

# April Director's Report



ARAPAHOE COUNTY  
PUBLIC HEALTH

Public Health Director's Report

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## Mission Moments

### Improving Mobile Food Truck Review Process

New mobile food truck operators must complete a Plan Review to ensure their setup and equipment meet regulatory requirements. This process requires submitting detailed information and resolving any issues before a license is issued.

The average timeline has improved significantly—from about 2 months to approximately 3 weeks in 2026—due to several process improvements:

- a. Clearer application materials: Reduced jargon and improved descriptions to better guide operators
- b. Greater accessibility: Applications available online and on paper, in English and Spanish; support staff can directly converse with operators in English, Spanish, and Russian
- c. Pre-application and inspection checklists: Provided in English and Spanish to help operators submit complete applications and understand inspection expectations
- d. Customer-focused support: Inspectors guide and educate operators throughout the process, helping them navigate requirements
- e. Hands-on assistance: When operators pick up an application in person our Business Support staff offer to walk through applications. This provides an opportunity to call out items we often see not completed correctly. This helps operators avoid common mistakes
- f. Online scheduling: Operators can self-schedule inspections, reducing delays

These improvements are making a real impact. One recent applicant received in-person support in Spanish, submitted a complete application with no follow-up needed, and passed inspection on the first attempt—going from application to license in just 5 business days.

### **Resource Finder Collaboration**

A cross divisional collaborative win! The ACPH Resource Finder is officially up and running. Through a cross-division collaboration, eight staff members across four divisions verified information for 482 organizations and over 1,000 programs in the community that provide services our clients may need, from food and shelter to lactation support and affordable providers. We are now moving into the “maintenance” phase, during which we will confirm service information every six months to ensure our referrals remain accurate. This work is also reflected in ACPH core measures, highlighting a successful cross-division effort that benefits both staff and clients. **This initiative aligns with the ACPH Community Health Improvement Plan goal of increasing economic wellbeing.**

### **B. Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Headlines**

You can find more details on these CHIP headlines in the Program Updates section.

1. Collaborative effort launched to inform future chronic disease prevention and control initiatives
2. Supporting development of Englewood's Age-Friendly Action Plan
3. Popular ACPH Baby Café efforts enhanced with new grant funding
4. ACPH economic wellbeing work highlighted at Advent Health Annual Public Meeting
5. Funding continuation enables efforts to strengthen the healthcare workforce
6. Community partners trained as tax ambassadors through metro collaboration
7. Thousands reached with critical tax filing information for minimal cost using new tech tool
8. Arapahoe County leads the state in tax filings receiving the Family Affordability Tax Credit
9. Childhood immunizations increased among Burmese and Rohingya-speaking residents and others through language interpretation, mobile clinics, and community partnerships

### **C. Events and Engagement Opportunities**

Spotlight on upcoming events:

- May 1, Senior Resource Fair at May Farms in Byers
- May 2, Southeast Aurora Islamic Center Health Fair in Centennial
- May 16, Soccer City with Iron Sharp in Aurora

Please reach out to [Grace Soulen](#) or visit our [Community Engagement Event Request Form](#) to suggest upcoming outreach opportunities. **This initiative aligns with CHIP objectives that advance community engagement.**

### **D. Program Updates**

## **Administration**

- 1) National Public Health Week is celebrated annually the first week of April to recognize the contributions of public health professionals. To mark the occasion, the Arapahoe County Board of Commissioners proclaimed April 6-12, 2026 as National Public Health Week and called on residents to recognize the value of public health, celebrate those who dedicate their work to keeping our community healthy, and commit to taking action toward a healthier future for all.
- 2) Arapahoe County was selected as one of just 12 counties nationwide for the highly competitive Public Health Leadership Academy, an inaugural program led by NACo, in partnership with the de Beaumont Foundation. The effort brings together ACPH, led by Jennifer Ludwig and Commissioner Warren-Gully, working together to align county leadership and public health strategies. Included in

this initiative are virtual learning, technical assistance, and an in-person convening in Washington, D.C., where participants engage with national leaders and peers. Through the program, the county will develop a data-driven public health action plan and strengthen cross-sector collaboration to address priority issues and improve community health outcomes.

- 3) ACPH had the opportunity to take a tour of Kazmira Therapeutics, a company supporting pharmacist-compounded cannabinoid formulations within licensed pharmacy and clinical evaluation frameworks. ACPH does not have regulatory authority, but Kazmira Therapeutics is in our jurisdiction.
- 4) Senator Hickenlooper will be meeting with Denver-metro public health leadership on April 8. More information can be shared after the meeting occurs.
- 5) ACPH coordinated Verbal Judo training for approximately 95% of ACPH staff. The opportunity was made possible by funding from Emergency Preparedness and Response and coordinated by staff from across multiple divisions and programs.

## Partnerships, Planning and Community Health Promotion

### 1) Chronic Disease Community Health Assessment

The Community Health Promotion team kicked off a grant-funded process to assess factors associated with chronic disease in Arapahoe County, including social determinants, risk and protective factors, root causes and health outcomes in addition to community capacity. Please stay tuned for more information as the project steering team finalizes plans for inviting input through focus groups and survey participation. The final report, scheduled for August, is intended to guide efforts slated for non-competitive grant funding through CDPHE. **This initiative will help inform new and/or existing CHIP efforts upon completion in Q3 of 2026.**

### 2) Englewood Age-Friendly Action Plan

Melissa has been invited to participate in the next phase of Englewood's Age-Friendly Action Planning as a community partner, joining two working sessions focused on identifying strategic priorities for the future and outlining initial action steps. The group is intentionally designed to represent different roles, experiences, and community connections to ensure a well-rounded and inclusive planning process. Sessions are planned for May and June. **This initiative aligns with CHIP objectives that advance age-friendly practices.**

## Nutrition Division

- 1) Nutrition received a grant for \$1,000 from the Human Milk Feeding Supportive Funding grant through the Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition and La Leche League of Mountain Plains. The funding will help support our Baby Cafe efforts to help educate, advocate and collaborate to reduce barriers and support families to achieve their breastfeeding goals. The funds will be used to enhance attendance at the Baby Café and create a more breastfeeding-friendly environment. By increasing participation, we aim to generate revenue through Medicaid reimbursement for lactation support services, which will help sustain and expand the Baby Café. We will purchase items requested by attendees to improve both the environment and the support offered. Additionally, we will update our promotional materials to highlight the availability of new IBCLC support. **This effort is included in our CHIP as a key strategy for advancing economic wellbeing and community safety, including social connections.**

- 2) Nutrition Programs by the Numbers for February 2026
  - a. WIC Clients Enrolled: 12,094
  - b. WIC Benefits Utilized at Arapahoe County WIC Authorized Grocery Stores: \$916,048
  - c. Number of WIC Appointments Seen: 4,612
  - d. Number of Calls Handled through Call Centers: 4,607
  - e. Number of Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Contacts: 1,043
  - f. Number of Breastfeeding Class Attendees: 14
  - g. Number of Mom/Baby Pairs at Baby Cafe: 21
  - h. Number of SNAP Applications Assisted: 41, benefiting 133 household members

## Community Health Nursing Division

- 1) Maternal Child Health & Regional Health Connector
  - a. The Career Paths into Healthcare Program contract has been extended an additional 12 months beyond the original 6-month contract. This extension will allow for the Regional Health Connector to continue to work on the program. The Career Paths into Healthcare Program (CPHP) is a 5-year initiative led by the University of Colorado School of Medicine (CUSOM) Department of Family Medicine (DFM) to strengthen Colorado's healthcare workforce, not just providers, but the full range of roles that make clinics, hospitals, and community health programs work. **This effort is included in our CHIP as a key strategy for advancing Economic Wellbeing.**
  - b. The Regional Health Connector presented at the Advent Health Annual Public Meeting on the Economic Mobility strategies that that ACPH is implementing including our nurse home visitation programs, WIC, and our concrete resources and supports work. **This effort is included in our CHIP as a key strategy for advancing Economic Wellbeing.**
  - c. The MCH team received data on the Family Affordability Tax Credit (FATC) by county for tax year 2024 (filed in 2025). Among Colorado's 64 counties, Arapahoe County had the highest number of returns in which families received the FATC. A total of 44,290 households in Arapahoe County received the credit, resulting in \$126,332,000 returned to local families. Statewide, 320,490 FATC returns were filed, with \$865,929,000 refunded to Coloradans. **This effort is included in our CHIP as a key strategy for advancing Economic Wellbeing**
  - d. The MCH team identified a new outreach strategy with great success. The team used a digital flyer management system called PeachJar for school outreach. A tax outreach flyer was distributed to 49 schools in Aurora Public Schools. The flyer ran for four weeks at a cost of \$625. To date, it has been delivered 34,503 times, with 25,777 unique deliveries, resulting in 13,367 unique impressions. **This effort is included in our CHIP as a key strategy for advancing Economic Wellbeing.**
  - e. Arapahoe MCH, in collaboration with the Jefferson County and Adams County Health Departments, sent 5 community partners to the Colorado Fiscal Institute's 6-week Tax

Ambassador Program. By training individuals from trusted community-based organizations who understand tax codes, Colorado's fiscal constraints, and the tax filing process, we ensure there are knowledgeable advocates who are able to support the community in navigating tax filing. **This effort is included in our CHIP as a key strategy for advancing Economic Wellbeing.**

## 2) Immunizations

- a. In March, the Immunization program administered 766 immunizations.
- b. Mobile clinics were held in conjunction with schools in Cherry Creek and Aurora Public Schools. Also, a mobile clinic was held for a new partner, the Aurora Housing Authority. 1A funding was utilized to provide in-person interpretation at a school clinic for families who speak Burmese and Rohingya – an invaluable resource for improving communication at busy clinics where phone interpretation is challenging. **This effort is included in our CHIP as a key strategy for advancing Economic Wellbeing through increased access to health care.**
- c. [SB26-032](#) Promoting Immunization Access was signed into law. This bill extends protections for Colorado providers administering vaccines on evidence-based schedules such as the American Academy of Pediatrics. ACPH supported this bill through CALPHO, the Commissioners Office, direct testimony from the CMO, and participation in a state-wide coalition – Colorado Chooses Vaccines.
- d. CDC released [data for children born in 2021-22](#) showing that while most people do vaccinate their children, slight decreases in childhood vaccine rates continue. These decreases were most notable for flu vaccine. Children living in poverty and those who are eligible for the [Vaccines for Children Program](#) (VFC) had the lowest vaccination rates – demonstrating the continued need for VFC program access and clinics like at ACPH that serve children in need of a medical home and without insurance.

## 3) Sexual Health

- a. The Sexual Health and Harm Reduction teams participated in a special Communicating Across Differences DIVE workshop on March 2. Together, our team developed a set of team Rights and Responsibilities to ensure that we center equity and respect in all of our interactions with each other and the community.
- b. The Sexual Health and Harm Reduction program participated in the first in a series of Emergency Preparedness trainings to better prepare for their roles in case of a public health emergency.
- c. In response to a cluster of five mpox cases identified in Colorado Springs, the sexual health clinic has revised mpox protocols and retrained staff on testing and management of mpox in the event of an outbreak. One of the Colorado Springs cases was an Arapahoe County resident.
- d. In future Director's Reports, the Sexual Health program will provide an update on communicable disease trends in Arapahoe County related to sexual health. Below is a summary of trends from recent years, including February 2026 preliminary data. \*Please note that 2026 data may be incomplete and will be updated in subsequent reports.

Total Cases in Arapahoe County	Chlamydia	Gonorrhea	Syphilis	Congenital Syphilis	HIV	Hepatitis C
2024	3,014	812	443	9	69	98
2025	2,839	676	336	7	69	90
January 2026	210	55	13	0	5	0
February 2026	199	35	4	1	2	0
2026 total to date	409	90	17	1	7	0

4) Harm Reduction

- a. On March 6, the Harm Reduction team advocated at the Colorado State Capitol for Harm Reduction and HIV Prevention programs in our community. We networked with other Harm Reduction advocates and spoke with Senator Mike Weissman at length about the high demand for our services and need to increase and sustain funding to continue meeting the need.
- b. Our new Care Coordinator, Dametria, started on March 9. She brings a wealth of experience in HIV and STI testing, follow up and case management. We are delighted to have her on the team.
- c. The Harm Reduction Program (HRP) received approval to begin having volunteer support at our It Takes a Village fixed site. Since January 2026, volunteers have supported kit making efforts in the office. Established volunteers will now have the option to support fixed site services by helping make bags for participants during drop in.
- d. Staff completed their final coaching call for the Systems Analysis Improvement Approach study with UC San Diego and Drexel University for HIV testing in Syringe Service Programs. The study provided coaching calls and support for increasing and improving HIV testing efforts within our syringe service program between March 2025-March 2026. We'll continue submitting data for the next 6-months.
- e. HRP and PPCHP staff and leadership participated in a kick-off call for the Overdose Fatality and Prevention Response group. This is part of the planning period for implementing a program, and funded by CDC through the Overdose Data to Action grant.

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

### 1) HPR Division Administration

#### a. Qualtrics National Conference Presentation

Julie presented in late March at [X4: The Qualtrics Experience Management Summit](#) conference in Seattle. Julie's round table session was part of the government track (for city, county, state, tribal, and federal government staff) and titled "Streamlining public service: The digital forms revolution", focusing on the work she, Kristin, and HPR's Environmental Health programs have conducted to transfer burdensome paper applications into streamlined online applications. This has allowed public health to not only save staff time and printing costs, it has also increased our data efficiency. The session was attended by 65 people and feedback included "This session was the most applicable session I participated in throughout this conference!" and "It was so good to be able to talk about the forms I need to make digital and to be able to talk to others to see how/if they've done it. The session facilitator even gave me tips! This was probably one of my favorite sessions just to be able to brainstorm and talk!"

### 2) Environmental Health (EH) Programs

#### a. Consumer Protection Programs

I. Three Environmental Health Specialists (Lasata, Johnny, and Michael) in the Consumer Protection Program offered four separate food safety training classes during the month of March to students at the Cherry Creek Innovation Campus (CCIC). The training covered the principles of basic food safety and provided a good opportunity to further strengthen ACPH's strong working relationship with the Cherry Creek School District.

II. On 4/1/2026, members of the Retail Food Special Events Team offered a free webinar designed primarily for Special Event Coordinators and open to Special Event food operators. The webinar provided a clear overview of the regulatory requirements for operating food booths at temporary special event, including application submission timelines, permitting procedures, and documentation expectations. Participants also gained detailed guidance on booth setup requirements, handwashing stations, temperature control, cross-contamination prevention, and more.

#### b. Early Childhood and Environmental Protection Programs

I. The Early Childhood Program continues to make significant progress in strengthening the school inspection program over a relatively short period of time. This includes establishing and deepening partnerships with school districts, improving communication, and creating space for ongoing dialogue.

Staff have maintained a collaborative approach, engaging districts through discussion sessions, listening to operational realities, and working to find a balance

between district needs and public health responsibilities. This approach allows the team to build trust while continuing to advance the program that is both practical and protective of public health.

Cherry Creek School District teachers recently shared appreciation for the resources and checklists provided by our staff ahead of inspections to understand the expectations and prepare.

- II. The Water Quality Program led a webinar on 3/3/2026, titled, "Pool Water Quality and Maintenance: To Swim or Not to Swim?" The training provided Pool professionals an opportunity for participants to increase their understanding of recreational water risks, including waterborne illnesses. The training also explored ways to mitigate risks and improve pool, spa, and other regulated bodies of water in which our community recreates. Pool professionals working for recreation districts, child care centers, country clubs, high schools, hotels, swim schools, and mall splash pads in Arapahoe County attended the training. Our team explored pool operation best practices and regulation requirements for pools and spas in Arapahoe County. We also discussed the health inspection process and its relationship to safeguarding public health. An evaluation survey was sent to attendees to identify additional topics about which the community would like to learn more, and to allow us to strengthen our ongoing training efforts.

We are also partnering with South Suburban Parks and Recreation District (SSPRD) to host a similarly focused in-person training for SSPRD staff and anyone else interested in attending on 5/21/2026.

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

- a. As part of our ongoing effort to increase inclusivity in emergency preparedness and response activities, the EPR program hosted training in March available for all ACPH staff titled 'Neurodiversity and Inclusive Emergency Preparedness.' The course was facilitated by the Executive Director of the Colorado Neurodiversity Chamber of Congress and walked staff through the fundamentals of understanding neurodiversity, communication strategies, identifying barriers, and identifying tools to support both staff and community members during emergencies. Participants in the class identified opportunities to improve daily operations at ACPH as well as strategies for improving our work with the public when the county is impacted by a disaster.

### 4) Communicable Disease Epidemiology (CDE) Program

- a. *Updates to Epidemic and Communicable Disease Control Regulations:* Effective 3/17/2026, the Colorado State Board of Health approved amendments to [6 CCR 1009-1: Epidemic and Communicable Disease Control](#) regulations. These revisions are intended to clarify disease reporting responsibilities, including reporting roles, methods, and timelines, and to promote the use of electronic reporting systems. The primary update included a transition from a

single reportable conditions poster to two distinct reporting resources by reporter type and outlined which institutions are considered designated reporters.

- I. [Communicable diseases and conditions that must be reported by laboratories](#)
- II. [Communicable diseases and conditions that must be reported by health care providers, health care facilities, veterinarians, and additional reporters](#)

ACPH shared a Health Alert Network (HAN) notification on [3/23/2026](#) with healthcare providers and health and community organizations to provide notification of these changes. Additional communication messaging was shared with schools and childcare providers to clarify reporting requirements and included the new reportable conditions posters.

- b. *Summer Preparedness*: In preparation for the 2026 summer season, the Communicable Disease Epidemiology Program, Environmental Health Program, and the Emergency Preparedness and Response Program are partnering with County Communications to launch another summer-long safety campaign covering topics such as rabies, West Nile virus, plague, extreme heat, food safety, and more. The campaign will feature content on social media as well as in the County Line newsletter. We also include information on the website about [10 Ways to Prevent Rabies and Other Diseases this Spring and Summer](#) in an effort to share preventive education with the public who visit our website.
- c. *Rabies*: Rabies is a preventable disease spread through direct contact, such as a bite or scratch, with the saliva or brain/nervous system tissue of an animal that is sick with rabies. Most rabies cases are found in wild animals like raccoons, skunks, bats, foxes, and coyotes. Rabies is regularly found in Colorado wildlife. While reports of rabid animals can occur throughout the year, most reports occur between March and September. In 2025, 69 animals (65 bats; 4 skunks) tested positive for rabies in Colorado, including four bats in Arapahoe County. As of 4/1/2026, two rabies positive skunks have been reported in Colorado (Jefferson County) in 2026. The Communicable Disease Epidemiology Program conducts in-depth rabies risk exposure assessments for humans and domestic animals following an encounter with wildlife. If a wild animal is unable to be tested for rabies following an encounter with a human, rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) vaccinations may be recommended to prevent possible infection.