

Public Health Director's Report

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Dates Covered: Dec 10, 2025 – Jan 13, 2026

A. Mission Moments

Winter Solstice Dinner

On December 18, the Participant Advisory Leadership Initiative (PALI), the advisory group comprised of Harm Reduction Program participants, hosted a Winter Solstice Dinner in partnership with Access Point, a syringe access program from Denver. Under the leadership of Betsy Craft, the PALI and Access Point secured donations and hosted a dinner at Street Fraternity providing meals and cold weather and harm reduction supplies for 50-75 unhoused community members along the East Colfax corridor. Harm Reduction Team members, PPCHP staff, and community partners volunteered their time to set up, serve, and clean up for the event. Everyone left with full hearts, full bellies, and plenty of supplies for safer use and colder nights.

B. Events and Engagement Opportunities

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.**

C. Program Updates

Administration

- 1) Region 9 Opioid Abatement Council (ROAC) voted to approve three (3) new programs including Full Circle, an organization that provides support for young people struggling with/at risk for substance abuse, and their families; 5280 High School, the sole recovery high school in Colorado where approximately 25% of its students are Arapahoe County residents; and One Chance to Grow Up, a group focused on protecting youth from the risks of high-concentration marijuana and emerging harmful substances (including opioids) through education, advocacy, prevention, and community collaboration.
- 2) Plans to move from our Englewood to Arapahoe Plaza in Littleton later this year are progressing. Deputy Director, Penny Grande, has been meeting with Arapahoe County Facilities teams, contractors, and staff to work through timelines, communications, and project management.

Partnerships, Planning and Community Health Promotion

- 1) Melissa Smith and the Healthy Aging Advisory Team hosted several trainings and education events, including a fraud prevention training in partnership with the Office of Consumer Protection and Community Engagement at the 18th Judicial District. The well attended and highly engaging fraud training will help ACPH staff talk to clients, family, and friends, about preventing fraud and scams.
- 2) The Community Health Promotion Team submitted a grant application for the Resilient Colorado funding opportunity with the Department of Law and the Office of the Attorney General. The proposal focuses on assessing and building capacity with regional and statewide partnerships to provide peer support and navigation in different settings. The ACPH team plans to engage Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office and Community Resources, as well as the WORTH Project at CU and the Northern Colorado Health Alliance to explore ways to bring people with lived and living experience in settings like judicial services, workforce development, reentry from incarceration,

and access to physical and behavioral health care. If funded, ACPH will facilitate a multi-county community of practice of agencies and organizations working on the development of peer leadership career path and professional development strategies. Funding decisions are expected by May and work would start July 1.

Nutrition Division

- 1) Pilot of Evening Breastfeeding Classes for WIC Families
Grace Perez is providing an evening Breastfeeding Class for our WIC families. The pilot began in November through December, providing three classes (two in English and one in Spanish). There were 39 clients scheduled with 15 attending. While the show rate is low, WIC will continue the pilot and make modifications to meet working families' schedules to provide breastfeeding promotion and education.
- 2) ACPH WIC Precept Three Children's Hospital Dietetic Interns, September 2025 – January 2025
ACPH WIC has an Affiliation Agreement with Children's Hospital Dietetic Internship to host three of their dietetic interns for a 1-week Public Health/WIC rotation. During their time with us, they receive a Public Health overview, WIC overview, clinic observations with WIC Educators and Dietitians and Grocery Store Tour activity. We have received positive feedback and look forward to hosting the next set of interns starting Fall 2026.
- 3) By the Numbers for November 2025
 - a. 12,388 WIC clients enrolled; this is a decrease of 121 from October, however this trend is normal due to three holidays and staff vacation during the month
 - b. 4,903 WIC appointments completed
 - c. 3,587 incoming calls handled through the call centers
 - d. The Breastfeeding Peer Counselors had 982 contacts with pregnant and breastfeeding women
 - e. 16 Mom/Baby pairs attended the Baby Cafe
 - f. 32 WIC clients were assisted with their SNAP application

Community Health Nursing Division

- 1) Family Connects
 - a. Family Connects Nurse, Kena Pina, was recognized in the Family Connects International 2025 Highlights Report:

FC Colorado: Arapahoe County

FC Arapahoe County launched on September 1, with **only one nurse, Kena**, who has already made an extraordinary impact.

Kena has already had **three remarkable “good catch” moments** that ensured families received critical, potentially lifesaving, medical care when they needed it most. Additionally, all three families spoke different languages, and Kena was able to clearly communicate the next steps via a phone interpreter.

- 2) Maternal Child Health & Regional Health Connector
 - a. MCH funds were awarded to South Metro Fire Resuce and the South Metro Safety Foundation to expand the *License to Survive* teen driver safety program into Arapahoe

County using a bilingual, culturally responsive delivery model. Grant funds supported bilingual instruction, full translation of educational materials, and coordination with Littleton Public Schools' East Center to deliver one complete session geared toward parents of young drivers. This initiative removed language and access barriers while ensuring consistent, evidence-informed teen driver safety education for families. The bilingual curriculum, trained instructor, and established school partnership position this program for sustainable expansion across Arapahoe County. Future sessions can be delivered in English, Spanish, virtual, or hybrid formats with reduced startup costs, maximizing the long-term impact of ACPH's initial investment. Report link: [ACPD South Metro Impact Report 2025.pdf](#)

This initiative aligns with the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) objective to increase access to community safety.

- b.** The MCH team hosted training for nurse home visitors (NHV) with Rocky Mountain Welcome Center. The training was well attended with over 30+ participants and included NHV from Nurse Family Partnership, Nurse Liaison Program and Family Connects. Special guests included the Family Connects team from Denver Health and Monica Kovaci. The training provided attendees with helpful information on referrals for legal assistance and other resources for supporting our newcomer communities, with a focus on families from Venezuela. **This initiative aligns with the ACPH Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) goal of increasing economic security and mobility.**

3) Immunizations

- a.** On Monday January 5 the CDC issued major revisions to the childhood vaccination schedule. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) came out strongly against this move as anti-science and, fundamentally, anti-child health. Read their response [here](#). Colorado's [Board of Health](#) changed their rules on December 17 to incorporate the AAP vaccine schedule by reference. The State board of health is the entity that will continue to determine school-required vaccines. The Immunization Program, in consultation with Dr. Urbina and CDPHE, is updating our documentation to refer to the AAP vaccine schedule in lieu of CDC for the time being. The key vaccine access program, Vaccines for Children, which provides no-cost doses to providers throughout the country who serve children who are on Medicaid or uninsured (about half of all kids) is administered by the CDC as they control the purchase, formulary and ordering for states. At present, we believe VFC providers will be able to order all the vaccines on the AAP schedule.
- b.** In 2025, the ACPH Immunization program administered 12,146 vaccines during 3,862 patient encounters. This is essentially equivalent to 2024 numbers but performed with less FTE and improved process efficiencies. The program serves as a critical access point for community members – 58% of children served by the program are uninsured and almost 2/3 of all patients report they do not have a medical home. 60% of all program patients speak a language other than English.

4) Sexual Health

- a.** Jordyn Bode, Sexual Health Clinical Advisor, is working on a plan to update and consolidate all clinical procedures to provide more consistency in clinical care and improve accessibility for staff.
- b.** Sexual Health has begun to successfully bill Denver Health Medicaid for all family planning and family planning related services, which encompasses all sexual health services except for mammogram referrals and LEEP.

- c. An additional \$9,000 was provided by the CPED program for cervical and breast cancer screening reimbursement. In 2026, the program will expand to cover annual mammograms and the full range of cervical and breast cancer screening and education for all patients 40 years and older, including pap and HPV testing. Previously, the program was only funded to cover biannual mammogram referrals, and cervical and breast cancer follow up and diagnostics including diagnostic mammogram, ultrasound, biopsy, and colposcopy.

5) Harm Reduction

- a. The Harm Reduction team is working closely with the Harm Reduction Community Engagement specialist, Betsy Craft, and Senior Epidemiologist Alexa Escobar Paez, to work on a plan to formally solicit feedback from the Participant Advisory Leadership Initiative (PALI) on harm reduction programming. In quarter 1, 2026, the PALI will discuss harm reduction supply purchasing and help set priorities for the new year. The team also participated in a collaborated kit making session during PALI programming.
- b. The Harm Reduction team joined Betsy Craft and Denver-based syringe access program, Access Point, to serve holiday meals to participants and other community members at Street Fraternity on December 18.
- c. Both Arnette Lim and Raquel Isaac have completed their Community Health Worker training through CDPHE and have completed their exams. Due to this being a pilot program, final exam grades have not yet been released.
- d. HRP Staff collaborated with Community Medical Services (CMS) to offer resources and information on Medication Assisted Treatment and Peer Support during It Takes a Village (ITAV) drop-in hours. Approximately 45 kits were distributed and roughly 15 people expressed interest in CMS services.
- e. HRP and ACPH leadership worked to finalize the Harm Reduction Volunteer program. This included finalizing policies and procedures, training and orientation plans and hosting a kick-off meeting, held on 1/6/2026. Since the kick-off event, we've had 3 volunteers complete the application and background check, with 2 scheduled for an interview.
- f. Due to decreased staffing, the Harm Reduction team has made the difficult decision to pull back on direct services at It Takes a Village, and will be closed on Fridays in 2026 until more staff have been hired and trained (anticipated through at least June 2026). In addition, a 2026 planning meeting was completed to ensure staff capacity and service provision during this time.

Health Protection and Response (HPR) Division

1) Environmental Health (EH) Programs

- a. *National Radon Action Month*: January is National Radon Action Month (NRAM). To acknowledge NRAM and to raise radon awareness, ACPH is ramping up its community outreach efforts. Most notably, ACPH is collaborating with five other local metro area health departments (Adams, Denver, Boulder, Jefferson and Broomfield) to display a common radon slogan on one billboard located within each respective county. Each billboard is branded to the county and reads, "Radon Causes Cancer. Prevention is Easy" and provides the [radon test kit ordering website](#) the public can use to order a free radon test kit. The billboard for Arapahoe County is located on the northwest corner of Parker and E. Iliff and is visible through the end of January 2026. In addition to the billboard, ACPH is boosting radon

awareness messaging on social media during the month of January and more information can also be found on our [ACPH radon website](#).

b. Annual Environmental Health Programs Inspection/Review Numbers

i. Early Childhood and Environmental Protection Programs

1. Early Childhood & Schools: Completed 354 routine child care inspections, including 9 co-visits with district and licensing partners, and district-wide mock school inspections across multiple districts in preparation for official regulatory inspections.
2. Water Quality: Completed 121 routine pool inspections and 104 chemistry checks, with an average 18% closure rate. Also completed the PFAS grant efforts through partnership with CDPHE.
3. Solid & Hazardous Waste: Reviewed 28 methane vapor reports, disseminated 304 communications to partners, and participated in 3 community events to highlight the program work and efforts with the Lowry Landfill Superfund Site
4. Community engagement: Participated in 18 outreach and engagement events across the Early Childhood and Environmental Protection programs

ii. Consumer Protection Programs

1. Retail Food: Completed 3,287 retail food inspections (brick & mortar, mobile unit and temporary vendors) and 189 plan reviews. Also hired and trained three new Environmental Health Specialists (field inspectors).
2. Body Art: Completed approximately 90 body art inspections.
3. Mosquito Surveillance: During the summer mosquito surveillance and West Nile Virus season, operated 4 mosquito trap sites, set 56 traps, collected and identified ~6,000 mosquitoes, and submitted 41 samples to the CDPHE lab resulting in a total of 3 positive pools.
4. Environmental Health received 909 complaints in 2025. Of these complaints, 447 were food related (food service and food borne illness) and approximately 330 were related to Housing/Public Accommodations. Other complaints include vector (related to rodents, mosquitoes and bats), air quality, pools, public accommodations (hotels/motels) and water/wastewater.

c. *Annual EH Invoicing Update:* Renewal invoices for Retail Food and Body Art licenses were mailed between mid- and late-October 2025. All associated licenses expire on December 31 each year. For the 2026 renewal cycle, a combined total of 2,284 Retail Food and Body Art invoices were issued, representing just over \$1.1 million in billed revenue.

Beginning January 21, 2026, ACPH will launch a courtesy call campaign to contact facilities with outstanding renewal invoices. The goal is to encourage payment and ensure businesses are properly licensed before civil penalties apply.

Historically, only a small number of establishments progress to civil penalties. For Retail Food, if a renewal invoice remains unpaid as of January 31, 2026, a \$500 civil penalty applies for operating without a valid license. Businesses that remain out of compliance after multiple notices from ACPH—including mailed notices, phone calls, and emails—may be subject to enforcement action. Food establishments that fail to pay both the license fee and

civil penalty, and are confirmed to be open and operating, may be subject to an injunction requiring immediate closure until all outstanding fees are paid. Unlike Retail Food, Body Art operators are subject to a penalty of up to 250 *per day* including eventual license suspension and revocation. Based on prior experience, full compliance is generally achieved by March for both Retail Food and Body Art.

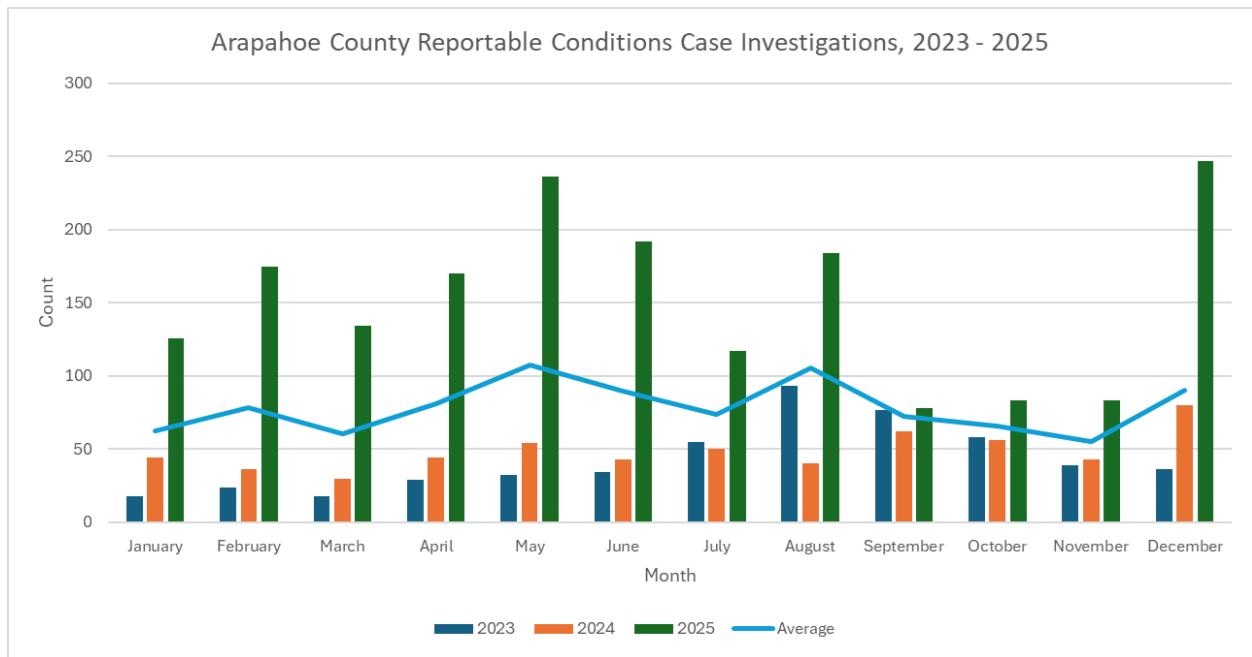
2) Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Program

- a. On December 15, 2025, Xcel Energy announced a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) for December, 17, 2025, due to a weather system featuring high temperatures, low humidity, and very strong winds. These conditions created a severe risk for wild land/urban interface fires like conditions around the Marshall Fire in 2021. The ACPH EPR program coordinated closely with the county Office of Emergency Management, internal ACPH leadership, Communications, and the North Central Region Healthcare Coalition to monitor the evolving situation, coordinate messaging for all staff, and to provide support as requested by health and medical partners within the county. Fortunately, while conditions continued to persist, requiring a shut off on 12/17/2025 and 12/19/2025, residents in Arapahoe County were spared from the days long PSPS. Staff from ACPH EPR were pre-positioned in the county Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to cross-train on the provision of support during any unplanned outages from the wind and for the high potential for fires. Arapahoe County did not see severe consequences from this incident.

3) Communicable Disease Epidemiology (CDE) Program

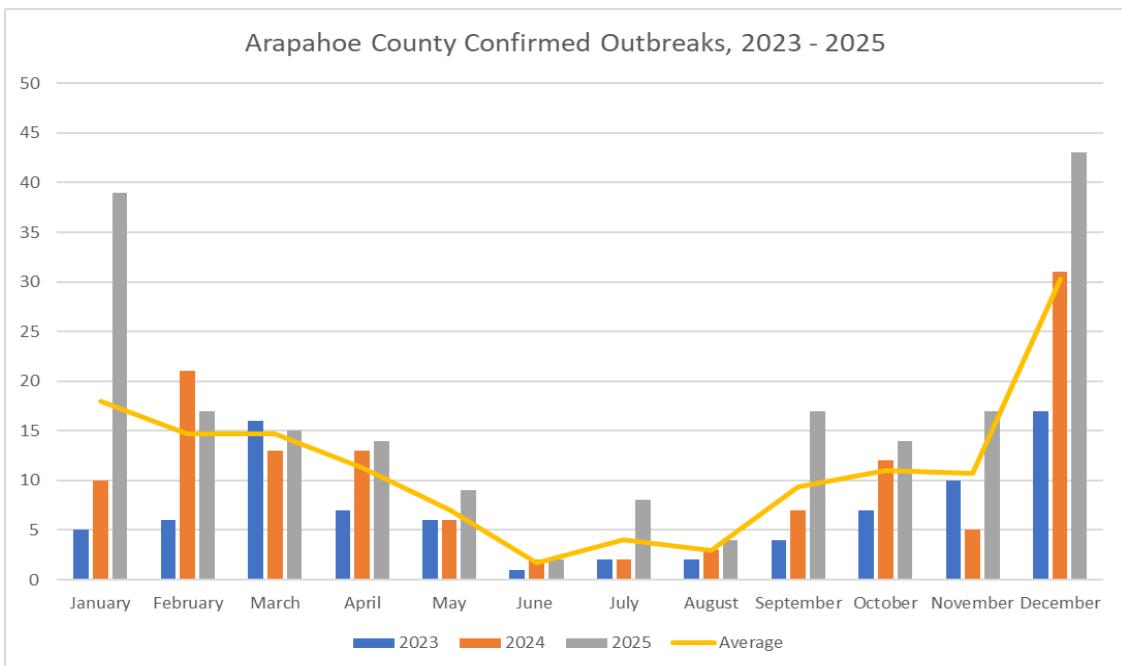
a. 2025 Case Investigations – Colorado Reportable Conditions

In 2025, the ACPH Communicable Disease Epidemiology (CDE) Program completed 1,825 case and contact investigations for Colorado reportable conditions compared to 582 in 2024 (214% increase). This only includes investigations completed by CDE staff and does not account for communicable diseases managed by CDPHE including viral hepatitis, sexually transmitted infections, and healthcare acquired infections. Case investigations typically increase during the summer months and decline through fall and winter. The most commonly investigated conditions included measles (502 – *includes confirmed cases, suspect cases, and contacts*), hospitalized influenza (444), pertussis (189 – *includes cases and contacts*), hospitalized COVID-19 (112), and hospitalized RSV (68). Notable pathogen specific increases in 2025 include measles, suspect measles, and measles contacts following increases nationwide and across Colorado, as well as recent increases in hospitalized influenza cases associated with the current 2025 – 2026 influenza season. Of note, CDPHE assisted with some Arapahoe County investigations, not included in the numbers presented below, from May through October 2025, while CDE staff prioritized measles response work and staff capacity was reduced during a staffing transition.



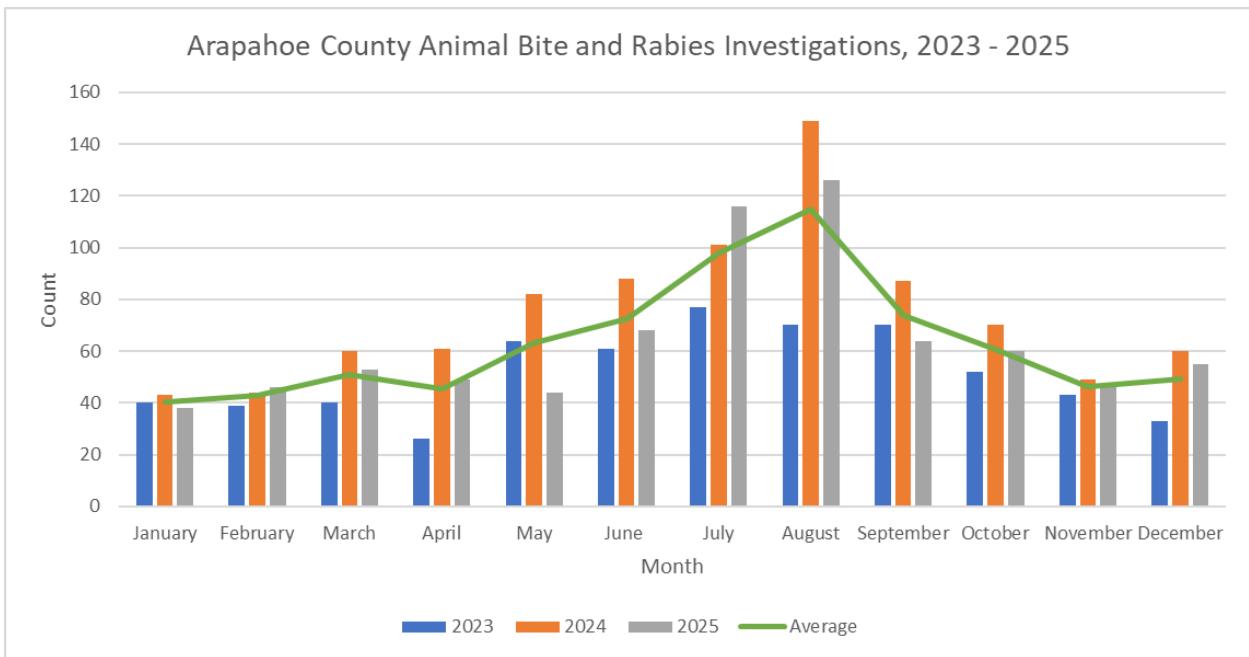
b. 2025 Outbreaks

The CDE Program managed 199 confirmed outbreaks in 2025 compared to 125 in 2024. Outbreaks typically increase beginning in fall and continue through spring when respiratory illnesses are more common, and people spend additional time indoors. This seasonal trend was seen in 2025 as noted in the graph below. Most outbreaks were reported in long-term care facilities (70), schools (66), and childcare facilities (50). The most common pathogens reported for outbreaks included influenza (64), viral gastrointestinal/norovirus (46), COVID-19 (39), and hand, foot, and mouth disease (19). Of note, most influenza outbreaks were reported at the end of 2025 and increases in influenza outbreaks are expected to continue throughout the 2025 – 2026 influenza season. An additional 55 suspect outbreaks were also monitored and managed by CDE staff in 2025 compared to 50 in 2024 which are not accounted for the graph below.



c. 2025 Animal Bites and Rabies Investigations

The CDE program investigates all domestic animal bites (i.e., dog or cat bite to a human) and rabies reservoir species (RRS) encounters with either a human or domestic pet. In Colorado, RRS include bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes, and coyotes. In 2025, the CDE program investigated 766 total animal encounters compared to 894 in 2024. Of the 766 investigations in 2025, 594 involved a domestic animal bite and 172 involved an RRS. The CDE program recommended rabies post-exposure prophylaxis to 63 people in 2025 compared to 72 in 2024. In Arapahoe County, 4 bats tested positive for rabies in 2025 compared to 3 bats and 1 domestic dog in 2024. The CDE program also responds to public inquiries related to other non-RRS or domestic animal bites such as bites from rodents (squirrels, mice, rats), prairie dogs, horses, and other international wildlife. The purpose of any animal bite investigations is to assess for infectious disease risk, determine if any post-exposure treatment is recommended and if any action (i.e., testing or quarantine) is required for the animal involved.



- d. *Influenza:* Outbreaks of influenza and influenza-like-illness (ILI) continue to increase in Colorado and Arapahoe County for the current 2025-2026 season. Forty-eight (48) influenza or ILI outbreaks have been reported in Arapahoe County since 9/1/2025. The CDE Program works closely with facilities to provide disease control recommendations, parent/resident notification letters, education, monitor trends to help stop transmission, and recommend vaccination as a safe and effective way of stopping disease spread or limiting illness severity.
- e. *Measles:* On 12/23/2025, ACPH was notified of an out-of-state measles case that had a layover at Denver International Airport (DIA) on 12/12/2025 while infectious. The individual did not leave the airport and no other exposures in Colorado were reported. Arapahoe County received 4 contacts from the flights with this traveler. The CDE program contacted all 4 individuals to complete an investigation, assess immunity status, recommend disease control measures, and monitor for symptoms. Monitoring for these individuals concluded on 1/2/2026, and no individuals developed symptoms consistent with measles.
- f. *Norovirus:* Norovirus is a very contagious virus that causes vomiting and diarrhea. It is sometimes referred to as the “stomach flu” or the “stomach bug”. However, norovirus illness is not related to the flu. It is possible to get norovirus many times in your life because there are many different types of noroviruses and infection with one type may not protect you against other types. Norovirus symptoms typically include diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, stomach pain, fever, headache, and body aches. Symptoms usually develop 12 to 48 hours after being exposed to norovirus. Norovirus is a very difficult virus to destroy and can live on surfaces in the environment for several weeks. Norovirus can spread by having direct contact with someone with norovirus, like caring for them, sharing food or eating utensils, or eating food prepared by someone with norovirus, eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus, and touching contaminated objects or surfaces and then not washing your hands properly. Public health recommends the following to prevent norovirus illness:

- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water often. Hand sanitizer is not effective against norovirus
- Cook shellfish thoroughly and wash fruits and vegetables
- Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces with EPA-approved products effective against norovirus
- Wash laundry in hot water
- Stay home for a full 48 hours after vomiting and diarrhea has stopped

In the United States, reports of norovirus increase November to April with peak season usually between January and March. While a single case of norovirus is not a reportable condition in Colorado, norovirus outbreaks are reportable and make up a considerable portion of all outbreaks reported each year. There were 46 norovirus/viral gastroenteritis outbreaks reported in Arapahoe County in 2025. The CDE Program works closely with facilities reporting a norovirus outbreak to ensure proper cleaning and disinfectant products are being used, provide education on norovirus and proper vomit and diarrhea cleanup, monitor for trends in illness, and provide notification letters to families, residents, and staff to prevent further illness spread.