

EL PASO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROMOTION

Colorado identifies Chronic Disease, Injury Prevention, and Behavioral Health Promotion as one of several foundational public health services essential for strong and healthy communities. El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) operationalizes this service locally by implementing strategies that strengthen well-being, build resilience, and create environments where residents can thrive. Behavioral health promotion is a central component of this foundational service. It prioritizes upstream, preventive approaches that support mental health and prevent substance misuse. This document outlines how EPCPH integrates behavioral health promotion across its programs and initiatives. Its purpose is to clearly describe our current activities and priorities, identify opportunities for alignment, and reinforce collaboration that advances behavioral health outcomes throughout the County.



MENTAL HEALTH

Programs that support emotional well-being and resilience

- **Collaborate with schools and caregivers on training & resources:** Provide training, tools and resources for school professionals and caregivers on how to foster strong, trusting relationships with youth, especially with youth who may have experienced trauma.
- **Screenings as part of direct client care:** EPCPH routinely screens clients enrolled in certain clinical services for depression and anxiety.
- **Referral to services:** EPCPH provides community referrals to support the emotional, behavioral and physical well-being of children and youth with special healthcare needs. EPCPH staff also assess mental health concerns as part of routine clinical care and provide referrals, resources, and encouragement to seek behavioral healthcare when needs are identified.
- **Supporting behavioral health response in emergencies:** Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8 addresses behavioral health needs during disasters and emergencies. EPCPH supports ESF8 through coordination and integration of behavioral health considerations into preparedness, response, and recovery activities.
- **Data:** EPCPH publishes suicide data on its publicly available dashboard, along with convening the statutorily required Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT). CFRT reviews all injury, violence-related and undetermined youth deaths. Prevention recommendations, trends and demographic data from case reviews are used to implement and support local prevention efforts.



SUBSTANCE USE

Programs that support prevention, intervention, resources and referrals

- **Clinical interventions:** Clients seeking clinical services at EPCPH are given opportunities to identify substance use or other concerns that may affect a patient's health, safety, or ability to engage in care. This includes education and connection to appropriate resources. EPCPH staff also screen clients enrolled in Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) for substance use as part of ongoing assessment throughout pregnancy and early parenthood. Nurses provide education on the health and safety impacts of substance use, support clients in identifying opportunities for behavior change, and connect clients to treatment and other community resources.
- **Data:** EPCPH publishes overdose fatality data on its public-facing dashboard, along with engaging in pilot initiatives to further explore the context around overdose deaths. EPCPH also produces community data assessments such as the Tobacco-Focused Community Profile and the comprehensive Community Health Assessment.
- **Prevention:** Recognizing that mental health and substance use are interconnected, EPCPH strengthens its approach by supporting tailored tobacco cessation approaches for people with conditions like depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders. Additionally, tobacco prevention includes joint education efforts to equip schools, families and providers with tools to address addiction in the context of mental health. More broadly, EPCPH supports community-level coalitions to advance substance use prevention, such as the DUI taskforce, by providing data and supporting community outreach. EPCPH is also working to evolve a tobacco-focused coalition into a more encompassing substance use prevention coalition.

Programs that contribute to this work at EPCPH include Nurse-Family Partnership, Maternal and Child Health, Substance Use Prevention, Clinical Services, Injury and Violence Prevention, Data & Analytics, Emergency Preparedness and Response, and Women, Infants and Children.