

Public Health Director's Report
Prepared by: Jennifer Ludwig
Date Prepared: March 15, 2024
Dates Covered: February 19 – March 14, 2024

Equity and Engagement

- 1) Upcoming Events, Opportunities, and Trainings
 - a. OPHP (Office of Public Health Practice, Planning, and Local Partnerships) has partnered with RIHEL (Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership) to offer **Leadership in Action** to all Colorado Board of Health Members. Please check your email for dates and how to register.
 - b. Join ACPH Staff from Sexual Health, COVID-19, Healthy Beverages and Tobacco Cessation for the **Aurora Wellness Community Health Fair** hosted by the [Aurora Wellness Community](#) on Saturday, March 30, 2024 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm (open house) at the [Aurora Science & Tech Middle School](#).
 - c. Join ACPH Staff from COVID-19 and Harm Reduction programs in supporting the **Aurora Economic Opportunity Coalition Community Health Event** on Tuesday April 16, 2024 11am-2pm at Dayton Street Labor Center, 1521 Dayton Street, Aurora, CO 80010.
 - d. The Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners will proclaim April 1-7 as **National Public Health Week** to celebrate public health professionals on March 26th at 9:30am at the Arapahoe County Administration Building, East Hearing Room, 5334 S. Prince Street, Littleton.
 - e. ACPH Staff and Leadership will present the **Community Health Assessment** overview and finding to the Arapahoe County Board of Commissioners on April 23, 2024 at 2:00PM at the Arapahoe County Administration Building, West Hearing Room, 5334 S. Prince Street, Littleton.

Program Updates:

Partnerships, Planning and Community Health Promotion

- 1) Partnership with Aurora NAACP to fill overdose prevention education gap

In partnership with the Aurora NAACP, the PPCHP Division submitted a grant application to the Opioid Response Strategic Impact Grant administered by the Colorado Attorney General's Office. If funded, this grant would be used by the NAACP and ACPH to develop and disseminate an overdose prevention resource and communications toolkit designed specifically by, with, and for African Americans, filling an important national gap in overdose prevention education.

- 2) Increasing access to recovery-friendly employment

PPCHP partnered with Bridge House Ready to Work program in the development of two competitive state-level grant applications. If awarded, these funds will be used to expand capacity and increase countywide connections in support of Ready to Work's case management to individuals experiencing homelessness and chronic unemployment, including training and linkages to recovery-friendly workplaces.

- 3) Tobacco prevention and cessation with and for Spanish-speaking communities

Following a competitive selection process, PPCHP has selected Sheridan Rising Together for Equity to receive grant funding administered by ACPH through the State Tobacco Education and Prevention Program. Sheridan Rising seeks to improve health equity for systematically underserved residents by intentionally centering the community experience. Through this grant, the organization will train youth and adults to deliver prevention and cessation education within Spanish-speaking communities.

Nutrition Division

1) Staff Attend 2024 National WIC Association Policy Conference

- a. Jill Bonczynski, Director of Nutrition, and Kathleen Rebollo, Special Projects Coordinator, attended the 2024 National WIC Association Policy Conference. Through this conference attendees learned about important policy, program and legislative issues and updates for the WIC Program and their clients. At the end of the conference, local and state Colorado WIC staff partnered together at virtual hill visits with our Congressional Members. Jill and Kathleen, along with CDPHE WIC state staff were able to visit with Representative Crow's



staff (pictured) and Senator Bennett's staff on the WIC Program and local impacts of the program. On Friday, March 8, the government came to a funding agreement for federal fiscal year 2024 (FFY24). The spending package includes an additional \$1 billion for the WIC program, which removes the risk of waitlists and ensures the current Cash Value Benefit (CVB) for fruits and vegetables is maintained at the higher (\$26, \$47, \$52) levels.

Community Health Nursing Division

1) Immunizations

- a. During the month of February, the program held 24 clinics and administered 1,449 total vaccines. To date, this is the most vaccines we have given in a month.
- b. At the February Shots for Tots clinic at the MLK Library, we saw 31 clients and turned away 21 clients. We gave a total of 165 vaccines. Due to the influx of migrants who came to the clinic, the majority of the children needed 7+ shots to be up-to-date with school requirements.
- c. In addition to the standing monthly Shots for Tots clinic, we held off-site clinics at the following locations:
 - i. Vaughn Elementary, 2/7
 - ii. Innovative Housing, 2/23
 - iii. Abilene Migrant Shelter, 2/21 and 2/23
 - iv. Tollgate Elementary, 2/14, 2/21, and 2/28 (note: heavy migrant population)
- d. We also provided outreach to the following community groups:
 - i. Charles Hay World School, School Wellness night, 150 attendees

- ii. Colorado Finest High School, Multilingual Family Night, 50 attendees
 - iii. Arapahoe Early Childhood Council Conference, 250 attendees
 - e. We submitted a grant application to Health Care Policy and Finance (HCPF) with the hopes of purchasing a mobile vaccination van.
- 2) Sexual Health
 - a. Beginning syphilis community engagement focus groups in partnership with It Takes a Village.
 - b. We are working with Communications on a community-responsive digital media campaign to promote testing and treatment services for syphilis among LGBTQ+ populations in Arapahoe County, with primary strategies including dating app and social media advertising utilizing sex-positive, tongue-in-cheek messaging designed to resonate with the target audience.
- 3) Harm Reduction
 - a. Thank you to the Board of Health members who were able to attend the Prevention Point launch on February 27, 2024. Prevention Point will be strategically located at community-based organizations within Arapahoe County every Thursday starting the first week of March. Services will expand as need arises.
 - b. The Immunization Program and Harm Reduction Program paired up to provide Meningitis outbreak outreach on 2/14 and 2/21.

Health Protection and Response

- 1) Environmental Health Programs
 - a. Water Quality Program staff gave a presentation at the annual education conference for Colorado Professionals of Onsite Wastewater (CPOW) on February 8, 2024. Attendees at the conference included septic installers, inspectors, cleaners, onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS) designers, engineers, and regulators from across the state. The presentation explored the design considerations for septic systems when an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is added to a home. As the amended land development code to allow ADUs in unincorporated Arapahoe County was passed last fall, this presentation discussed the rising popularity of ADUs and its impact on septic systems in Arapahoe County. We also partnered with the Water Quality Program Managers from El Paso and Boulder counties to discuss the unique challenges and requirements in their respective counties. Arapahoe County installers and engineers were appreciative of the relevant discussion as more homeowners are exploring the option of adding an ADU to their home.
 - b. Inspired by lessons learned in the Arapahoe County “Digital Transformation Academy”, Consumer Protection staff have reimagined the mobile food unit licensing renewal process. Mobile unit operators now submit a revised and more customer focused “renewal packet” which is reviewed prior to inspecting a mobile unit itself. Once an operator has been notified their packet is complete, they are then invited to schedule an onsite inspection at either the Willow or Altura office locations. The revised process has improved the customer experience and created a more thorough and accountable inspection process for everyone.
 - c. On March 16, 2024, CDPHE will formally adopt the 2022 FDA Model Food Code, which provides the regulatory foundation for all retail food inspections. By extension, Arapahoe County will similarly adopt the updated version of the code. While operators will notice little change, the updated code ensures that emerging food safety concerns are addressed and accounted for as part of operations. Also, with support from the funds from the FDA Retail Flexible Funding Model Grant Program, Arapahoe County staff will continue to seek

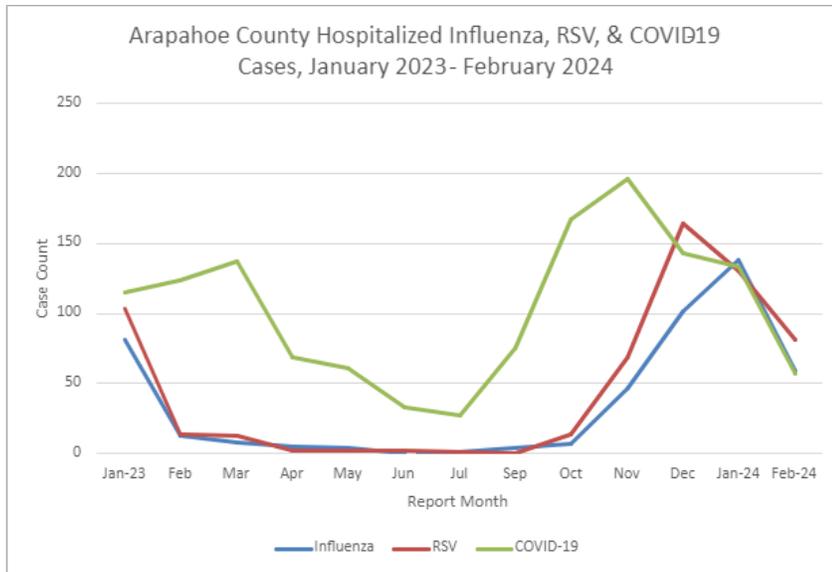
innovative ways to achieve compliance all while remaining true to our education oriented and collaborative approach.

- d. For the 2024 licensing season, 59 civil penalties totaling \$29,500 have been issued for non-payment for a required retail food license. As of March 8, 2024, 28 of the 59 facilities have not yet paid their license and civil penalty. For comparison, 51 civil penalties (\$25,500) for nonpayment of license were issued in 2023. All Body Art operations have paid their 2024 license fees.
 - e. The Onsite Wastewater (Septic) team has been proactive in contacting realtor groups and providing presentations for the Transfer of Title program. A Transfer of Title inspection must be conducted before the sale of a home that is connected to a septic system. In partnering with local realtors, our team is hoping to continue to expand the reach of this program this upcoming year and help assure a more efficient and customer centered process for all parties involved in the Transfer of Title.
- 2) COVID-19 Program
- a. The COVID-19 Program is fully funded by the ELC 2.1 grant, with the grant period originally scheduled to end on April 30, 2024. A no-cost extension was offered and accepted, with a new final end date of July 31, 2024. The extension allows three additional months to provide education in the community, distribution of COVID-19 test kits, and the thoughtful integration of activities to be sustained into the permanent ACPH program structures.
- 3) Emergency Preparedness and Response
- a. ACPH has finalized the Public Health Emergency Operations Base Plan (PHEOP) as required by State Statute. The PHEOP formalizes the command structure and processes used to lead the response to public health emergencies, including the use of the National Incident Management System framework, the integration of health equity into all response operations, and resource acquisition during a response. The plan also lays out the foundation of how ACPH responds to any incident with public health consequences impacting the county and in support of other response partners. This document was developed in coordination with partners across ACPH divisions and across county departments to include the Office of Emergency Management, the Communications Team, and the County Attorney's Office.

Communicable Disease Report

- 1) Measles
- a. Measles cases are on the rise across the United States, including several outbreaks across the country. As of March 7, 2024, 45 measles cases were reported by 17 states. No cases have been reported in Colorado in 2024. The Communicable Disease Epidemiology Program, Immunization Program, and Communications have collaborated to develop social media and partner messaging to notify Arapahoe County residents of the increase in cases and to encourage vaccination ahead of spring break travel due to cases being reported in popular travel destinations such as Florida, California, and Arizona. We also shared this messaging with our school and childcare partners to help disseminate the information to families. Arapahoe County Public Health continues to monitor the increase in cases and outbreaks nationally so we are positioned to respond should we have a case or exposure within our jurisdiction.
- 2) Respiratory Season Update

- a. CDC anticipates that total hospitalizations for influenza, RSV, and COVID-19 will decline but continues to remain elevated at the time of this report. Nationwide, current levels of emergency department visits for viral respiratory illnesses are stable or decreasing across most areas of the country. However, further increases in one or more viral respiratory diseases are still possible and influenza has recently been increasing in some parts of the county.
- 3) Influenza
- a. Surveillance for the 2023-2024 influenza season officially began on October 1, 2023, and will continue through May 18, 2024. Statewide influenza hospitalizations have been declining since the last week of December. Arapahoe County influenza hospitalizations peaked in January followed by a decline in February.
 - b. The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) [interim estimates of the seasonal influenza vaccine effectiveness](#) were released on February 29, 2024. Analysis of data from four vaccine effectiveness (VE) networks estimated interim pediatric influenza VE was 59%–67% in outpatient settings and 52%–61% against influenza-associated hospitalization. Interim adult influenza VE was 33%–49% in outpatient settings and 41%–44% against influenza-associated hospitalization. These data indicate that the 2023-24 seasonal influenza vaccine is effective at reducing the risk of influenza-associated outpatient visits and hospitalizations.
- 4) RSV
- a. Surveillance for the 2023-2024 RSV season officially began on October 1, 2023. Rates of statewide RSV hospitalizations appear to be decreasing since the end of January. RSV hospitalizations in Arapahoe County peaked in December and have declined through February.
- 5) COVID-19
- a. On March 1, the CDC released [updated COVID-19 guidance](#) to align more closely with other respiratory viruses. This guidance removes the recommendation for a 5-day isolation with COVID-19 infection and encourages people to stay home when they are sick with any respiratory symptoms until they have experienced overall symptom improvement for 24 hours and have been fever-free without the use of fever reducing medication for 24 hours. This guidance is for community prevention activities and does not apply to healthcare settings, congregate living facilities, long-term care facilities, and schools and childcares at this time. The CDC and CDPHE are in the process of updating guidance recommendations for these settings. We are awaiting these federal and state updates prior to making changes in local guidance to ensure we align with both federal and state recommendations and best practices.
 - b. COVID-19 hospitalizations in Arapahoe County peaked in November and have continued to decline through February.



C.

Social Media and Communications

Prevention Point Launch

[Sentinel](#)

[Colorado Community Media](#)

[Colorado Sun](#)

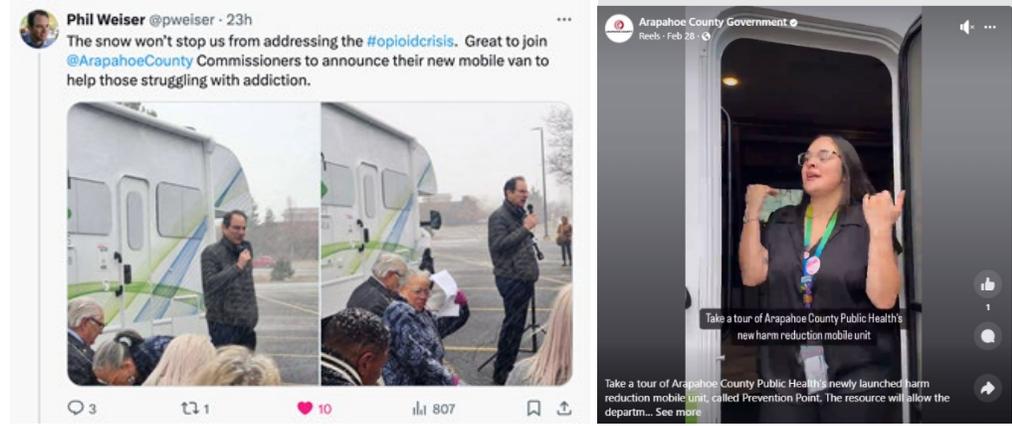
[KDVR 31/KWGN 2](#)

[KUSA 9](#)

[KCNC 4](#)

[KMGH 7](#)

[BNN](#)





Arapahoe County Public Health

2d · 🌐

Our harm reduction vehicle's second stop today is at the [Town of Bennett, Colorado Town Hall](#)! We got to network with community officials and other partners, speaking about how we can best serve the eastern portion of Arapahoe County! Learn more: www.arapahoeco.gov/news_detail_T13_R445.php



Arapahoe County Government

1d · 🌐



Office of Health Equity partners with Arapahoe County Public Health [What's the 411? February 2024 \(constantcontact.com\)](http://constantcontact.com)

Other Social Media Posts:



Arapahoe County Public Health

4d · 🌐

Valentine's Day may be over, but sexual health is important year-round! Make sure you swipe right on the perfect contraception. Pills, patches, shots, implants, IUDs, and emergency contraception — these all prevent unplanned pregnancies, but condoms and dental dams can also reduce the risk of STIs.

📖 Find tips for choosing the birth control that's right for you: <https://ow.ly/yoeP50Qakvm...> See more



Legislative Update

Bill	Status	Positions Taken	Overview
SB24-22 Regulate flavored tobacco	Introduced <u>UPDATE:</u> <u>Postponed indefinitely</u>	CALPHO: Support BOCC: Support CCAT: Support	Allows a board of county commissioners to adopt an ordinance or resolution to: Regulate the distribution of cigarettes, tobacco products, or nicotine products; and Prohibit the distribution or sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, or nicotine products, including flavored cigarettes, flavored tobacco products, or flavored nicotine products.
HB 24-1028 Overdose Prevention Centers	Introduced, 1/10 <u>Second reading:</u> <u>3/15/24</u>		Allows a municipality to authorize the operation of an overdose prevention center within the municipality's boundaries for the purpose of saving the lives of persons at risk of preventable overdoses.
SB24-043 Raw Milk Sales	Introduced, 1/12 <u>No movement</u>	CALPHO: Oppose BOCC: Amend	Authorizes a raw milk producer (producer) that registers with the department of public health and environment (department) to engage in direct-to-consumer sales of raw milk in the state if the producer complies with certain labeling, storage, handling, and transportation requirements.
HB24-1081 Regulation of the Sale of Sodium Nitrite	Introduced, 1/10 Engrossed 2/5 Reengrossed 2/6 <u>Hearing: 3/19</u>		The bill limits the sale or transfer of a product containing sodium nitrite in a concentration greater than 10% of the mass or volume of the product to commercial businesses that are verified to require a covered product.
SB 165: Air Quality Improvements	Hearing, 3/20	BOCC – monitor CALPHO – support	SB 165 would require the Air Quality Control Commission in CDPHE to adopt certain emission standards and rules for controlling emissions that result in pollutants
SB 166: Air Quality Enforcement	Hearing 3/20	BOCC – No position CALPHO – Support	SB 166 would focus on enforcement, including for repeat offenders. CDPHE would be required to assess civil penalties and require a root-cause analysis from repeat offenders, vs issuing a warning letter or other informal actions.
HB24-1359 Public Notification of Hazardous Chemical Releases	Hearing: 3/28	BOCC – No position, staff and lobby team working with bill sponsor CALPHO – oppose	Would create additional notification requirements for oil and gas operators in the event of a spill or release of a hazardous chemical. Within 24 hours of report submission, it would need to be shared with people located near the well site and through emergency notification systems.