

Public Health Director's Report  
Prepared by: Jennifer Ludwig  
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Dates Covered: September 12, 2025 – October 8, 2025

## **Mission Moments**

### 1) Nurse Liaison Program

Since the program relaunch on July 7, the nurse home visitation program known as the Nurse Liaison Program transitioned to a new co-responder service delivery model. At that time, our target engagement rate was 40%. Now, with the auto-referral model, NLP nurse home visitors are involved from the very beginning of a family's interaction with Human Services — and our engagement rate has held steady at an impressive **82%** since August 1! Achieving and maintaining this level of engagement is no small feat. It's a true reflection of the NLP program's dedication, skill, and meaningful relationships they've built with case workers and families alike.

Not only that, but the NLP team recognized a real need and took the initiative to launch **Ask the NLP Nurse Office Hours**. Each Thursday, NLP nurses are on-site at the CenterPoint (CPT) building to offer in-person consultation and support to department staff. Many of these conversations have led to referrals to NLP, allowing nurses to provide home visits to families identified by caseworkers as needing additional support during intake. To date, NLP home visitors have provided 34 in-person case consultations to case workers across Arapahoe County Department of Human Services during regularly scheduled office hours. This was a brilliant idea and a tremendous show of support for case workers, many of whom are new to the field and still learning to navigate complex, emotionally charged situations.

Not long ago, we were uncertain about the future of NLP and anxious about the changes ahead. Yet, in less than three months, this small but mighty team has turned this co-responder approach to nurse home visitation into a successful model for others to follow.

We have heard repeatedly from DHS administrators and case workers how deeply they appreciate the NLP team's expertise and partnership, and their professional, graceful, and compassionate approach to their work.

### 2) WIC Win at Baby Cafe

At a recent Baby Café, we welcomed 5 moms—12 people total including support partners and little ones. Early in the session, a mom arrived in tears, struggling with severe engorgement, plugged ducts, and pain. Thanks to Heather's quick help, conversation and peer support flowed while Grace was able to provide hands-on help for the mom and her husband. With the right flanges and a better pump setup, she left feeling both physically and emotionally relieved. Her words say it best:

"I came in tears because I was having issues exclusively pumping. The WIC team was amazing and knowledgeable. They were professional and kind to both my husband and me, and I left with both physical and mental relief."

This moment highlights the incredible breastfeeding support and teamwork our WIC program offers—creating a safe, welcoming space where families feel cared for and empowered.

### 3) School Inspection Program

Following extensive collaboration with seven school districts, private schools, and parochial schools, through webinars, mock inspections, resource development, communication flyers / postcards, and multiple partnership meetings with school personnel, Arapahoe County has officially begun regulatory high-risk school inspections. Beginning in September, staff from the Environmental Health Early Childhood and Schools Program conducted six high-risk inspections at Arapahoe County schools as part of our contractual obligations with CDPHE for delegated programs. As expected, common violations such as chemical inventory, storage, and disposal have emerged as priorities for correction. Due to the strong partnerships and proactive communication efforts, school personnel have shown a positive response to the School Regulations and associated inspections and are actively working to implement effective compliance strategies.

## **A. Program Updates**

### **Partnerships, Planning and Community Health Promotion**

#### 1) Community Engagement and Event Participation

Recent events: Aurora Public Schools Behavioral Health Event, Older Adult Safety Symposium, Longer Tables Littleton, Englewood Homeless Connect Event, Food Justice NW Aurora Fall Festival, 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Littleton Public Schools Community Resource Expo, Sheridan Celebrates, Resource Fair at Pickens Technical College, NW Aurora Community Resource Fair

Upcoming events: Solutions to Food and Nutrition Access: A community conversation at ABC Community Hub.

Please reach out to [Grace Soulen](#) or visit our [Community Engagement Event Request Form](#) to suggest upcoming outreach opportunities. **This initiative aligns with the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) cross-cutting objective to advance community engagement.**

#### 2) Street Fraternity Members Discuss Tobacco and Vape Prevention and Cessation

Thanks to an introduction from Board Member Shawn Davis, ACPH's Tobacco Prevention and Control Team joined youth at Street Fraternity on October 7 to share information and discussion on nicotine and vape prevention. The organization supports young men ages 14-25 in the East Colfax neighborhoods of Aurora and Denver who may experience obstacles to safety, independence, and community connection by helping create a space for building personal goals, positive leadership, and brotherhood. The 22 participants actively engaged in sharing questions and valuable insights on issues like unfair tobacco marketing to youth, nicotine and its impact on brain development, addiction, vape chemicals, and cessation resources. We look forward to continuing the partnership.

#### 3) Uniting to End Food Insecurity in the Tri Cities

Those who live, work, or play in Englewood, Littleton, and Sheridan are invited to a free community forum November 6 hosted by the Arapahoe County Food Security Coalition and South Metro Community Foundation. Arapahoe County Commissioner Carrie Warren-Gully will emcee the event, [Hungry for](#)

[Change: Uniting to End Food Insecurity in Our Community](#), at South Fellowship Community Church in Littleton. Leslie Levine, ACPH Sr. Community Health Promotion Specialist and Hungry for Change co-planner, looks forward to speaking at the event, which will highlight findings from a recent assessment of emergency food providers and include discussion on how each of us can help ensure no neighbor goes hungry regardless of age, race, or income. Additional supporters of the forum include South Fellowship Church, Nourish Meals on Wheels, Lift Up Littleton, Love Inc., Integrated Family Community Services, and Englewood Public Schools. **This initiative aligns with the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) objective to increase access to healthy, affordable food.**

#### 4) Now Hiring: Community Engagement Specialist (Food Systems)

ACPH is currently seeking a [Community Engagement Specialist](#) to lead efforts of the [Arapahoe Food Security Coalition](#) as it works to combat food insecurity across Arapahoe County. This role involves guiding the coalition's strategic plan in partnership with a diverse network of members united in their mission to eliminate hunger. The Community Engagement Specialist will engage coalition members, community stakeholders, and county and municipal partners in strategies to sustain and grow the AFSC into the future as an independent organization. This position is a temporary, grant-funded, full-time, benefited position. Funding is guaranteed through December 31, 2026, with the possibility for extension or development of other food access-related positions and work assignments. Please help spread the word about this exciting opportunity! **This initiative aligns with the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) objective to increase access to healthy, affordable food.**

## Nutrition Division

### 1) By the Numbers: August

- a. WIC had 12,371 participants enrolled in WIC
- b. WIC completed 4,874 appointments
- c. WIC handled 4,418 calls through their call centers
- d. Food Navigators assisted 73 WIC participants with SNAP applications
- e. The Breastfeeding Peer Counselors caseload was at 1,513 and had 874 contacts
- f. The Baby Cafe had 54 breastfeeding pairs and 18 participants attended a breastfeeding class

### 2) Government Shutdown and WIC

Colorado WIC Clinics are open despite the federal government shutdown. The State of Colorado acted quickly to temporarily fund WIC benefits so that the program can continue through at least October. WIC participants will be able to buy WIC foods at this time. Please visit this website regularly for updates.

<https://www.coloradowic.gov/alerts/2025-10-01/federal-government-shutdown-colorado-wic-clinics-open-benefits-available>

### 3) Billing for Lactation Services

On December 1, 2024, the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing implemented a lactation support services benefit for Health First Colorado members. The Nutrition Division has partnered with Community Health Nursing to review processes and steps needed to begin billing for Lactation Support Services. ACPH will begin with piloting of billing for services provided through the

Baby Cafe and then explore other opportunities to bill for services provided Certified Lactation Counselors and International Board-Certified Lactation Counselors on staff.

- 4) Colorado Access Supporting Continuation of SNAP Outreach  
The ACPH WIC program has been supporting SNAP Application for WIC clients since opening our doors in January 2023 through funding from Hunger Free Colorado. With budget cuts in order to continue to provide this service, ACPH needed to find matching funds to continue. ACPH has partnered with Colorado Access to provide matching funds to support this important service in getting WIC families connected to SNAP benefits. The MOU and funding will begin October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2026, to fund .4 FTE to support this work.
- 5) ACPH Baby Cafe Highlighted in National Newsletter  
Baby Cafe USA recently highlighted the ACPH Baby Cafe in their Fall Newsletter on September 24, 2025. The article highlighted the World Breastfeeding Week Celebration and quoted Grace Perez, WIC Supervisor. Newsletters can be found at: <https://www.babycafeusa.org/> and a snip of the article below:

## Baby Cafés Celebrate World Breastfeeding Week

Baby Cafés across the country marked World Breastfeeding Week with special events that brought families, providers, and community partners together to celebrate and support breastfeeding.



Arapahoe County Public Health Baby Café in Aurora, Colorado and Santo Niño Baby Café in Laredo, Texas highlighted this year's celebration with creative, community-centered gatherings.



Arapahoe County Public Health Baby Café – Aurora, Colorado



Santo Niño Baby Café – Laredo, Texas

The Arapahoe team hosted a Breastfeeding Celebration that featured a community clothes giveaway. Café Leader Grace Perez shared, "It was a huge hit! We were expecting only about 40 so when we had so many people show up, we ended up having to expand to our breakroom and out into the back hall!" In the end, 86 people attended, more than doubling expectations. The event reflected the Café's commitment to supporting families in practical ways while creating an open and welcoming space for breastfeeding support.

- 1) Maternal and Child Health Program & Regional Health Connector Program
  - a. The MCH team completed a second round of their Financial Wellbeing Community of Practice, which focused on preparing for next year's tax season. Community partners learned about ITIN filing, upcoming changes to tax credits, IRS discontinuation of paper checks, and identified areas they would like to improve next year to help families receive their tax refunds. A total of five agencies participated, three serving primarily Spanish speaking individuals and one supporting children and youth with special health care needs. The Community of Practice was conducted in partnership with the Adams County Health Department and Jefferson County Public Health's MCH teams. **This initiative aligns with the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) objective to enhance economic security and mobility.**
  - b. ACPH partnered with the Aurora Health Alliance and the Firearm Injury Prevention Initiative to host an all-day workshop focused on engaging Maternal and Child Health focused partners in Aurora to identify strategies to prevent firearm injuries in the community. **This initiative aligns with the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) objective to increase access to community safety.**
  - c. ACPH hosted our fall schools webinar which was focused on school inspections updates, program updates from our communicable disease epidemiology team and tobacco and vaping resources. Over 60 partners attended the webinar and the recording went out to over 300 school partners.
  - d. ACPH was accepted as one of the grant recipients of the Charlie's Book donation award. We have been awarded 300 Safe to Sleep books in Spanish and 300 in English. The MCH/RHC team will be developing a distribution plan for getting books and information about safe sleep into the community.
  - e. ACPH's RHC participated in the PRIME Health Symposium-Responding to Medicaid Work Requirements with Purpose, helping to identify innovative ideas for the State to respond to the NEW Medicaid work requirements.
- 2) Immunizations
  - a. In September, the Immunization Program administered 800 vaccines and began seasonal vaccine administration of Influenza and COVID-19.
  - b. Staff were trained to begin offering Titer services later this fall. This blood test can help determine if an individual is protected against measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chickenpox). This service will be offered at low cost to expand access to community members and will be a benefit during outbreaks, when immunity status is needed to avoid quarantine. This new service will also help ensure staff readiness for emergency preparedness, ensuring that nurses are up to date on blood draw skills.
  - c. ACPH will be joining 'Colorado Chooses Vaccines'- a new coalition of medical groups working to ensure vaccine access and quality public information. It is funded by the Rose Community Foundation.
- 3) Sexual Health
  - a. Renee Lenthe and Elicia Chacon were invited by CDPHE to serve on a panel as subject matter experts at the Syringe Access Summit on the integration of syphilis testing and treatment into Harm Reduction Programs. According to data presented by CDPHE at the conference, 25-35% of people with syphilis also report active drug use, making this collaboration essential in fighting the syphilis epidemic in Colorado. They reported lots of good questions and interactions from other Syringe Access Programs around the state.

- b. The sexual health schedule continues to stay full, with few empty nurse practitioner appointment slots, and appointments available for scheduling approximately two weeks out.
  - c. Funding from the Choose When grant was used to purchase 38 Nexplanon contraceptive implants and 21 IUDs to provide no cost Long Acting Reversible Contraception to 59 patients.
- 4) Harm Reduction
- a. The Harm Reduction team attended the Syringe Access Summit to convene with Syringe Access programs (SAP) from across Colorado. Elicia Chacon, program supervisor, was invited by CDPHE to serve on a panel as a subject matter expert (see above). The team connected with local SAP partners for collaboration including outreach efforts, and information sharing.
  - b. Harm Reduction and Sexual Health staff attended the CO Public Health in the Rockies conference in September where Elicia Chacon, Renee Lenthe and Kara Lenhoff presented on Syphilis Testing and Treatment in the field. Attendees also had the opportunity to learn about various public health programs and interventions across the Rocky Mountains.
  - c. Harm Reduction team leadership, along with the Harm Reduction Community Engagement specialist and leadership from Partnerships, Planning, and Community Health Promotion met with Aurora Police Department to discuss ongoing collaboration and mutual collaboration to understand the programs and support offered by both departments. A future meeting is scheduled with additional Aurora PD representatives and the UCHHealth Crisis Response Team. Future meetings are also scheduled with Englewood Police Department and Littleton Police Department.
  - d. The Harm Reduction team has connected with multiple Arapahoe County partners including ACPH Englewood office staff and the AC Community Resources staff to offer Harm Reduction 101 and Overdose Prevention and Response trainings. This is to better support staff in the placement of the Public Health Kiosk in the Community Resources office, as well as offer ACPH staff a better understanding of harm reduction interventions and programming.

**Health Protection and Response Division (*Environmental Health, Communicable Disease Epidemiology and Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs*)**

1) Environmental Health Programs

- a. Staff provided 3 separate presentations at the recent Colorado Environmental Health Association (CEHA) Annual Education Conference (AEC) from September 30 – October 3, 2025:
  1. *ACPH Pool Inspections and Community Outreach (Rachel Gamache)*: Staff from the Water Quality Program presented on the impact of Arapahoe County's Pool Inspection Program to approximately 40 environmental health professionals at the CEHA conference. The session highlighted inspection outcomes such as pool closure ratios and prevention of waterborne illnesses, along with community engagement efforts including trainings, webinars, partnerships with recreation districts and child-care centers, and the *Swimming Sue* lesson plan, all of which build trust with operators and strengthen public health.
  2. *Healing Tattoos and Piercings (Odina Trotman/Karl Schiemann)*: Drawing from information Odina obtained while attending the Association of Professional Piercers Annual Conference and Expo in Las Vegas, Odina and Karl presented on the most current techniques for proper wound care following body art procedures as well as complications that can result when proper wound care is not practiced.

3. *30 Years of Body Art (Karl Schiemann)*: Drawing from his 30 years of professional experience working with body artists in a regulatory capacity, Karl shared his perspective on several topics including changes in the industry, health department attitudes, regulatory shifts, changes in wound care and changes in equipment.
- b. End of Season Mosquito Surveillance Summary

The 2025 mosquito trapping season concluded during the week of September 14. A total of 5,678 mosquitoes were collected, of which 568 were identified as *Culex* species, the primary vector for West Nile virus (WNV). For the 2025 season, four traps were strategically placed weekly throughout Arapahoe County, resulting in 52 total trap collections. Of these, three trap collections tested positive for WNV. All three positive traps were collected from the Cherry Creek Valley Ecological Site (7500 S. Jasper St.), and the Department of Open Spaces, responsible for mosquito mitigation activities, was notified immediately to implement additional treatment measures at the site. Each time a positive result was confirmed, coordinated outreach occurred promptly with leadership, communicable disease, county communications, Open Spaces, along with communication with key business partners to ensure timely public messaging regarding mosquito bite prevention measures was disseminated. The team also collaborated closely with the Communicable Disease Epidemiology program to assess proximity between human WNV cases and trap locations, supporting a comprehensive and coordinated response. While less than 6% of our trap collections resulted in a positive pool, we want to acknowledge four Arapahoe County residents were infected with the virus to date in 2025 (*Note: Human cases cannot be attributed to infection in a specific county/location*). In response to positive cases, Communicable Disease staff work closely with affected individuals to provide outreach, guidance and education.
- c. Graywater Resolution

Following a June study session the Board of County Commissioners adopted to prohibit the use of graywater systems in unincorporated Arapahoe County, as defined in section 25-8-103(8.3), C.R.S. This will go into effect January 1, 2026. A draft of the unsigned resolution, which will be adopted on October 14, is attached below for reference.

## 2) Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Program

- a. The EPR Program continues to prioritize community engagement as a key element to building a resilient population. During National Preparedness Month, ACPH EPR staff participated in the Older Adult Safety Symposium hosted by the City of Englewood. The team shared resources on home and vehicle preparedness and a newly created emergency medical kit tips sheet developed in partnership with our Chief Medical Officer and the county communications team. EPR also participated in the Community Resource Expo at the East Community Center, an event designed for families with children who attend Littleton Public Schools with similar resources and information. The information shared and the materials provided were well received at both events and EPR staff encouraged attendees to continue the conversations with people in their own smaller communities.

## **B. Communicable Disease Epidemiology (CDE) Report**

Ongoing Activities of Note:

- a. *Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease*:

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD) is a common illness that usually causes fever, mouth sores, and skin rash. HFMD is spread through contact with droplets with virus particles from sneezing, coughing, or speaking, objects and surfaces contaminated with the virus, fluid from blisters, and feces from an infected person. HFMD is most common in infants and children younger than 5 years old and outbreaks are common in schools and childcare centers. Most individuals have mild symptoms for 7 to 10 days and can include fever, sore throat, painful mouth sores that blister, and rash usually on the hands and feet.

Outbreaks of HFMD have been increasing in Colorado and Arapahoe County over the past few weeks in both schools and childcare centers. Nine confirmed and 8 suspect outbreaks have been reported in Arapahoe County since mid-July. The Communicable Disease Epidemiology (CDE) Program works closely with impacted facilities to identify and monitor outbreaks of HFMD. CDE provides disease control recommendations to reduce the spread of illness, parent notification letters, education, and monitors trends to stop transmission.

b. *Rabies:*

Rabies is regularly found in Colorado wildlife, especially skunks and bats. However, rabies virus can be transmitted among all mammals. Rabies season typically runs from May through October, but rabid animals are found throughout the entire year. As of 10/7/2025, 63 animals have tested positive for rabies in Colorado compared to 58 positive animals in 2024. Of these 63 rabid animals, 57 were bats, 2 were skunks, and 4 were unknown mammals. Arapahoe County had four rabies positive bats so far this year compared to 3 positive bats and 1 domestic dog in 2024.

The Arapahoe County CDE Program conducts in-depth investigations for rabies to determine the need for testing and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) vaccine to prevent infection. When rabies PEP is recommended, CDE coordinates all vaccine doses and remains in close contact with the individual to ensure that the full series is completed. CDE has recommended rabies PEP for 56 Arapahoe County residents so far this year in response to a direct exposure to an animal that tested positive for rabies or a direct exposure to a rabies reservoir species or animal suspected of having rabies that could not be tested.

*NOTE: Colorado Rabies Data can be found at: [CDPHE Web Page](#)*

c. *Respiratory Season:*

Respiratory virus season, including influenza and RSV, runs from October to May each year. While COVID-19 is another respiratory season pathogen, data of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths show that COVID-19 does not follow the same seasonal trend as influenza and RSV. COVID-19 has thus far shown to have winter peaks (late December and early January), as well as summer peaks (July and August). CDPHE conducts enhanced surveillance for COVID-19, influenza and RSV during respiratory season by tracking statewide hospital admissions, outbreak reporting, test positivity, and syndromic surveillance data. Arapahoe County is one of five counties in Colorado that participates in the Emerging Infections Program (EIP) with the CDC. This is a national viral respiratory surveillance program that helps to provide more information about hospital admissions associated with influenza, RSV, and COVID-19. Data from this program is used to make public health recommendations and to better understand respiratory viruses nationwide.

The CDE Program works closely with facility and community partners to identify and monitor outbreaks of respiratory viruses. CDE provides disease control recommendations to reduce the spread of illness, provide education, and monitor trends to stop transmission. The CDC has released the [2025-2026 respiratory disease season outlook](#), providing a forecast that this fall and winter respiratory disease will likely have a similar number of combined peak hospitalizations due to COVID-19, influenza, and RSV as compared to last year.

Colorado Viral Respiratory Diseases Data Dashboard can be found at: [CDPHE Web Page](#). *Once updated for the 2025 –2026 season, Colorado and Arapahoe County data will be summarized in future reports.*

d. *New World Screwworm:*

New World screwworm (NWS) infestation is a type of myiasis that occurs when NWS fly larvae (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) infest the living flesh of warm-blooded animals—most commonly livestock and less commonly birds, pets, and humans. The screwworm flies are attracted to and lay their eggs on and in open wounds and mucous membranes. The name screwworm refers to the feeding behavior of the larvae (maggots) as they burrow (screw) into healthy tissue. NWS larvae cause extensive damage by tearing into the host's tissue with sharp mouth hooks. The wound can become larger and deeper as more larvae hatch and feed on living tissue. As a result, NWS can cause serious damage to the animal or person it infects. Bacterial superinfection can also occur because of the NWS infestation. People at higher risk include:

- i. Those living in rural areas in regions or countries where NWS is endemic, and where livestock are raised.
- ii. People who frequently work with livestock.
- iii. Anyone with open sores or wounds, including from recent surgery, as the flies will lay eggs on open sores.
- iv. Vulnerable populations, including people who are immuno-compromised, those at extremes of age, and people experiencing malnutrition.

NWS is endemic in the American tropics and subtropics which includes the countries of South America, Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. However, there have been recent outbreaks in Central American countries for the first time in many years where NWS was previously controlled. This re-emergence is attributed to both farming in areas that were previously barrier regions for fly control and increased cattle movement. Due to this re-emergence, the previously established biological containment barrier is likely no longer effective. Further northern spread increases the risk of re-emergence in the United States. The U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration's Office of Radiological Security has partnered with Texas A&M University to advance the sterile insect technique to control outbreaks of NWS.

The Arapahoe County CDE Program remains up to date on the situation in Central America to monitor surveillance trends and public health response should a case be reported in Colorado and to monitor the reintroduction risk to the U.S.

**RESOLUTION NO. 25-236.** It was moved by Commissioner Warren-Gully and duly seconded by Commissioner Campbell to adopt the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, pursuant to Colorado House Bill 24-1362, there is a statewide authorization of graywater use, except that each local government has the authority to “opt out” and prohibit the use of graywater systems within its jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners held a meeting on June 10, 2025 to consider the use of graywater in unincorporated Arapahoe County and received information regarding public and environmental health considerations, applicable plumbing code provisions that apply to graywater use, the benefits and drawbacks of graywater use and alternative methods to conserve water, the fiscal impacts of various options, the County’s capacity to implement and enforce such system uses, and the extent of public demand for graywater use systems; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners also accepted and considered the recommendations of the Arapahoe County Board of Health, which held its own meeting regarding the use of graywater on April 16, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Board determined that presently there was not sufficient justification to permit the use of graywater systems within unincorporated Arapahoe County, but indicated its commitment and willingness to re-evaluate permitting graywater use in the future if there is a marked increase in public demand, the technology of graywater use systems develops to address their current limitations, and/or other considerations arise to support revising this policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Arapahoe County that, effective January 1, 2026, the use of graywater, as defined in section 25-8-103(8.3), C.R.S, in the unincorporated parts of Arapahoe County is prohibited. Arapahoe County staff are directed to notify the Division of Administration within the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment of this Resolution.

The vote was:

Commissioner Baker, aye ; Commissioner Campbell, aye ; Commissioner Fields, aye ; Commissioner Summey, aye ; Commissioner Warren-Gully, aye .

The Chair declared the motion carried and so ordered.