointment by the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners. The Board is made up of two current County Commissioners, one Colorado Springs City Council member, one elected official from another municipality within El Paso County, an active or retired physician, an active or retired medical professional, a business or financial professional, a non-profit, public or private or public education professional and a citizen-at-large member. The Board meets regularly once each month, and additionally as needed.



**Dr. James Terbush**  
President  
2013 - Present



**Doris Ralston**  
Vice President  
2017 - Present



**Ted Collas**  
2021 - Present



**Dr. Richard Vu**  
2021 - Present



**Longinos Gonzalez, Jr.**  
2017 - Present



**Cami Bremer**  
2019 - Present



**Dave Donelson**  
2021 - Present



**Kari Kilroy**  
2012 - Present



**Dr. Robert C. Bux**  
2011 - 2021



**Yolanda Avila**  
2019- 2021



**Victoria Broerman**  
2011- 2021



**Sam Gieck**  
2018 - 2021



# ABOUT EL PASO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

El Paso County Public Health was established as a city health department, and then became an organized county health department in 1939. Public Health provides a broad spectrum of services to address ongoing and critical public health and safety issues for the estimated 731,640 residents of El Paso County (per 2020 estimates from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs).

Our charge has and continues to be twofold – actively address the urgent and emerging needs of El Paso County during a time marked by significant challenges, while looking ahead at long-term needs to continue to support the health and well-being of our community. As the COVID-19 crisis continues to unfold, we have kept our strategy concentrated on our central mission to promote and protect public health and environmental quality across El Paso County through people, prevention and partnerships while developing longer-term solutions that will help us recover, rebuild and reimagine the future of our county.

## Mission

Our mission is to promote and protect public health and environmental quality across El Paso County through people, prevention and partnerships.

## Vision

Our vision is for all El Paso County residents to live in thriving communities where every person has the opportunity to achieve optimal health.

## Values

- Integrity
- Service Excellence
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Data-Driven
- Respect



Public Health staff and volunteers at a vaccination clinic.





The Back-to-School Backpack Bash provides routine childhood vaccines ahead of the school year.

Our agency divisions, programs and services are aligned with Colorado's seven core public health services to assure high-quality public health services to all El Paso County residents and fulfill our agency's mission and vision.

**Administration and Governance:** Establish and maintain programs, personnel and operations; implement public health laws, policies and procedures; secure and manage financial resources.

**Assessment, Planning and Communications:** Analyze local, regional and state data sources; create Community Health Assessments and Public Health Improvement Plans; develop public health messaging and communications.

**Communicable Disease Prevention, Investigation and Control:** Monitor, detect and report disease; investigate and control diseases and outbreaks; assure immunizations using established standards.

**Emergency Preparedness and Response:** Promote preparedness by participating in all-hazards planning and training; prepare for and respond to emergencies; implement an emergency communication strategy; coordinate with other responders.

**Environmental Health:** Assure food safety; protect and improve air, land and water quality; assist with regulatory compliance; mitigate effects of environmental hazards.

**Prevention and Population Health Promotion:** Promote healthy living through policies and programs; promote physical and behavioral health with an emphasis on health equity; develop community-specific solutions to address prevention priorities.

**Vital Records and Statistics:** Record and report vital events (births and deaths); issue birth certificates and death certificates.



# 2021 AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

## **Director Wheelan recognized in the Colorado Springs Business Journal's COS CEO 2021 Leadership Series**

The Colorado Springs Business Journal's (CSBJ) COS CEO leadership series, which features some of the most influential people in southern Colorado, recognized Director Susan Wheelan's career-long commitment to public health and her passion for making a measurable impact in the community. As the director of El Paso County Public Health, CSBJ noted that Wheelan's innovative leadership and her ability to be nimble, flexible, strategic and collaborative has consistently driven necessary change in the community while leaving a lasting impact on the public health landscape.



**Director Wheelan recognized in CSBJ's COS CEO 2021 Leadership Series.**

## **Regional Recovery Council Receives National Recognition from the National Association of County and City Health Officials**

The Regional Recovery Council (RRC) was honored this year by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) with the Honorable Mention Status for the 2021 Innovative Service Award. Launched in April 2020, the RRC was formed to help businesses recover from the pandemic as quickly and safely as possible. Spearheaded by Susan Wheelan, director of El Paso County Public Health, and Dirk Draper, president & CEO of the Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC, the RRC represents multiple sectors including economic development, health care, industry, tourism, education, county and municipal government, non-profit, philanthropy and community development.

## **National Association of County and City Health Official's 2021 Innovative Practice Awards**

Our agency received a Bronze Award from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) for our efforts to increase transparency and support data-driven dialogue during the COVID-19 pandemic. The award is a recognition of programs demonstrating effective community partnerships and collaboration, adaptability and program resilience, and remarkable innovation.

## **Colorado Public Health Association Award for Technical Innovation**

Stephen Goodwin, chief data scientific strategist, received this award for his leadership of the Public Health Data and Analytics Office and his design and implementation of dashboards to better measure the spread of disease and individual risk of COVID-19. Putting the principles of Public Health 3.0 at the forefront, he established a two-way data sharing relationship with local hospital systems, state systems, military and federal partners and local organizations.

## **National Association of Counties Achievement Award**

Communities That Care (CTC) received a 2021 Achievement Award for its program, "Teen Advisory Board: Amplifying Youth Voice in the Community" from the National Association of Counties (NACo). The Achievement Awards program recognizes innovative county government programs in 18 categories, including health, children and youth, and human services.



### **Pikes Peak United Way's Person of the Week**

In February 2021, Fadi Youkhana, epidemiologist, was recognized as Pikes Peak United Way's Person of the Week for his involvement in the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. His activities include assistance with tests and vaccine data countywide, development of the county data dashboard and project lead for recovery case data analytics assuring transparency of data to provide timely and accurate information.

### **Government Finance Officers Association 2021 Distinguished Budget Presentation**

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) presented our agency with an award for the 2021 Distinguished Budget Presentation. This award is a testament to local government's commitment to preparing a high-quality budget which reflects GFOA's best practices and guidelines established by the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting. In receiving this award, our agency has met GFOA's criteria for transparent, effective financial statements. It is a rigorous process, and this award demonstrates our agency's commitment to accountability and excellence in financial reporting.

### **Government Finance Officers Association Excellence in Financial Reporting**

In 2021, our agency received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 2019 Financial Annual Report. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

### **USDA Food and Nutrition Service WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence**

Our agency's Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program received the 2021 Premiere Level Breastfeeding Award of Excellence for exemplary breastfeeding support and practice. The award's intent is to provide models, motivate other local agencies to strengthen their breastfeeding promotion and ultimately increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates among WIC participants.

### **Colorado Springs Business Journal Women of Influence**

Joyce Salazar, community outreach coordinator, was selected as one of the 2021 Women of Influence through the Colorado Springs Business Journal. Her nominator said Salazar is "a listener, bridge builder and a skilled communicator whose integrity and honesty build trust and support across a diverse and complex stakeholder group. She continuously looks for ways she can serve others — and centers the community, not herself, in the work."

### **Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists Recognizes Health Abstracts**

Three of our agency's abstracts were selected through a competitive process to be presented at the annual Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) conference. The abstracts covered the topics of hepatitis A outbreak response, botulism and sexually transmitted infections.

### **Mayor's Young Leader Award**

In September 2021, Kristi Durbin, immunization and travel clinic program manager, was a finalist in the Sports, Health & Wellness category of the Mayor's Young Leader Awards. These awards celebrate young professionals – age 40 or under – who are making a significant positive impact in Colorado Springs.



**Kristi Durbin is recognized by Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers.**



# ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE

## Forward-thinking and competitive approach to seeking grant funds

During 2021, our agency continued to be proactive and forward-thinking in seeking grant opportunities to augment agency and response activities and needs, with grants making up 57.7 percent of the 2021 original adopted budget. As part of these efforts, our team prioritized seeking grants to help move our community from acute COVID-19 response into the recovery phases, focusing on critical areas such as data analytics, professional development, health equity, mental health support, youth substance use and prevention, and care coordination. To support a collective impact approach to streamline funding efforts, our team conducted outreach to gain valuable input from community partners. As we look forward toward recovery, we will continue to sustain these efforts through a strategic approach to build the infrastructure required for a resilient public health system.

In 2021, our agency applied for 11 grants and received nine awards. The total of the grant awards received is \$3,309,888, which provided funding for new positions and contract positions, in addition to sustaining funding for several existing positions. Our agency also partnered with multiple community entities as part of a collaborative approach to maximize the impact of grant revenue.

## Increasing access to critical services for residents of southern El Paso County

Through strong collaborations and partnerships with various organizations in the Fountain Valley area, in 2021 the El Paso County Public Health South location was solidified as a hub of community services and resources to meet the needs of residents in the southern portion of the county. Following the purchase of the building in December 2020, our agency quickly mobilized to launch this new location as a powerhouse of COVID-19 response activities.

On Feb. 19, 2021, our agency launched its first mass vaccination clinic at the South location, offering a free pop-up vaccine equity clinic in partnership with Servicios de la Raza and the Colorado Vaccine Equity Taskforce. With the goal of meeting diverse communities where they are and increasing access to the COVID-19 vaccine by reducing barriers such as language, transportation, technology and accessibility, more than 900 individuals were vaccinated across the two-day clinic. Throughout the year, our agency worked with community partners, staff and volunteers to provide more than 50 vaccine clinics at Public Health South, administering more than 21,000 doses of the vaccine.

In addition to vaccinations, this location offered free drive-thru testing, administering approximately 600 tests per week for a total of 26,690 in 2021.



A vaccine clinic at El Paso County Public Health South in November 2021.



The City of Fountain was a vital partner in their commitment to support bringing critical public health resources to the southern part of the county. Public Health South offers an additional location for several core public health services:

- **Women, Infants and Children (WIC):** The Public Health South building will serve as a satellite location for this program, which has maintained a county-wide average monthly enrollment of 13,308 clients, and the amount of WIC food benefits redeemed in El Paso County in 2021 was over \$7.4 million.
- **Fountain Valley Communities That Care (CTC):** Public Health South will serve as the primary location for CTC, a model that works closely with Fountain community organizations, schools and youth to focus on upstream prevention strategies to address youth substance use.

Along with offering public health services, the location will house several cross-sector agencies to serve the growing population in southeast El Paso County. These include:

- **Fountain Office of Emergency Management and Fountain Police Department:** These two vital entities will have space in the building, including a substation for Fountain Police Department's behavioral health unit.
- **Mt. Carmel Veterans Service:** Mt. Carmel will be using the Public Health South location one day each week to connect veterans to local behavioral health resources.

## Key public health legislative initiatives

For public health agencies, the COVID-19 pandemic brought increased responsibilities and unique needs, as well as new and unprecedented challenges such as personal threats and harassment of public health workers. In 2021, the Colorado General Assembly sought to better address these changing circumstances, most notably through the passage of two bills: Protections for Public Health Workers (House Bill 1107) and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Appropriation Public Health Infrastructure (Senate Bill 243). Both bills were signed into law.

### Protections for Public Health Workers (House Bill 1107)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, public health workers faced harassment and vandalism. In Colorado, public health workers have been the victims of crimes and threats. Public health workers have also seen their private addresses distributed through social media with the intent of encouraging harassment.

House Bill 1107 protects the personal information of certain state, county and district public health workers with specific duties. Protected information includes home addresses, home phone numbers, personal mobile phone numbers, personal email addresses and personal photos. Under HB1107, public health workers may also request that a state or local government remove their personal information from public records on the internet.

HB1107 was sponsored by Reps. Terri Carver (R-Colorado Springs) and Yadira Caraveo (D-Thornton) and Sens. Paul Lundeen (R-Monument) and Jeff Bridges (D-Arapahoe). El Paso County Public Health Director Susan Wheelan was among those to give testimony in support of the bill.

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**"We should be able to be proud of the work we are accomplishing and the service to our community without fear for our safety."**

**-Director Wheelan**

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## **Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Appropriation Public Health Infrastructure (Senate Bill 243)**

Senate Bill 243 appropriates \$10 million to local public health agencies and \$11 million for disease control and public health response at the state level for each of the next three years (2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24). Funds for the first year came from the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, while the remaining two years will be funded by the state general fund.

SB243 allows for state funding to strengthen core services for Colorado's 53 local public health agencies. The change is critically needed because state funding for public health had remained flat for almost a decade, even as El Paso County's population increased from 599,060 in 2008 to an estimated 731,640 in 2020, representing 23.2 percent population growth. In addition to COVID-19 duties, local public health agencies, like El Paso County Public Health, are responsible for assuring healthy environments and safe restaurants, pools and child care facilities; protecting the public from communicable and chronic diseases; and providing emergency response services, as well as many other duties.

In past years, all 53 local public health agencies received \$9.4 million in annual, unrestricted funds from the state. Public health agencies do receive other funding, but it is often restricted and tied to specific issues or projects and cannot be used to cover the overall costs of running the agency. El Paso County Public Health's current, non-temporary workforce is 158 FTE (full-time equivalent positions), while the average national staffing for health departments serving populations of 500,000 to 999,999 is 269 FTEs. SB243 brings the total unrestricted, annual, state budget for local public health agencies to \$19.4 million.

The new funding allows public health agencies to respond to emerging issues such as reassignment of personnel in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, while continuing to sustain routine core services to meet the increasing needs of our growing population. The need for this funding has never been greater, as demand for public health services across all areas has increased.



Public Health staff providing tobacco education during the El Paso County Fair.



# ASSESSMENT, PLANNING & COMMUNICATIONS

## **Mobilizing partners around strategic planning efforts for the Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan**

In 2021, our agency was able to reconvene the Healthy Community Collaborative (HCC) which 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. Following the operational and staffing disruptions due to COVID-19, our agency was able to reboot the HCC Steering Committee to inform and support the engagement of HCC in community strategic planning activities.

Additionally, we began the process of developing our next community health assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The CHIP is a long-term, systematic effort to address issues identified by the CHA. The CHIP, which local public health agencies in Colorado are statutorily required to complete, is a strategic tool used by numerous agencies and partners in the community to identify and address local community health needs and priorities. Within this year we collected and analyzed publicly available data which describes various health and health-related metrics to our community and engaged in discussions with HCC members regarding the metrics, their significance and how to address gaps identified by the data. This included data related to economic opportunity, health behaviors and conditions, mental health, access to supports and resources, and utilization and quality of care. This was sourced primarily from publicly available data such as the American Community Survey, Healthy Kids Colorado Survey and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

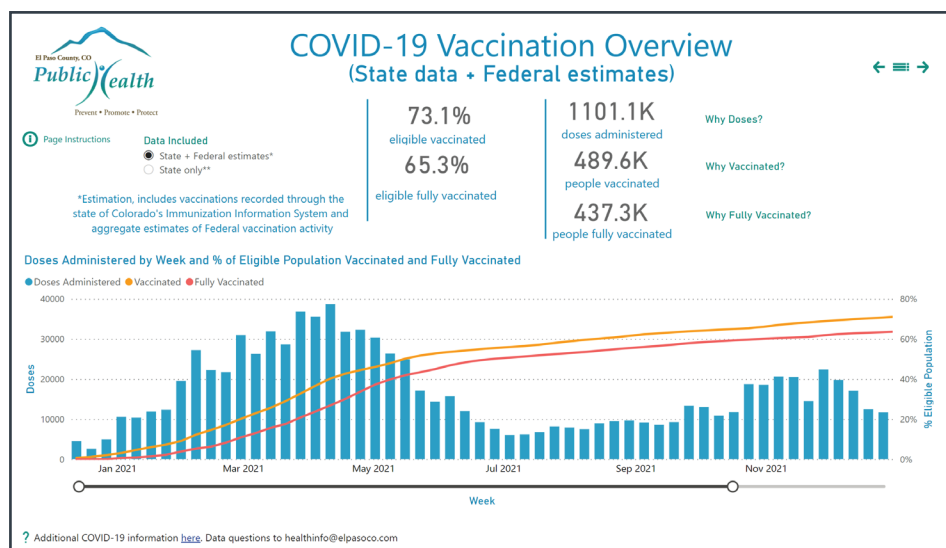
## **Harnessing the power of local, regional and state data to enhance transparency and support community collaboration**

The Public Health Data and Analytics (PHDA) Office continued to serve a critical role in our agency's ongoing response to the pandemic in its work to collect and visualize information. The COVID-19 data dashboard, launched in 2020, recorded 971,000 pageviews in 2021 as the leading community resource for local data.

Shortly after the COVID-19 vaccine became available in December 2020, PHDA launched the COVID-19 vaccine dashboard on Jan. 19, 2021, with breakdowns by vaccine type, demographics and rates to monitor progress. Coordination with federal and military partners, led by Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers and other elected officials, allowed our agency to gain valuable aggregate information on activity not captured by the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS), providing a more comprehensive picture of vaccination activity inclusive of military members and veterans who comprise a large segment of the local population. This was a unique partnership developed and implemented at the local level that provided data not available in other communities across the nation with large proportions of military and veteran populations.

While COVID-19 has been a significant focus of the office in the past year, PHDA has provided support for several non-COVID-19 projects. In partnership with the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Inside Out Youth Services, Springs Recovery Connection, Springs Rescue Mission and Homeward Pikes Peak, PHDA conducted interviews and collected data for a local report on co-occurring substance use and mental health conditions. The report provided insight into the drivers of substance use, the prevalence and type of substances, the family and environmental impact, and the tools clients used to pursue and sustain recovery.

PHDA expanded its work as a community information resource with its presentation on local health indicators to the Colorado Springs Health Foundation board in fall 2021, which informed the board's future strategy for new initiatives. The team also provided data support for public health community initiatives with Youth Suicide Prevention, the Child Fatality Review Team, Community Health Assessment and the Healthy Community Collaborative.



PHDA continued its work with El Paso County's Digital, Strategy and Technology Department to build the critical infrastructure to support long-term data operations and needs for our agency. The deployment of a cloud-native data analytic environment and platforms have enhanced security, performance, and features for internal and external data. It has been used to implement a new data collection system for our agency's environmental health division and to assist internal programs and partners with infrastructure upgrades and development. This partnership demonstrated that the new environment could also be applied to other county agencies and departments.

## Utilizing data and cross-sector partnerships to create a determinants of health data dashboard

An individual and community's health is influenced by multiple factors, a concept called determinants of health. Broadly identified as education, health care, environment, community and economy, these factors influence one another and can be used to identify how the public health of a community can be improved or maintained.

In 2021, our agency began working with local partners to identify and centralize existing data sources relevant to building a public-facing dashboard that would provide information for evidence-based and data-driven community decisions. The dashboard will be launched in phases throughout 2022 with full deployment by the end of the year.

The determinants of health dashboard will provide the opportunity for individuals, community organizations, government agencies and public health to compare multiple points of information to identify trends and how a change in one metric may influence another metric and contribute to the health of a person or group.



## Keeping the public engaged and informed through the “Don’t Wait. Vaccinate!” multi-media COVID-19 vaccination campaign

The “Don’t Wait. Vaccinate!” campaign, which launched in April 2021 and continued through July 2021, aimed to encourage Colorado Springs and El Paso County residents to get the COVID-19 vaccine to help our community overcome the pandemic.

The campaign featured community members participating in activities that the pandemic impacted to motivate people to get vaccinated. The campaign included a school teacher, college student, families, a physician from Centura Health, local business owners and everyday people who want to return to the things they miss most.

The bilingual campaign was supported by the City of Colorado Springs, El Paso County and El Paso County Public Health. “Don’t Wait. Vaccinate!” was shared on several communication channels, including social media (organic and paid advertisements), radio, print collateral and outdoor advertising. Our agency also provided partners with credible resources to share campaign materials with numerous audiences.

The metrics below capture the reach and impressions of weekly social media posts featuring different campaign spokespeople that were shared on social media between April 23-June 28.



### “Don’t Wait. Vaccinate!” Campaign Social Media Metrics

Platform	Reach	Impressions
Facebook	290,132	1,143,952
Instagram	167,435	400,208
Total	413,916	1,544,160

# COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

As the lead agency responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic response, our agency continued to make tremendous progress in 2021 in numerous areas, including increasing vaccine supplies and administration, testing, disease contact tracing and case investigation, and COVID-19 treatments and therapeutics.

## Navigating the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

The Communicable Disease team continued its tireless efforts in 2021 to perform contact tracing and case investigation to help mitigate the spread of the virus. During the course of the year, this dedicated team of case investigation experts interviewed more than 32,000 COVID-19 cases and contacts to provide quarantine and isolation guidance, in addition to answering a range of questions from the individuals, businesses and schools. These efforts were supported through expanded staffing—including additional positions and contract staff—which was critical to the success of these foundational disease prevention strategies.

## Launching COVID-19 vaccination efforts in El Paso County

With the advent of the vaccines in late 2020, we began 2021 with a new tool in our arsenal to fight COVID-19. Over the past year, much progress has been achieved in making this essential mitigation tool available to our community. At the close of 2021, more than one million vaccine doses (including federal estimates) had been administered to El Paso County residents, a truly remarkable achievement.

## Building the infrastructure to expand COVID-19 vaccinations across El Paso County

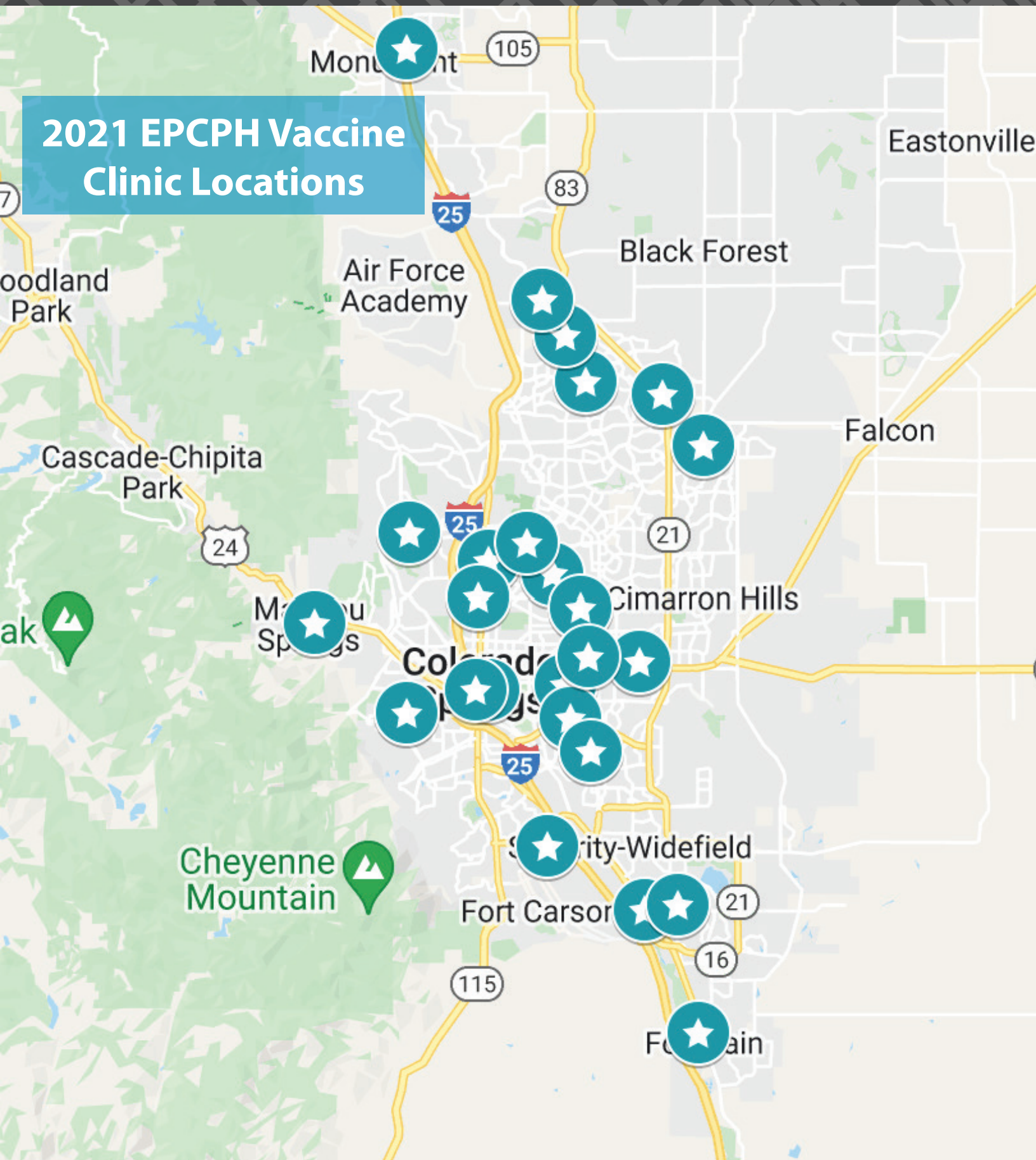
Recognizing the magnitude of launching a successful vaccine campaign in the most populous county in the state, we prioritized the development of a coordinated plan, which included building an extensive infrastructure that incorporated partners across numerous sectors. Our agency quickly established the El Paso County and Colorado Springs Vaccine Consortium, bringing together partners from public health, health care, pharmacies, military, elected and municipal leadership, and other operatives to make vaccines available to all residents who wanted to receive one. This unique approach brought a coordinated, efficient and effective service delivery model to El Paso County communities, with more than 100 locations across the county and more than 30 providers offering COVID-19 vaccines. As vaccine availability and eligibility ramped up, our agency worked with partners to continuously expand and improve processes. That included adding additional evening and weekend hours, and allowing same-day and walk-in appointments.



A Public Health nurse prepares to administer a COVID-19 vaccine during a mobile event.



## 2021 EPCPH Vaccine Clinic Locations



### **Augmenting vaccine convenience and accessibility through mobile outreach efforts**

In order to reduce barriers, increase easy access to vaccines and meet people where they are, our agency launched a mobile outreach van in 2021. This van, which is branded in English and Spanish, offered mobile COVID-19 and flu vaccination clinics at a variety of community organizations, churches, schools, rural areas and numerous events. Our agency also collaborated with partners to pair vaccines with existing and highly trafficked community events such as First Friday Downtown, Colorado Springs Switchbacks games, NAMI Walks Your Way event, food drives with Pikes Peak United Way and more. By pairing vaccines and clinical services with well-known and established events, it helped increase convenience and maximize success by meeting people where they are.

### **Bringing vaccines to homebound individuals through Operation House Call**

An innovative partnership between our agency, Colorado Springs Fire Department and Matthews-Vu Medical Group, this model program delivered COVID-19 and flu vaccines to homebound individuals who were not able to travel to get vaccines. During 2021, Operation House Call vaccinated more than 170 individuals with COVID-19 and/or flu vaccine.

## **Communicable Disease program responds to wide variety of reportable diseases**

### **Responding to rabies and plague concerns in El Paso County**

After a record-breaking year of rabies cases in 2018, our community has seen a significant decrease in confirmed cases with 2021 being the lowest number of positive animals since 2017.

While rabies is more common in the summer months, El Paso County had its first rabies-confirmed skunk in February 2021, underscoring the importance for residents to keep pets up to date on rabies vaccinations and to avoid wild or stray animals. The rabies virus spreads through an infected animal's bite or through saliva in an open wound, cut, or in the eyes, nose, or mouth.

In addition to rabies, El Paso County also had one cat and squirrel that tested positive for the plague. Plague is an infectious disease that is commonly spread to people by the bite of an infected flea but also may be transmitted by infected animal tissues, fluids, or respiratory droplets.

Reporting of sick animals with which people have interacted allows our agency to respond quickly, investigate whether the biting animal may have transmitted rabies to the bite victim and provide proper recommendations to assure people and pets receive the correct treatment to prevent disease.

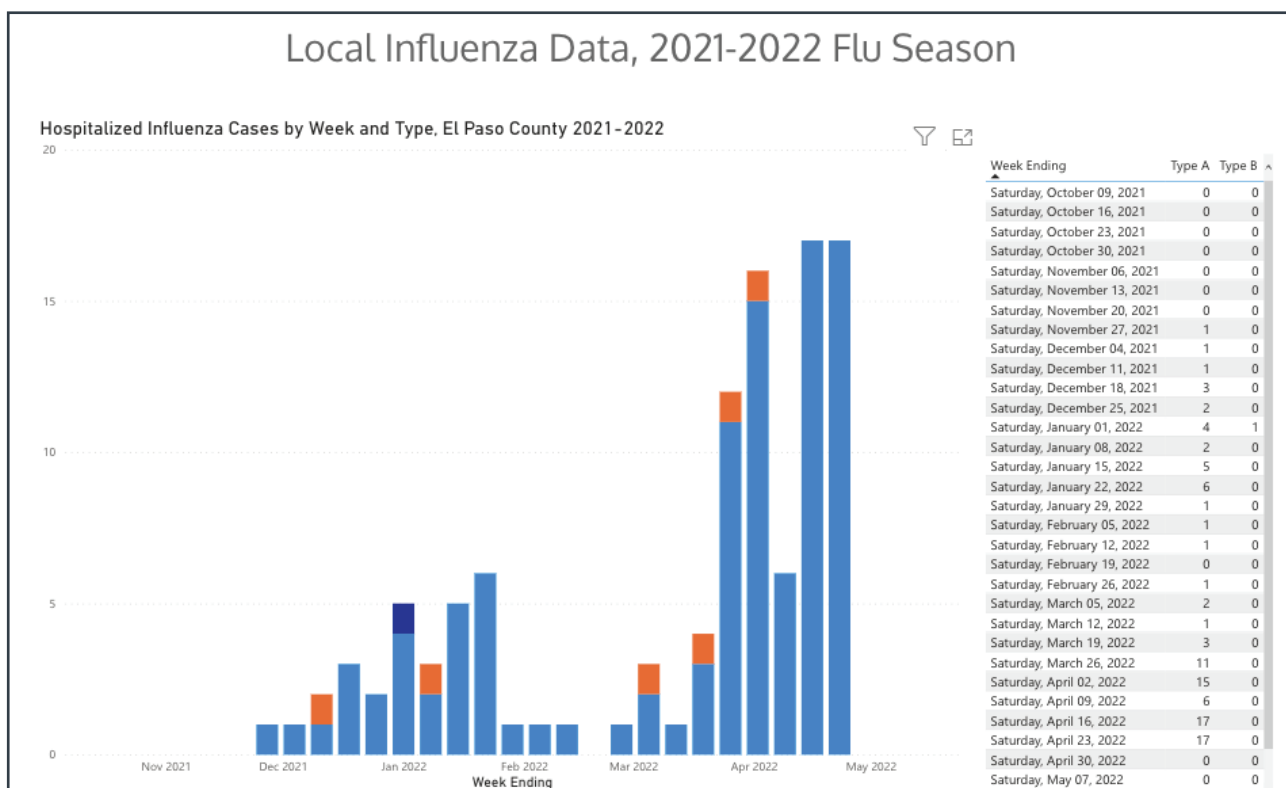


## Launching a new flu data dashboard to inform the public of local flu activity

In October 2021, our agency's Communicable Disease program launched a new influenza (flu) data dashboard to enhance its standard weekly flu reporting with new data visualizations. This new dashboard is designed to provide easy access for the public to timely and relevant local flu data so people can better protect themselves and their loved ones during flu season.

The interactive dashboard gives weekly updates on flu hospitalizations in El Paso County throughout the 2021-2022 flu season, which are reportable per Colorado law to local public health agencies. Additionally, this new resource allows individuals to compare trends from previous flu seasons, dating back as far as 2015, in El Paso County.

Amid the ongoing pandemic, our agency continued to focus on providing the public with credible data to help people make informed decisions for themselves and their families and provide easily accessible resources such as flu vaccines. In addition to COVID-19, tracking respiratory illnesses like flu is critical to efficiently monitor and identify disease trends in the community. For comprehensive local flu data, visit: [www.elpasocountyhealth.org/flu-prevention](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/flu-prevention).



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

## Expanding access to COVID-19 testing

Our agency continued to work closely with partners at the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to support COVID-19 testing throughout El Paso County. With locations at Public Health South, Chapel Hills Mall, Citadel Mall and Falcon, we continued efforts with partners to reduce barriers and increase free, easy access to testing throughout the region. Across all the testing sites throughout El Paso County, there were more than one million PCR tests completed, with more than 26,000 of those tests completed at our agency's Public Health South location. There was an average of 2,900 tests completed each day during 2021, with an average turnaround time between four to five days.

Our agency's laboratory, which is recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a Biosafety Level 3 lab, works with microbes that can cause serious or potentially lethal disease. Our laboratory meets rigorous standards to maintain these capabilities and to help quickly identify outbreaks. The laboratory was a critical resource during the pandemic, and in 2021 was able to prioritize testing for high-risk settings such as the Criminal Justice Center and the homeless isolation shelter. These efforts helped mitigate and respond to outbreaks in a timely manner.

## Advocating to make lifesaving COVID-19 treatments available to El Paso County residents

In fall 2021, our agency leadership worked closely with the state to advocate for expanded access to monoclonal antibodies (mAb) and other lifesaving COVID-19 treatments and therapeutics. El Paso County was prioritized as one of the state's first sites for a mobile mAb treatment bus. The bus, which was located in a central area of the county at the Citadel Mall (co-located with testing and vaccine sites), provided critical treatment to more than 500 individuals in the approximately two months it was stationed there.



A health care worker at the monoclonal antibody treatment bus at Citadel Mall.



# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

## Increasing efficiencies of processes to support onsite wastewater treatment systems

For several years, our agency's Water Quality program has routinely received one of the highest numbers of applications for onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) in the state. By the end of 2021, it averaged 100 new applications and 71 repair applications per quarter, an increase of 10 percent over 2020. Nevertheless, in 2021, the program reduced its turnaround time for issuing new OWTS permits from three-to-five weeks to five-to-seven days.

The improvement in turnaround time resulted from an additional position, which was made possible through critical needs funding from the county in 2019. The Water Quality program, which provides inspections and permits for new and repaired OWTS, also known as septic systems, is essential to assure the safety of people, businesses and the environment in areas without municipal water service. OWTS permitting assures that new systems are well designed, and old systems are properly cared for and maintained. This protects public health and the environment by preventing human exposure to sewage and groundwater contamination.

### 2021 WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

100

AVERAGE OWTS APPLICATIONS PER QUARTER

71

AVERAGE OWTS REPAIR APPLICATIONS PER QUARTER

5-7  
DAYS

TURNAROUND TIME FOR NEW OWTS PERMITS



A public health worker performs an onsite wastewater treatment system inspection.

There are an estimated 34,000 operating OWTS in El Paso County. In recent years, El Paso County has seen a significant increase in single-family homes, particularly in the eastern portion of the county, that rely on OWTS. In the past year, demand for OWTS system cleaners, specialized trucks that pump OWTS tanks and allow them to continue operating, has increased by 40 percent. With people spending more time at home, the demand and stress on OWTS is leading to an increase in the issuance of modifications and repair permits.

With increased staffing and careful allocation of resources, our agency's Water Quality program is meeting these challenges and planning for future growth in demand spurred by the county's steady growth in construction.

### **Supporting the business community: retail food establishments continue to grow, despite challenges of the pandemic**


Despite the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 represented an all-time high number of licensed retail food establishments (RFE) in El Paso County. Our agency licensed just over 2,800 RFEs, an 11 percent increase from 2016 where we licensed 2,516 RFEs. Recognizing the impact on restaurants throughout the pandemic, our agency continued to work with partners such as the Colorado Restaurant Association to quickly communicate information regarding changes in state public health orders, capacity allowances and mitigation efforts.

In January 2021, the El Paso County Board of Health voted to waive the 2021 license fees for full-service retail food establishments, bars and taverns in El Paso County. The Board's action was made possible by Senate Bill 20B-001, which was signed into law in December 2020 and aimed to help alleviate the financial impacts of COVID-19 on the restaurant industry. With the passing of this bill, 1,568 (57 percent) of the 2,733 retail food establishments in El Paso County were eligible for this relief, resulting in over \$620,000 in waived fees.

#### **RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS IN EL PASO COUNTY**



**2,800**  
2021 RFES

  
**2,516**  
2016 RFES

To assure food safety in our community, each of the 1,568 facilities (comprised of full-service restaurants and bars that received the waived license fees) were prioritized for inspections and assistance throughout the ongoing COVID-19 response in 2021. As part of additional efforts to support restaurants and businesses in our community, our agency worked with the Downtown Partnership of Colorado Springs to host a vaccine clinic for retail food workers in the downtown area. The clinic, which focused on breaking down barriers and bringing vaccines directly into the community, offered more than 1,000 doses to retail food workers.



# PREVENTION & HEALTH PROMOTION

## Partnerships to address youth mental health and suicide prevention in El Paso County

Convened by our agency since 2015, the Youth Suicide Prevention (YSP) Workgroup works with community partners to take collective action to support youth mental health, well-being and suicide prevention. Youth suicide is an issue that has impacted El Paso County residents deeply and inspired many collaborative solutions.

Most recently, the YSP Workgroup published a new resource called “Protecting Youth from Suicide: Written by Local Parents for All Parents.” This guide was created to help parents support and connect with teens and be a resource when someone needs to seek help, especially to prevent suicide. Since published, the team partnered with the Mental Health Family Advisory Council from Children’s Hospital Colorado to co-brand the resource and share it with a statewide network.



Our agency sponsored and participated in the NAMI Walks Your Way Colorado Springs event on October 9. The event, which featured an in-person and virtual walk experience, raised awareness and support for improving mental health, a top priority of our agency’s Community Health Improvement Plan.

Several YSP Workgroup school district partners collaborated to host an interactive virtual behavioral health learning series for parents during the 2021-2022 school year. Through YSP Workgroup efforts, 300 youth pastors and faith community leaders have been trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid. In addition, a pilot program was launched to allow trained and certified youth pastors to serve as referral sources for Second Wind Fund, which helps youth at risk for suicide to access professional counseling services by removing financial barriers.

In September, our agency joined community members and organizations across the nation to recognize Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Additionally, the El Paso County Board of Health and El Paso County Board of County Commissioners declared September as El Paso County Suicide Prevention Awareness Month to increase awareness and provide education about suicide, its warning signs and to connect people to valuable resources.

In 2021, our county experienced its lowest death by suicide number in many years, with four youth suicide fatalities. While it is encouraging to see the number of suicide fatalities decrease, especially considering that in 2020 our community experienced the highest death by suicide number, we know that each life lost impacts many families, community members, and those who diligently work in suicide prevention. It is also important to note that one year of data is not enough to establish a trend; therefore, it remains vitally important to continue suicide prevention efforts with partners throughout the county.

### **Child Fatality Review Team**

The El Paso County Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) is mandated by state law and was formed in 2014 by our agency and the El Paso County Coroner's Office. The team is made up of members from local government agencies, law enforcement, schools, hospitals, and other entities to conduct case-specific reviews of preventable child deaths (ages 0-17) that occur in our community. This includes undetermined, unintentional injury, violence, motor vehicle incidents, child abuse or neglect, sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) and suicide deaths. In 2021, CFRT reviewed a total of 42 cases from the previous year, an increase from the 34 cases reviewed in 2020.

Through these multidisciplinary reviews, CFRT collects de-identified data, identifies trends and makes prevention recommendations at local, state and national levels. When our community experienced a rise in youth suicides in 2020, the team changed its processes, accelerating its review of child fatalities to assure the YSP Workgroup had vital information to inform their action planning. This was an essential step in a multiagency community effort to prevent youth suicide.

## **Supporting the southeast Colorado Springs community with free and healthy foods**

A long-standing public health and community priority has focused on healthy eating and active living. In looking at the importance of having fresh food in every family's diet, our agency—in partnership with Solid Rock Church, Solid Rock Community Development Corporation (SRCDC) and the Colorado Farm and Art Market—sponsored three free farmers markets this summer which provided 2,100 individuals with fresh produce and food. As a facilitator, our agency also assisted with connecting SRCDC to other community funding sources. In addition, at the markets our staff provided information about our Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program to educate the community about the free resources we provide for mothers and their babies.

Solid Rock Church, SRCDC and the Colorado Farm and Art Market began this endeavor in summer 2021 to support the southeast Colorado Springs community, which has very limited resources of fresh food. This initiative was focused on addressing barriers such as the widely dispersed location of grocery stores in our geographically large county, as well as the limited availability of public transportation to food outlets for residents who lack public transportation.





With funding from grants, the support of the SRCDC and sponsorships from community partners, Solid Rock Church was able to provide this service to its members and beyond. They enlisted the Colorado Farm and Art Market to gather farmers and other vendors to offer these free markets throughout the summer and fall months. In total, over 4,500 people enjoyed fresh bread, eggs and produce, as well as entertainment and activities for the entire family.

They were more than free farmers markets. They were festivals with live music, activities for the kids, clowns, food trucks and even a pony. Most importantly, free food was distributed to residents in the southeast part of the city, with 95 percent of that being fresh produce.

## Increased fruit and vegetable benefits for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) clients

The federally funded Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program provides supplemental foods, breastfeeding support, health care referrals and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age 5 who are found to be at nutritional risk.

Our agency's WIC program maintained an average monthly enrollment of 13,308 clients in 2021, with incomes at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty line. While many clients are served by multiple assistance programs, WIC provides tailored services for moms and babies, guiding nutritional choices and helping new parents to make healthy choices. WIC is conveniently located across three locations throughout El Paso County and offers many virtual services as well, expanding easy access to this critical program for WIC participants.

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"When WIC began providing approximately three times the normal monthly budget for fruits and vegetables, parents were able to introduce their little ones to healthy, new recipes. New foods can expand children's horizons and build nutritious habits that can last a lifetime."

-WIC Program Manager

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The WIC program's supplemental foods are tailored to the unique needs of clients to support their nutritional needs. For instance, the needs of a baby will differ from that of a toddler. Food packages starting at 1 year of age and older include a monthly stipend for fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables. However, from June to September 2021, as part of the American Rescue Plan Act, all WIC participants over the age of 1 each began receiving additional stipends for fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables every month. That amount increased to nearly three times the normal stipend for children, and about four times the normal amount for pregnant and postpartum women and breastfeeding participants. The extra funding is currently scheduled to continue through September 2022.

To encourage families to take advantage of this resource and add more fruits and vegetables to their diets, our agency launched an educational social media campaign with weekly posts highlighting the increased funding and sharing favorite recipes from WIC educators. The recipes were also shared on a webpage for clients to access at their convenience.

## Impacting youth substance use prevention through Communities That Care

Through grant funding, Fountain Valley Communities That Care (FV-CTC) was able to accomplish many of its 2021 goals of impacting youth substance abuse prevention, building public awareness of its programs, and gaining increased support in southeastern El Paso County.

With continued funding from a Communities Organizing for Prevention grant from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and with additional funding from a Drug-Free Communities grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), FV-CTC leveraged roughly \$415,375 to mobilize community members and community partners to:

1. Build public support for safe community spaces for youth. Work with local organizations and youth to make community spaces safer and more appealing to young people.
2. Build public support for quality child care early in life. Work with parents, child care providers, and organizations to increase child care availability in the region.
3. Connect residents of the Fountain Valley to resources that are available in the region, and work with providers to improve their resources.
4. Target marijuana and prescription drug use through activities such as strengthening communication skills between parents and children, campaigns on risks of driving while under the influence of marijuana and organizing drug takeback days.
5. Promote evidence-based programs in the region, such as Kidpower and the Boys and Girls Club.

Community-minded youth and adults are vital to the operation of the FV-CTC with volunteers serving in a variety of capacities. In 2021, the coalition increased membership from lay community members with the addition of four new community parents, three child care providers and two community members. Many other community members participated in the coalition through focus groups, sounding boards and surveys. Over 65 coalition members were engaged throughout the year with 50 of those participants connected to an agency and 15 community members, parents and young people.

Community member Taheim Davis sums it up, "I'm happy Communities That Care is in Fountain Valley. It's bringing a bunch of energy back to this area."

In 2017, Fountain Valley Communities That Care (FV-CTC) was formed as a coalition to prevent youth substance use in Fountain Valley by providing resources, education and opportunities. It was spearheaded by our agency, which provided staff and recruited community leaders and organizations to join the effort and lay out an effective, achievable plan of action.

### Positively impact youth in the Fountain Valley

In 2017, El Paso County Public Health spearheaded a coalition, **Fountain Valley Communities That Care** to prevent youth substance use by providing resources, education, and opportunities.

Individuals and organizations work to accomplish five goals to improve public support for youth community spaces, child care availability, resources for eligible families, marijuana and prescription drug use and promotion of evidence-based programs

Opportunities for a variety of skills and interests are available on the Key Leader Board, Community Board and Teen Action Board.

Learn more at [elpasocountyhealth.org](http://elpasocountyhealth.org)  
Get involved by emailing [teresabassma@elpasoco.com](mailto:teresabassma@elpasoco.com)

"By re-establishing partnerships in the area and regaining trust from stakeholders, a unified community will come together to support, build up and meet the needs of our youth."

—Terrie Blackwell, Key Leader Board member



**Fountain Valley Communities That Care impacts local youth.**



**FV-CTC was the 2021 recipient of the National Association of Counties' Achievement Award.**




# VITAL RECORDS

Our agency's Vital Records team continued providing this critical service to our community in 2021. To maximize safety and COVID-19 prevention measures, the team put in place a system to see customers by appointment—a system which has received positive feedback from the public—in addition to processes to maintain social distancing, mask wearing, and more.

Committed to excellence and accuracy, the team passed all four of their security paper audits with 100 percent ratings, in addition to passing their annual application audit with 100 percent. Also of note, the Vital Records team—which serves the most populous county in Colorado—issued more birth certificates in 2021 than ever before – 21,859 – and helped 10 families with the process for home birth registration. They also issued 48,457 death certificates.

## VITAL RECORDS 5-YEAR GROWTH

	2016	2021
BIRTH CERTIFICATES	21,629	21,859
DEATH CERTIFICATES	36,322	48,457

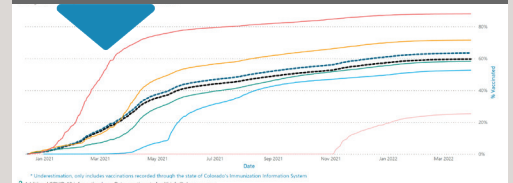
# COVID-19 TIMELINE

**Jan. 4:** El Paso County moves to Level Orange: High Risk on the state's COVID-19 Dial framework. Indoor events are limited to 25 percent capacity or 50 people, outdoor events are limited to 25 percent capacity or 75 people.

**Jan. 7:** El Paso County Public Health launches a new vaccine web page, "How will I get the vaccine?"

**Jan. 11:** El Paso County Public Health expands operating hours at three community-based testing sites at the Citadel Mall, Fountain and North Colorado Springs.

**Jan. 19:** El Paso County Public Health launches a vaccine dashboard to track local COVID-19 vaccination efforts.



**Feb. 3:** The state's 5 Star program launches in El Paso County, allowing certified businesses to enjoy increased capacity limits.

**Feb. 3:** El Paso County Public Health and local governments are in close communication with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment concerning vaccine allocation, as the county has not received a supply proportionate to its population.

**Feb. 2:** El Paso County administers over 50,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses.

**Jan. 27:** In an effort to provide economic relief to local restaurants impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the El Paso County Board of Health votes unanimously to waive 2021 license fees for full-service retail food establishments (RFE), bars and taverns in El Paso County.

**Feb. 3:** Pikes Peak United Way's 2-1-1 helpline begins serving as a centralized phone number to help direct community members to COVID-19 vaccine providers.

**Feb. 6:** El Paso County moves to Level Yellow: Concern under state's revised COVID-19 Dial framework. Restaurants, gyms and personal services may operate at 50 percent capacity or 50 people.



**Feb. 8:** Colorado enters Phase 1B.2 of its vaccine distribution plan. The newly eligible include people ages 65 to 69, K-12 education and child care workers, and a small number of government officials.

**March 5:** Colorado enters Phase 1B.3 of its vaccine distribution plan. Those newly eligible include people age 60 and older; frontline essential workers in grocery and agriculture, including meatpacking workers, grocery store workers and agricultural processing workers; people age 16-59 with two or more high-risk health conditions.

**March 4:** El Paso County activates an inbound call center to schedule appointments for 70+ seniors.

**Feb. 19-20:** Vaccination providers across El Paso County expand equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines by providing thousands of doses at simultaneous pop-up equity clinics.

**Feb. 19:** El Paso County reaches milestone of over 100,000 vaccine doses administered.



**March 5:** One year anniversary of the first Colorado COVID-19 case.

**March 5:** El Paso County Public Health administers 1,500 doses of the Janssen vaccine to eligible individuals in Phase 1B.3 of the state's phased vaccine distribution plan.



**March 16:** 70 percent of El Paso County residents aged 70 and older are vaccinated.



**March 19:** Colorado enters Phase 1B.4 of its vaccine distribution plan. Those eligible to receive a vaccine now include: Anyone age 50 and older, student-facing higher education faculty and staff, food and restaurant employees, manufacturing workers, U.S. Postal Service employees, public and specialized transportation employees, public health employees, human services employees, people providing direct services to Coloradans experiencing homelessness, frontline journalists, select local and state government employees, adults who received a placebo in a COVID-19 vaccine trial and anyone age 16 and up with one high-risk health condition.

**March 20:** In conjunction with the Colorado Vaccine Equity Taskforce, El Paso County Public Health and Servicios de la Raza vaccinate more than 1,000 individuals with the Moderna vaccine at a second-dose equity clinic on March 19 and 20 at El Paso County Public Health South.

**March 23:** El Paso County Public Health, Downtown Partnership of Colorado Springs and the state host a COVID-19 vaccination clinic for restaurant workers as Phase 1B.4 of the state's phased vaccine distribution plan rolls out.

**March 30:** El Paso County reaches milestone of over 250,000 vaccine doses administered.

**April 23:** The City of Colorado Springs, El Paso County and El Paso County Public Health kick off the "Don't Wait. Vaccinate!" campaign.

**April 16:** The state retires the COVID-19 Dial framework, and El Paso County moves to fewer COVID-19 restrictions for events and businesses.

**April 11:** El Paso County reaches milestone: One-third of eligible residents have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

**April 2:** Every Coloradan aged 16 or older is eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.



**April 28:** El Paso County Public Health, Nomi Health and the state of Colorado bring the first mobile vaccination clinic to a local high school (Cheyenne Mountain High School).



**May 2:** One-third of eligible El Paso County residents are fully vaccinated.

**May 10:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) expands emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for adolescents age 12-15.

**August 23:** FDA grants full approval to Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine for ages 16-plus.

**July 1:** The Citadel Mall drive-thru vaccine site and Chapel Hills Mall testing site open.



**June 14:** 50 percent of eligible El Paso County residents are fully vaccinated.

**May 31:** Lyft offers 400 free rides for COVID-19 vaccine appointments for residents in El Paso County.

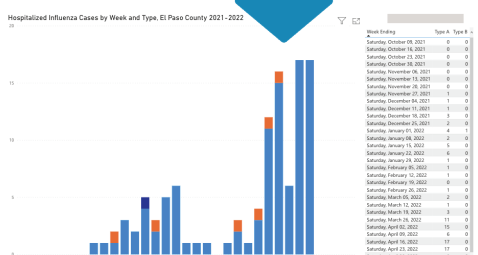
**Sept. 16:** El Paso County regional hospital capacity moves to orange-red on the COVID-19 data dashboard as local hospitals experience resource and staff limitations.



**Sept. 18:** El Paso County Public Health launches its mobile outreach van to increase access to COVID-19 vaccines, immunizations, and other services across the county.

**Sept. 22:** FDA authorizes a booster dose of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for certain populations.

**Oct. 22:** El Paso County Public Health launches a new flu data dashboard.



**Oct. 21:** CDC officially recommends Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine booster doses for people at higher risk for COVID-19.

**Oct. 20:** FDA expands the use of booster dose for the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines in eligible populations.

**Oct. 13:** 70 percent of eligible El Paso County residents have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.



**Nov. 1:** The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) deploys a monoclonal antibody treatment bus to El Paso County as part of efforts to expand access throughout the state.



**Nov. 2:** CDC authorizes the Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5-11.



**Nov. 29:** CDC strengthens messaging on COVID-19 booster recommendations for individuals who are 18 years and older. Everyone aged 18 and older should get a booster shot either when they are six months after their initial Pfizer or Moderna series or two months after their initial J&J vaccine.

**Nov. 19:** Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) amends Public Health Order 21-02 to allow individuals who qualify to seek monoclonal antibody treatment for COVID-19 without a doctor's referral.

**Nov. 5-6:** Nearly 1,700 children aged 5-11 receive the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine across numerous clinics in El Paso County.

**Dec. 9:** CDC expands COVID-19 booster recommendations to 16-and-17-year-olds. Everyone aged 16 and up who is eligible is urged to get a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose.

**Dec 14:** El Paso County reaches milestone: Nearly one million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine administered since the first doses were given one year ago.

**Dec. 15:** El Paso County Board of Health approves a Resolution in Favor of Voluntary COVID-19 Vaccines.

**Dec 21:** The first Omicron COVID-19 case is identified in El Paso County.

**Dec 28:** El Paso County Public Health updates guidance to match new recommendations from the CDC and CDPHE to shorten COVID-19 isolation and quarantine periods for the general population.

# PUBLIC HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS

2,531

REPRODUCTIVE  
HEALTH VISITS



966

INFECTIOUS DISEASE  
CASES REPORTED  
(NON-COVID)

REPORTED  
INFECTIOUS DISEASE  
OUTBREAKS  
(NON-COVID)

70



PEOPLE IMPACTED  
BY INFECTIOUS  
DISEASE OUTBREAKS  
(NON-COVID)

1,042

2,534

STI TESTS  
PERFORMED



109

FLU IMMUNIZATIONS  
PROVIDED



21,859

BIRTH CERTIFICATES  
ISSUED

48,587

DEATH CERTIFICATES  
ISSUED

3,838

RETAIL  
FOOD  
ESTABLISHMENT  
INSPECTIONS

154

RETAIL  
FOOD  
ESTABLISHMENT  
PLAN REVIEWS

1,160

FOOD WORKERS  
PROVIDED  
FOOD SAFETY  
EDUCATION CLASSES

1,211

COLORADO QUITLINE  
CALLS FROM  
EL PASO COUNTY  
RESIDENTS

2,973

PRIVATE WELL  
WATER TESTS



680

ONSITE  
WASTEWATER  
PERMITS ISSUED



4,714

PUBLIC WATER  
SYSTEMS TESTS



302

CHILD CARE  
INSPECTIONS

15

SCHOOL SAFETY  
INSPECTIONS



13,308

WIC AVERAGE  
MONTHLY ENROLLMENT

196

COORDINATED CARE FOR  
CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

2,261

NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP HOME VISITS

144

AIR QUALITY PERMITS ISSUED

162

LAND USE REVIEWS



141

BODY ART  
ESTABLISHMENT  
INSPECTIONS

320

PUBLIC POOL  
INSPECTIONS





# COVID-19 BY THE NUMBERS



**908,234**

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS  
ADMINISTERED (STATE  
AND LOCAL DATA)

**21,573**

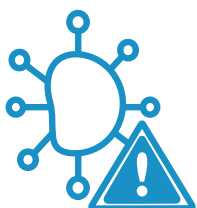
NUMBER OF VACCINATIONS ADMINISTERED AT  
EL PASO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH CLINICS

**2,018**

MOBILE VACCINATION  
BUS CLINICS

**520**

# OF PATIENTS WHO  
RECEIVED MONOCLONAL  
ANTIBODY  
TREATMENTS THROUGH  
MOBILE BUS



**183**

GENERAL  
OUTBREAKS



**125**

LONG-TERM CARE  
FACILITY OUTBREAKS



**256**

SCHOOL/CHILD  
CARE OUTBREAKS

**1,065,003**

COVID-19 PCR TESTS  
IN EL PASO COUNTY



**218,362**

COVID-19 PCR TESTS  
AT COMMUNITY-BASED TESTING  
SITES

**82,853**

COVID-19 CASES



**4,236**

HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS

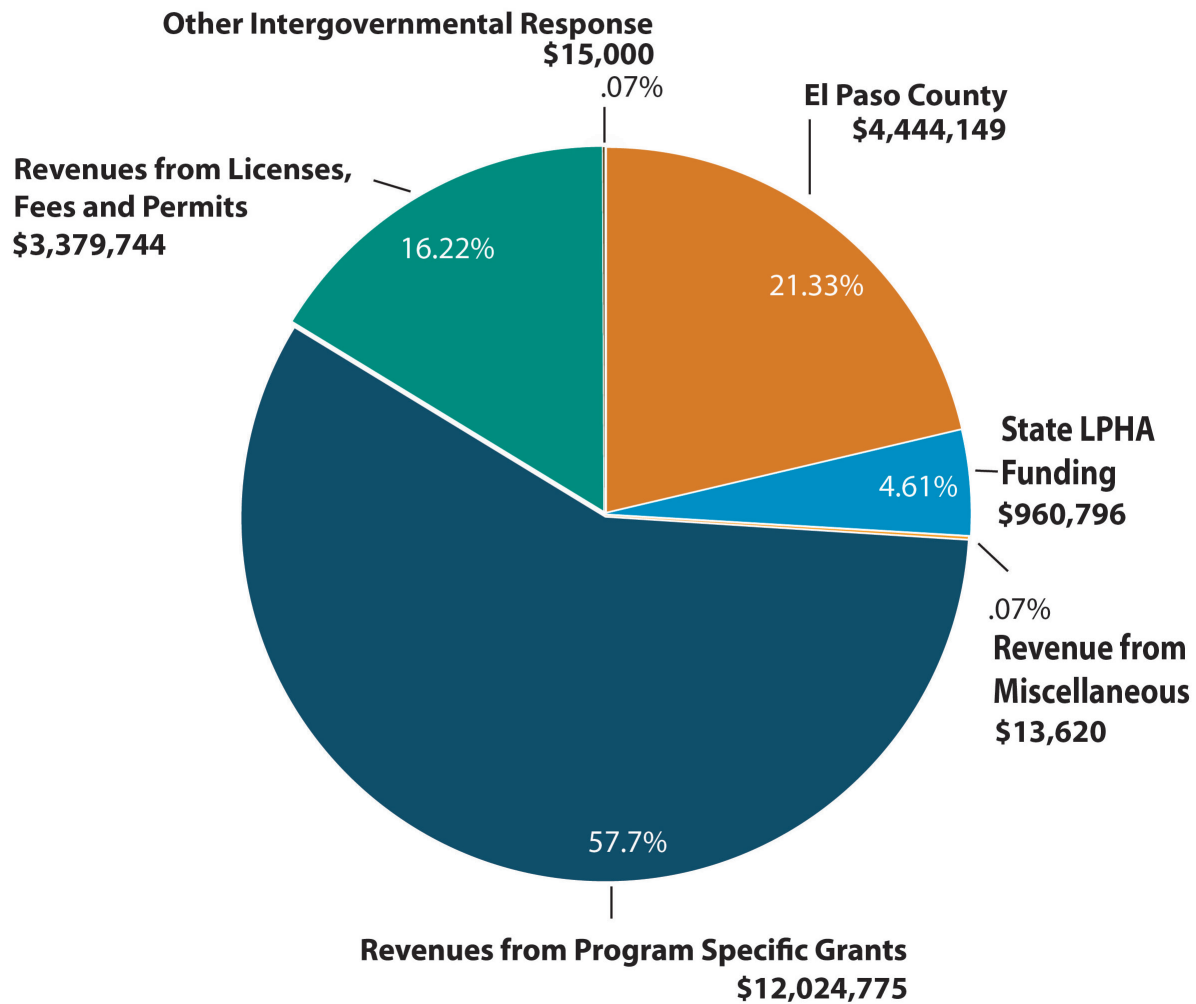


**823**

DEATHS (BY DATE)

## 2021 ORIGINAL ADOPTED BUDGET REVENUES

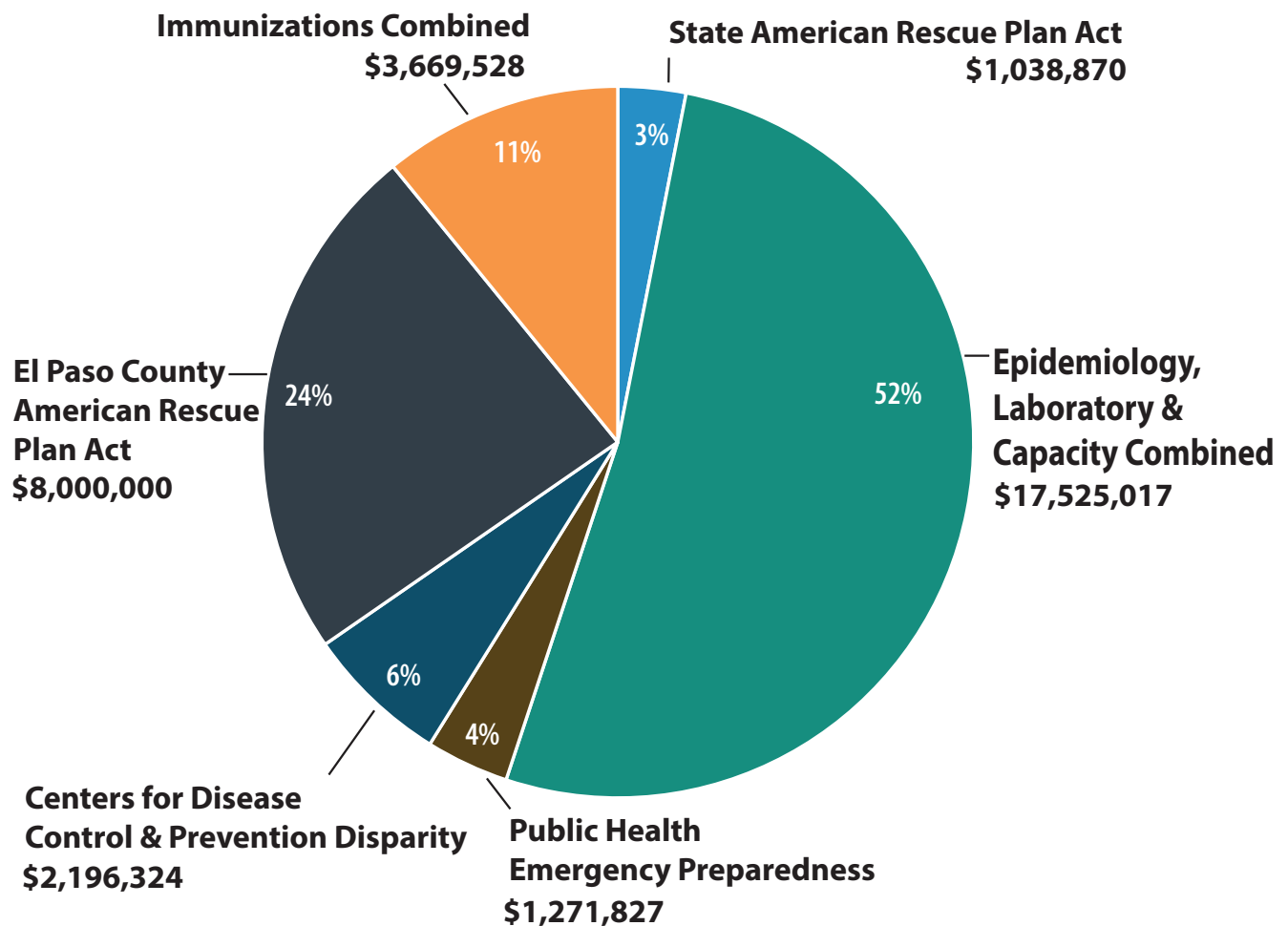
**\$20,838,084**





## 2021-2024 COVID-19 FUNDING SUMMARY

**\$33,700,566**



Our agency received a significant amount of COVID-19 response funding in 2020 and 2021. This funding allowed our agency to build capacity and infrastructure to quickly respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and will assist with recovery efforts throughout the community. This funding is time-limited and restricted to uses related to the pandemic, with many funding streams ending in 2023 and 2024. Our goal is to continue to advocate for more permanent funding to continue to maintain capacity to respond to emerging issues, support the pandemic recovery efforts, and continue to employ these vital public health positions and efforts.



## **Mission**

Our mission is to promote and protect public health and environmental quality across El Paso County through people, prevention and partnerships.

## **Vision**

Our vision is for all El Paso County residents to live in thriving communities where every person has the opportunity to achieve optimal health.

## **Values**

Integrity  
Service Excellence  
Collaboration  
Innovation  
Data-Driven  
Respect

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