

EL PASO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Spring flowers in Ute Valley Park



A LETTER OF GRATITUDE

El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) thanks former director Susan Wheelan and former Board of Health (BoH) president Ted Collas for their commitment to EPCPH and the residents of El Paso County. Wheelan retired in February 2025, following an impressive 25-year tenure with EPCPH, where she served as executive director during her last five years. Collas stepped down from the board following four years of service, where he served as president during his last year.

EPCPH is grateful to both Wheelan and Collas for their leadership and tireless dedication to supporting the health and well-being of our community during one of the most challenging times in recent public health history. As EPCPH embarks on a new path forward, it is not without pausing to reflect on and express gratitude for its leaders who came before.



Susan Wheelan



Ted Collas

DEANN RYBERG: WELCOMING CHANGES IN THE NEW YEAR

As I stepped into the role of interim executive director in March 2025 and reflected on the past year, the theme that most resonates with me is one of evolution. The ability to change and adapt is at the forefront as we explore new ways to better meet the ever-changing needs of the residents and communities we serve. To be better poised to meet these needs, over the course of the past year-plus, we carefully evaluated our staffing and organizational structure, with the goal of optimizing and streamlining our agency infrastructure. With pandemic-era grants coming to an end, it also became more critical than ever to methodically evaluate our funding sustainability in the context of agency and community needs, along with establishing more nimble staffing models.

In leading the agency through this critical transitional period, my goal has been to prepare our agency and workforce to adapt to changing needs while building more robust systems, processes and infrastructure that will set us up for success well into the future. At our core, we are a resilient, talented, and compassionate workforce who remains committed to our vision for all El Paso County residents to live in thriving communities where every person has the opportunity to achieve optimal health.



DeAnn Ryberg

DeAnn Ryberg
Interim Executive Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

02 LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

03 TABLE OF CONTENTS

04 EL PASO COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

05 OUR VISION, MISSION & VALUES

07 AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

09 ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE

14 ASSESSMENT, PLANNING & COMMUNICATION

15 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION, INVESTIGATION & CONTROL

18 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

19 ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH

21 CHRONIC DISEASE, INJURY PREVENTION & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROMOTION

22 VITAL RECORDS & STATISTICS

23 MATERNAL, CHILD, ADOLESCENT & FAMILY HEALTH

26 BUDGET AND FINANCIALS

BOARD OF HEALTH



-
1. **Ted Collas,**
President
 2. **Doris Ralston,**
Vice President
 3. **Cami Bremer,**
El Paso County
Commissioner
-



-
1. **Dr. Debora Chan**
 2. **Dave Donelson,**
Colorado Springs
City Councilor
 3. **Glant Havenar,**
Palmer Lake Mayor
-



-
1. **Jack Briggs**
 2. **Longinos Gonzalez**
Jr., El Paso County
Commissioner
 3. **Dr. Richard Vu**
-

El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) 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 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 nonprofit/private organization or public education professional and a citizen-at-large member. The Board meets regularly once each month.



OUR VISION, MISSION & VALUES

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

Our core values are accountability, collaboration, innovation, integrity, respect and transparency.



Staff hosting the DEA Drug Take Back Day event

ABOUT EPCPH

El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) was first established as a city health department in 1872. Public Health provides a broad spectrum of services to address ongoing and critical public health and safety issues for over 750,000 residents of El Paso County.

Our charge has and continues to be twofold – actively address 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 vision is for all El Paso County residents to live in thriving communities where every person has the opportunity to achieve optimal health.

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

1

Administration & Governance

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

2

Assessment, Planning & Communication

Analyze local, regional and state data sources; plan and implement Community Health Assessments and Public Health Improvement Plans; develop public health messaging and communications.

3

Communicable Disease Prevention, Investigation and Control

Monitor, detect and report disease; investigate and control diseases and outbreaks; assure immunizations using established standards.

4

Emergency Preparedness & 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.

5

Environmental Health

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

6

Prevention and Population Health Promotion

Promote healthy living through policies and programs; promote physical and behavioral health; develop community-specific solutions to address prevention priorities.

7

Vital Records & Statistics

Record and report vital events (births and deaths); issue birth certificates and death certificates.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

For the fifth straight year, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) presented EPCPH with the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its 2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial 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.

Government Finance Officers Association Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) presented EPCPH with the Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting (PAFR Award) for its 2022 Popular Annual Financial Report. This award represents a significant achievement, with eligibility criteria dependent upon submission and receipt of the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the current fiscal year.

Outstanding Community Partnership

EPCPH was recognized with an award for Outstanding Community Partnership from CommonSpirit's Trauma Services & Injury Prevention Program at the Choose S.A.F.E. (Seatbelts & Safe Speeds; Avoid Alcohol and drugs; Focus; Eliminate Distractions) awards ceremony in May. EPCPH partnered with CommonSpirit Penrose Hospital to help them implement Choose S.A.F.E. programming and outreach at multiple elementary, middle and high schools, which focuses on preventing injuries and fatalities for young drivers, passengers, cyclists and pedestrians.

Latina Equity Foundation Award
EPCPH Executive Director Susan Wheelan received the Latina Leader of the Year Award from the Latina Equity Foundation. Executive Director Wheelan was recognized by the Latina Equity Foundation for her outstanding contributions to advancing public health and her unwavering dedication to improving the well-being of El Paso County communities.



National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award for partnership on RISE (Resilient, Inspired, Strong, Engaged)

EPCPH was recognized with an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo) for co-designing an initiative to support long-term community viability. The award honors innovative county government programs that strengthen services for residents. This particular award highlights the RISE Coalition, which was founded in 2016 when EPCPH received the El Pomar Foundation's Possibilities grant. The grant provided a seven-year commitment to enhancing Southeast Colorado Springs from within through meaningful, innovative, resident-led change. This same resident-led ownership and empowerment then contributed to the successful transition of RISE to an independent entity that is well established and well prepared to continue meeting the needs of residents.

EPCPH receives Impact Award from RISE

EPCPH was presented with an Impact Award from the Resilient, Inspired, Strong, Engaged (RISE) Southeast. The Impact Award expressed appreciation for EPCPH's dedication to assuring that every individual has access to essential resources and opportunities for well-being. In 2016, EPCPH received a competitive grant to create the RISE Southeast, an initiative designed to create a cross-sector community coalition interested in working with stakeholders in southeast Colorado Springs. In January 2024, RISE Southeast became its own 501(c)3 nonprofit. EPCPH is dedicated to continued partnership and support of RISE Southeast.

ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE



Photo (Above): Tobacco Education and Prevention employees talk to the public at the Fiestas Patrias celebration

2023 Community Health Assessment (CHA)

In May 2024, El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) released the 2023 Community Health Assessment (CHA), a comprehensive report that provides an in-depth overview of the health and well-being of El Paso County communities. By systematically collecting and analyzing local data, the CHA identifies key health needs and issues, offering valuable insights into the conditions and factors that influence health outcomes.

This effort was led by EPCPH in collaboration with the Healthy Community Collaborative (HCC), a multidisciplinary group of over 60 representatives from

schools, hospitals, nonprofits, businesses, and local government. The CHA focuses on the determinants of health, examining how the conditions where people live, learn, work, pray, and play impact their quality of life and health outcomes.

Through the assessment process, EPCPH and the HCC analyzed nearly 60 health indicators, ultimately identifying four leading public health issues: barriers to accessing health care, suicide, drug overdose, and housing stability. These findings guide the development of the 2025-2029 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), ensuring that public health efforts are data-driven and responsive to community needs.



Photo: Ongoing training of Public Health nurses was held at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs

2023-2027 Strategic Plan

El Paso County Public Health's Strategic Plan is a strong framework that guides our agency work. In alignment with the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) and the National Association of County and City Officials (NACCHO), our strategic plan provides a clear picture of where our organization is headed, what we plan to achieve, and the methods by which we will accomplish this work.

Our Strategic Plan includes four strategic pillars that represent broad goal areas: workforce, health data and communications, community trust and engagement, and partnerships. Goals for each area are set annually and incorporated into a work plan that guides daily work.

Based on the Strategic Plan goals, notable achievements in 2024 include:



- **Emergency Preparedness and Response:** Facilitated Emergency Preparedness and Response Emergency Support Function-8 Collaborative and developed a collaborative approach to response activities for public health emergencies and mass casualty events.



- **Clinical Services Division:** Conducted training for clinical staff on adverse event response. Conducted bloodborne pathogens/infection control for all staff.



- **Communicable Disease:** Successfully facilitated and convened an internal stakeholder meeting in April 2024 to review expectations and roles for addressing zoonotic conditions ahead of the seasonal increase, meeting the target deadline.



- **Communications, Data and Analytics:** Launched a redesigned public health website, along with two new data dashboards on community health priorities.



- **Strategic Initiatives:** Successfully completed the 2023 Community Health Assessment (CHA).

2024-2028 Quality Improvement (QI) Plan

Quality Improvement (QI) is a structured, evidence-based approach to enhancing organizational processes and outcomes, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. At EPCPH, QI is important for meeting the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards and promoting high-quality, effective services for the community. Over the past year, significant strides have been made in revitalizing the QI team, broadening its representation across divisions, and enhancing its capacity to identify and implement meaningful process improvements.

In August 2024, EPCPH completed the development of the 2024-2028 QI Plan, which identifies actionable goals, objectives, and strategies designed to set a strong foundation for advancing agency-wide performance. Additionally, the QI team developed an “Introduction to Quality Improvement” self-paced training which is available to staff online in the agency’s training system. Access to this training supports staff in understanding the importance and impact of QI within public health. Together, these efforts strengthen EPCPH’s ability to innovate, address challenges, and continuously improve the quality of services delivered to the community.

Overview of Grants/Contracts

Each year, EPCPH focuses on evaluating and increasing funding streams to cover costs to meet statutory requirements, paired with increasing service demands and emerging issues due to El Paso County's steadily growing population.

Funding objectives are set through an iterative analysis of:

- Shifts in grant funding by program area due to changes at the state and/or national level.
- Community health needs as outlined in the Community Health Assessment.
- Emergent issues.
- Impact of COVID-specific grants ending, including the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funds.

Sustaining an agile and resilient public health workforce remains a top priority. This is paramount as funding shifted in 2024, with the sunset of COVID-specific grants such as ARPA. To successfully adapt to these shifts, EPCPH strategically aligned current grant funds to ensure sustained support and minimize disruptions to programming, while continuing to aggressively seek out new funding opportunities.

In 2024, EPCPH was successful in securing \$849,588 in new grant funding. This funding also includes a third year of funding for the CDC A2 Foundational Capabilities grant, a collaboration as a sub-award recipient for the Region 16 Opioid funding, and a Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Office of Public Health Practice, Planning and Local Partnership (OPHP) Rapid Grant. In alignment with the agency's strategic plan, this award will impact our communities in the following areas:

- Continuity of service and support for clients served through the Women, Infants and Children program through no disruption in capacity as state funding shifted.
- Expanded capacity of the agency to meet the needs of the retail food sector through sustained funding of Retail Food Program staff while anticipating a state-level review of retail food fees with anticipated increases in late 2025.
- Professional development aligned to program needs funded through the CDC and CDPHE grant sources.
- Expansion of the capacity of the Data & Analytics team to conduct qualitative analysis of substance use trends as part of a collaborative partnership with Colorado State University.
- Assessment of fees to cover cost of service delivery.

The primary focus of current grants has been to support public health infrastructure and staff, particularly during the successful transition of personnel tied to grants that concluded in 2024. EPCPH secured funding to maintain 22 full-time positions across the agency through the CDC Workforce Funding, with an annual allocation of \$2,928,344. This funding will address emergent personnel needs and support programmatic requirements, particularly for the Care Coordination Program.

EPCPH has also secured continued funding totaling \$7,278,6578 through the CDC Public Health Infrastructure grant, which is a five-year grant set to close on Nov. 30, 2027. As EPCPH looks to 2025, the agency will continue to seek funding to support and sustain agency infrastructure, including monitoring current trends driving the funding and grant landscape. An analysis of grant forecasting highlights the follow two areas which will drive future grant opportunities: partnerships and multi-sector collaboration and innovation to expand outreach impact and health outcomes.

Photo (Below): All Staff Training at Public Health South



ASSESSMENT, PLANNING, DATA & COMMUNICATIONS

El Paso County Public Health launches data dashboards

EPCPH's Data & Analytics program is pioneering new and innovative methods to enhance transparency and increase access to local data. In February 2024, the team launched two cutting-edge dashboards that feature data visualizations for two critical health issues outlined in the Community Health Assessment: suicide and overdose.

The dashboards—which provide a more comprehensive look at these complex public health issues—include information on counts and rates over time, in addition to breakdowns by sex, race/ethnicity, age, type or manner and more. The overdose dashboard also features a specific section on fentanyl to highlight the role it has played in overdose deaths.

Launch of new, modernized EPCPH website

In EPCPH's core values of innovation, collaboration, and transparency, EPCPH unveiled a sleek, modern public website in the first quarter of 2024. In developing the new site, the Communications team prioritized ease of use, accessibility, and intuitive navigation. A reflection of the Strategic Plan, the primary goal of the new site is to enhance access to public health information and resources for the community. By offering a more efficient platform, EPCPH's to streamline the user experience and provide top-tier service to the residents of El Paso County.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION, INVESTIGATION AND CONTROL



EPCPH and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) host Sixth annual Colorado Epidemiology Conference in El Paso County

This year EPCPH and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment co-hosted the sixth annual Colorado Epidemiology Conference in El Paso County. The conference, which brings together local and state epidemiologists and public health professionals, is held annually to share important data, best practices and trends regarding research and emergent public health issues in Colorado. This year's conference bore particular significance, as it marked the first time the conference included a virtual component, allowing greater reach and participation from across the state.

During this year's conference, two sessions highlighted work from EPCPH team members:

- Mother's Day is for sharing moments, not microbes: A norovirus outbreak investigation associated with a restaurant, Colorado, 2023
- An epidemiologist's guide to interpreting sensitivity, specificity, and predictive value of laboratory tests

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) response

Throughout 2024, El Paso County experienced an increase in pertussis (whooping cough) cases, primarily in school settings. Pertussis is a highly contagious vaccine-preventable illness which affects the respiratory tract (nose, throat and lungs) of infected individuals. Symptoms begin like the common cold but over the course of two weeks, individuals start to develop uncontrolled coughing fits. Pertussis can be an extreme illness, especially for infants under one year of age. Complications can range from an ear infection, pneumonia, lung collapse, seizures, brain damage and in severe cases it has the potential to be fatal.

Under statute, it is the responsibility of local health departments to investigate pertussis within one working day after identification or clinical suspicion in an attempt to mitigate how many people get the disease, prevent further spread and assist with proper care. The EPCPH Communicable Disease team accomplished this work throughout the year by providing health alerts to medical providers; working closely with school partners to provide education, information and recommendations regarding pertussis; and provided outreach to families to ensure individuals who were ill were connected to appropriate treatment. The team also followed up with close contacts of sick individuals to recommend preventative medication in hopes of preventing and limiting further spread.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASE BY THE NUMBERS



9,660

IMMUNIZATIONS
PROVIDED

233

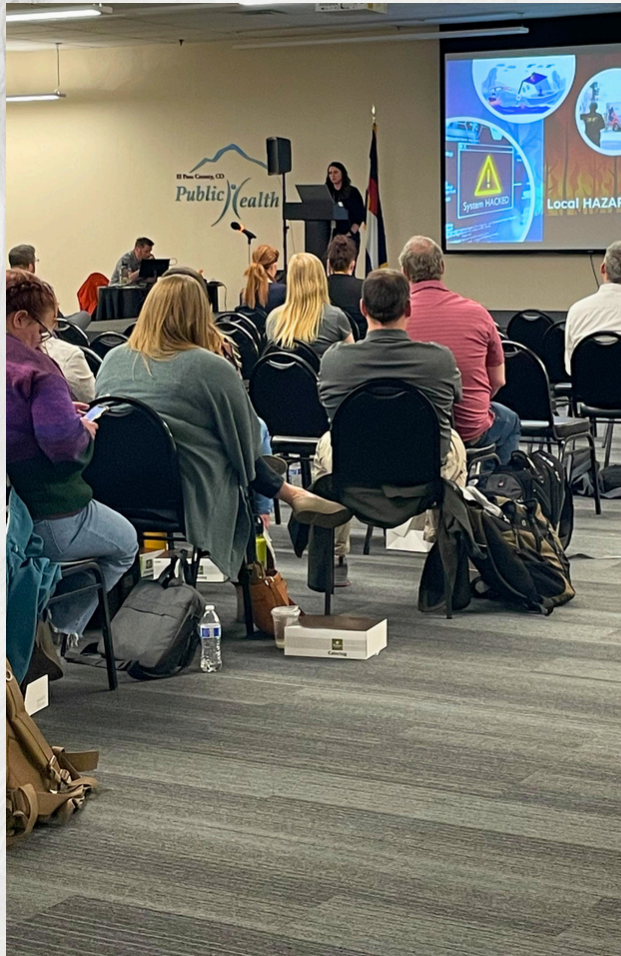
CONFIRMED
INFECTIOUS DISEASE
OUTBREAKS

27

ACTIVE AND LATENT
TUBERCULOSIS CASES
TREATED BY EPCPH

2,770

TOTAL
INVESTIGATIONS
COMPLETED BY
COMMUNICABLE
DISEASE



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE



Measles tabletop exercise

In November 2024, numerous team members from programs across the agency participated in a Measles Tabletop Exercise (TTX) designed to simulate EPCPH's response to a measles outbreak. These collaborative exercises provide valuable insights, helping to identify strengths, potential gaps, weaknesses, and solutions in the agency's emergency response capabilities. This is essential in improving public health emergency planning to ensure staff are proactively prepared to respond to the needs of the community.

"Such exercises are a crucial component of our agency's ongoing efforts to enhance preparedness for potential outbreaks within our jurisdiction," said Emergency Preparedness and Response Division Manager Janel McNair. "They offer a collaborative environment to review response procedures, allowing us to systematically discuss our strategies so we can act swiftly and effectively in the event of a real-world emergency."

The exercise provided a key opportunity to assess current response capabilities, while identifying challenges that could emerge in the event of an outbreak.

Photo Above: Measles Tabletop Exercise

Opposite Page: EPR in action

ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH

Implementation of fee modernization

In January 2024, EPCPH implemented a new fee structure for numerous Environmental Health programs. With over 750,000 residents in a county experiencing rapid growth, the demand for EPCPH's Environmental Health services significantly increased since the last fee structure evaluation which took place in 2016. The timely update to the fee structure aimed to enhance service quality for the community, reduce response times for services, and aid in meeting the increasing demands of the public health workforce.

The adjustment in fees allowed for the addition of five full-time employees in the Environmental Health Division to address the growing needs of the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS), Child Care and Body Art programs, and Retail Food Special Events programs.

One year into these changes, the modernized fee structure has yielded substantial impact, including significantly reduced turnaround times. Previously, OWTS had a turnaround time of two to six weeks for reviewing permits and applications. Now, with the support of new staff, the team has improved their service by reducing the response time to seven to 10 business days. Other programs have also benefited significantly, with improved food safety oversight for retail food special events, increased high-risk consultations for Child Care Facilities, quicker review times for Body Art Applications, and a more equitable distribution of workload in the water recreation field.

Environmental Health team brings Colorado Environmental Health Association (CEHA) to Colorado Springs

This year, the EPCPH Environmental Health team hosted the Colorado Environmental Health Association Annual Conference at the Great Wolf Lodge in Colorado Springs from Sept. 11-13. The conference—which included 10 exhibitors, 83 speakers and approximately 260 attendees—featured a comprehensive program with education tracks on everything from food safety to water quality to child care/school safety and more. EPCPH Environmental Health Division Director Kat McGarvy stated, “The conference was thoughtfully organized and provided a wealth of information that can be applied to real-world scenarios and help all environmental health professionals excel.”

During this year's conference, EPCPH team members presented and highlighted:

- Initiating an operation and maintenance program: Challenges faced and lessons learned.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS

2,431

RETAIL FOOD
ESTABLISHMENT
INSPECTIONS

291

RETAIL FOOD
ESTABLISHMENT
PLAN REVIEWS

2,125

INDIVIDUALS
PROVIDED FOOD
SAFETY
EDUCATION
CLASSES

256

CHILD CARE
INSPECTIONS

29

SCHOOL SAFETY
INSPECTIONS

123

BODY ART
ESTABLISHMENT
INSPECTIONS

307

PUBLIC POOL
INSPECTIONS

6,414

WATER TESTS

439

ONSITE
WASTEWATER
PERMITS
ISSUED

155

AIR QUALITY
PERMITS
ISSUED



Photo:
Environmental
Health Special
Mock
Inspection
Event

CHRONIC DISEASE, INJURY PREVENTION, AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROMOTION

Pikes Peak Rising 360 Launch

In July 2024, EPCPH launched an innovative new digital behavioral health platform, [Pikes Peak Rising 360](#), (PPR360), with the goal of increasing access to behavioral health resources.

The platform is a pilot project which supports regional efforts to enhance the mental health and well-being of all El Paso County residents. PPR360 is an online, web-based platform which provides thousands of expert-vetted resources and scientifically validated assessments, all of which are adaptable to different learning styles. It is easily accessible and offers hundreds of topics and approaches all in one place while allowing individuals to learn new skills, understand their own mental health, and browse the library of thousands of resources, videos, podcasts, apps, books, articles, and more.

Between the dates of July 10 and Dec. 27, 2024, Pikes Peak Rising 360 saw at least 4,740 unique users who visited the site more than 5,850 times. Those users engaged with the platform for an average of 4:45 mins. The users took 1,475 assessments and viewed 110 topics. Over 190 people registered for an account on the site.

EPCPH utilizes a data-driven approach to help improve health, and PPR360 is one of several strategies with a direct tie to the 2023 Community Health Assessment (CHA), which utilizes systematic, comprehensive data analysis to describe the overall health of El Paso County communities. With behavioral health as the overarching framework of the CHA, Pikes Peak Rising 360 represents one key strategy EPCPH is implementing to effectively combine actionable local data and community partnerships to quickly mobilize and expand access to vital mental health supports.

CARE COORDINATION

1,648

REFERRALS FOR CARE COORDINATION FOR CHILDREN
AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS

75

OUTREACH

22

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Naloxone (Narcan) kits made available to El Paso County communities

Opioid overdose is a complex, multi-faceted crisis, impacted by numerous factors including substance misuse, mental health issues, and limited access to mental health care and treatment resources. EPCPH utilizes several strategies to combat the opioid crisis, with prevention being the ultimate goal. In an effort to pair prevention efforts with acute response resources, EPCPH also implemented a naloxone kit distribution program with the goal of helping to save lives. Just as a first aid kit is essential in any household, a single Narcan nasal spray kit, containing two doses, can be used in the event of a known or suspected opioid overdose. Opioids such as heroin, fentanyl, oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, and morphine are examples of substances that can lead to overdose. In 2024, EPCPH distributed 1,500 Narcan kits, totaling 3,000 doses. These kits were made available to the community through a variety of channels, including EPCPH locations at the Citizens Service Center, Valley Hi, and Public Health South; walk-in clients at the front desk; and numerous behavioral health and community partners across the region. By engaging a broad network of community stakeholders and prioritizing awareness and education, the goal is to expand access to naloxone, while also enhancing and building out more robust prevention initiatives.

VITAL RECORDS BY THE NUMBERS

El Paso County Public Health Vital Records & Statistics provides certified copies of birth and death records for vital events that occurred in Colorado.

2024 BIRTHS AND DEATHS IN EL PASO COUNTY



19,964

BIRTH CERTIFICATES ISSUED



38,084

DEATH CERTIFICATES ISSUED

MATERNAL, CHILD, ADOLESCENT AND FAMILY HEALTH

ECPH Congenital syphilis program at the El Paso County Criminal Justice Center

In response to an increase in cases of congenital syphilis, ECPH's Reproductive Health Clinic (RHC) was awarded funding in 2023 for an innovative new syphilis prevention grant, with renewed funding and expanded capacity to 2024 to further support and advance this vital work.

The Syphilis Prevention Grant aims to reduce new cases of congenital syphilis by screening, identifying, and treating syphilis in women of reproductive age at the Criminal Justice Center (CJC). In its first year, funding allowed ECPH to provide a trained public health nurse to provide STI (sexually transmitted infections) screening and treatment protocols in the CJC in coordination with CJC's clinical team. In 2024, the program was expanded with the addition of a second public health nurse, allowing ECPH to increase the frequency of screening and the number of patients reached.

The Syphilis Prevention Grant has enabled ECPH to be one of the first in the nation to utilize innovative technologies for patient screening through the use of a rapid syphilis/HIV test. ECPH public health nurses, in coordination with the CJC's clinical team, are able to identify and provide real-time patient care and treatment, improving access to care and allowing for better health outcomes for pregnant women and babies. Implementation of testing technologies for syphilis/HIV has garnered national attention, allowing ECPH the opportunity to lead and model best practices across the nation.

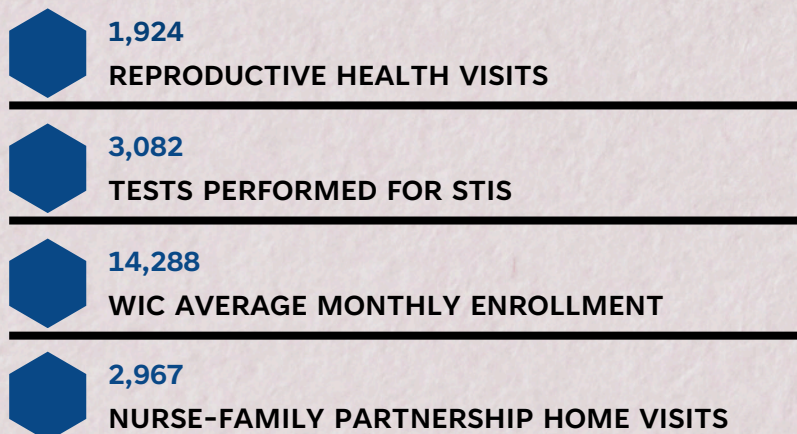
In 2024, care was offered to a total of 790 patients through the program. Of those, 449 patients were tested for gonorrhea/chlamydia, 505 patients were tested for HIV/syphilis, and 89 patients were given pregnancy tests. ECPH nurses also built strong community partnerships that helped patients successfully transition out of the CJC, providing continuity of care and a connection to key resources.

Community Voice Collaborative

Convened by EPCPH's Maternal and Child Health program, the Community Voice Collaborative (CVC) brings together community members, families, and providers who serve children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN). These children often require services beyond standard care, yet they face challenges accessing quality health care.

Key barriers include a lack of resources, insufficient availability of services and specialists, and the complexities of the health care system. Established in April 2023 with six caregivers and six community members, the collaborative was created to guide the strategic direction of the Maternal and Child Health Program. By October 2024, the CVC expanded to over 30 community members who help advocate for children with special health care needs while enhancing the public's knowledge and understanding of the challenges of accessing high-quality services.

The increased collaboration within the community has led to the development of key strategies to support all families, to include improving access to respite care, child care, and recreational activities.





IMPACT SPOTLIGHT: CHIPETA ELEMENTARY

Chipeta Assistant Principal Jennifer Breeding called the partnership, “the most relevant work I have personally done with an entire staff in a very long time.” She added, “The feedback we got from staff was very encouraging and we have seen evidence of learning and application across the building. People are using common language and there is a greater sense of empathy with students and each other – I think that’s incredible.”

Chipeta Park Elementary Principal Tiffany Brown said she was impressed by the program’s research-based approach, the way it was tailored to the needs of her school, and the helpful materials. “We especially appreciated the one page, at-a-glance resource/references that ensure staff can access and remember to use these tools and techniques in the moment!” she said. “It was priceless!”

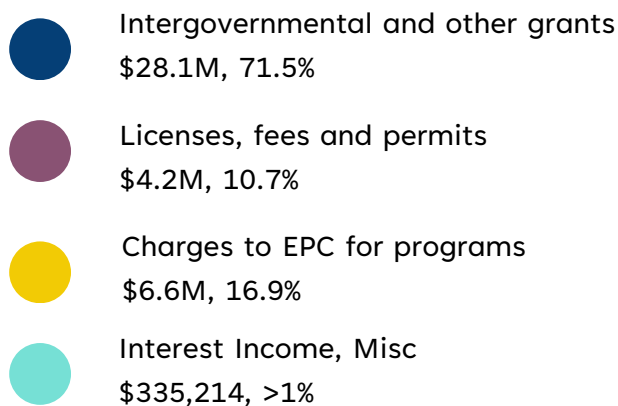
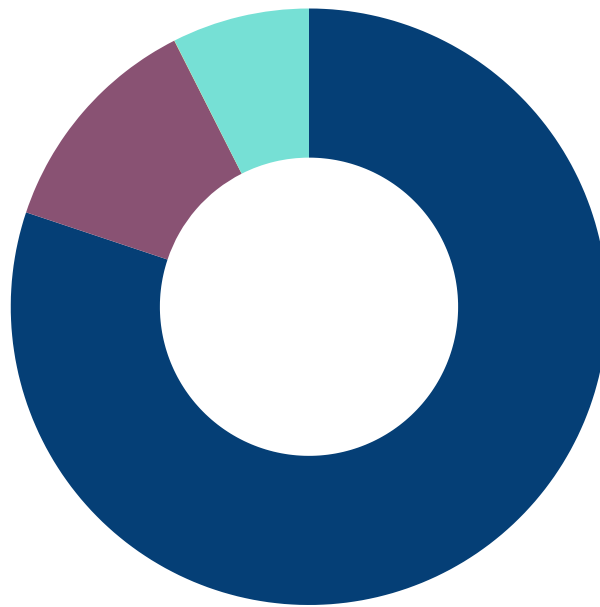
D11 and El Paso County Public Health collaboration

EPCPH’s approach to fostering a healthier community is grounded in collaboration, where the needs of children are identified and addressed through strategies focused on building strong relationships between public health and local communities. This effort aims to support the well-being of children and youth. Through deep-rooted partnerships with Colorado Springs School District 11, EPCPH works to address the unique needs of the student population by providing training for teachers and staff. These sessions focus on the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and offer practical strategies to prevent or mitigate the effects of toxic stress caused by childhood trauma.

Since the partnership with D11 began in 2019, EPCPH staff and D11 staff have facilitated a multitude of trainings. In 2024 alone, nine elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school received this comprehensive support. Training was, and is, provided for all early education staff (this is ongoing every year), community liaisons, all new staff entering the district, and the Academic Leadership Team. This cultivated relationship resulted in MCH and community partners being celebrated and recognized at the January 24, 2024, District 11 Regular Board meeting. In addition, the successes of this partnership were highlighted through presentations at two state conferences, Strengthening Colorado Families and Communities and Public Health in the Rockies. This effort speaks to the importance of valuing partnerships where combined resources and perspectives lead to better health outcomes for children and youth.

FINANCIALS

According to a 2022 national profile of local health departments by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), local health departments serving populations of 500,000 to 999,999 have on average 309 full-time equivalents (FTEs). In 2024, El Paso County Public Health had 197 authorized FTEs.



The pie chart above breaks down the actual revenues for Intergovernmental and other grants, Licenses, fees and permits, Charges to EPC for programs and Interest Income, Misc. Intergovernmental and other grants equates to \$28.1 million, 71.5%. Licenses, fees and permits equates to \$4.2 million, 10.7%. Charges to EPC for programs equates to \$6.6 million, 16.9%. Interest Income, Misc. equates to \$335,214, <1%.



1675 W. Garden of the Gods Rd., Suite 2044
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
(719) 578-3199
ElPasoCountyHealth.org