

Public Health Director's Report

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Dates Covered: October 15, 2025-November 12, 2025

Mission Moments

Uplifting Food Assistance Agencies

In response to the lapse in SNAP benefits, Arapahoe County partnered with trusted community organizations to increase food availability countywide. Emergency donations are being directed to organizations including Integrated Family Community Services, Village Exchange Center, Nourish Meals on Wheels, SECOR Cares, the Salvation Army, and several school-based food pantries. These partnerships will help ensure that no neighbor goes without a meal during this difficult time.

Aurora Regional Navigation Campus

<https://denverite.com/2025/11/06/aurora-connection-center-homeless-shelter/>

The Aurora Regional Navigation Campus held its Ribbon Cutting event on November 6, an Open House on November 12, and will open its doors on November 17. The Campus is a 600-bed refurbished Crowne Plaza Hotel at Chambers Road and 40th Avenue that will provide day shelter, overnight shelter in three tiers, case management, and resource navigation. The project was funded in part by Arapahoe, Adams, and Douglas counties and serves adults only. Arapahoe County Public Health will provide Vital Records onsite two times per month. We are excited to be a part of this effort to lead people to self-sufficiency.

A. Equity and Engagement

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

Upcoming events: Arapahoe County Warrant Forgiveness Day November 22, Arapahoe County Visit the Village December 13, Iron Sharp Foundation Lavished with Love December 6.

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.**

B. Program Updates

Partnerships, Planning and Community Health Promotion

- 1) Hungry For Change Forum

About 1 in 8 Coloradans experience food insecurity, with more than 72,000 residents affected in Arapahoe County. The [Arapahoe Food Security Coalition](#), a network of 60+ organizations across Englewood, Littleton, and Sheridan with leadership from ACPH's Leslie Levine, hosted a free forum Nov. 6 at South Fellowship Church in Littleton to discuss challenges and solutions. Speakers included Arapahoe County Commissioner Carrie Warren-Gully and representatives from area schools, Integrated Family Community Services, and Nourish Meals on Wheels. Local residents and representatives of community-based organizations, hospitals, local government, faith communities, schools and more joined the event to learn about who is suffering from a lack of healthy food options, the coalition's vision and how more funding can fulfill its strategic goals, as well as volunteer opportunities to support these efforts. **This initiative aligns with the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) priority to increase access to healthy, affordable foods.**

- 2) ACPH's Tobacco Prevention and Control Team took the lead on updating existing tobacco free schools signage for use across the state. In partnership with Arapahoe County Communications and CDPHE, the team finalized inclusion of the no marijuana symbol in alignment with state statute. All Colorado local public health agencies now can use this updated, bilingual artwork as they collaborate with local education leaders and operations teams to ensure clear, accessible guidance on complying with tobacco free state law on school grounds.



Nutrition Division

- 1) WIC Clinics are Open in November!
Update from Colorado WIC (COWIC) on November 4, 2025:

COWIC was granted spending authority by the State of Colorado through a decision by the Joint Budget Committee to approve the Governor's supplemental request on October 30, 2025. The funding can be used to provide food benefits to participants and cover local agency contracts through November 30, 2025. Any federal funds received will continue to be used to repay the state for any funds used through this temporary spending authority.

Recently there have been headlines about the transfer of an additional \$450M of emergency funding to the USDA to fund WIC nationally into November. Colorado's portion is approximately \$2M NSA (Admin)

and \$6.5M Food. **This supplemental funding will cover food benefits and local agency contracts through November 30, 2025.**

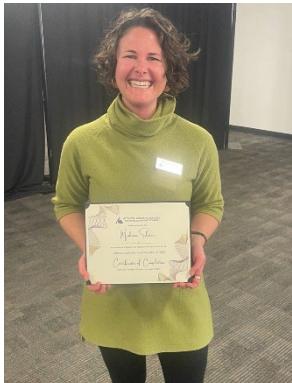
2) By the Numbers in September

- a. 12,394 WIC clients enrolled – highest since opening doors at ACPH!
- b. 4,957 calls handled through the WIC call centers – highest volume this year
- c. 4,904 WIC appointments completed
- d. 920 contacts by our Breastfeeding Peer Counselors to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers
- e. \$914,601.76 spent at WIC authorized grocery stores

Community Health Nursing Division

1) Nursing Operations

- a. Makena Slater, Clinical Nurse Informaticist, graduated from the 2025 Littleton Leadership Academy on Friday, October 17. The ceremony featured Arapahoe County Commissioner Carry Warren-Gully as a keynote speaker, and along with approximately 40 other members of her graduating class, Makena was honored for her achievements and recognized as a



future leader of the Littleton community. The Academy is a 10-month leadership development program hosted in the city of Littleton at Arapahoe Community College. Participants meet once a month for a full day and explore topics like city governance, land use, infrastructure, non-profit sector, health & wellness, and art & culture.

2) Maternal and Child Health Program

- a. The Regional Health Connector (RHC) program has been awarded grant funding to support the Career Paths into Healthcare Program (CPHP). CPHP is a five-year initiative led by the University of Colorado School of Medicine Department of Family Medicine to strengthen Colorado's healthcare workforce, not just providers, but the full range of roles that make clinics, hospitals, and community health programs work. The RHC will be serving as the CPHP liaison with community partners and supporting engagement of participating organizations. **This initiative aligns with the ACPH Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) goal of increasing economic security and mobility by improving access to affordable physical and behavioral care.**
- b. ACPH is partnering with the Metro Denver hospitals and other local public health agencies on a shared messaging campaign for firearm injury prevention. The launch of the campaign will be on November 18, for National Injury Prevention Month. The focus of the messaging will be on keeping families and youth safe and safe storage. ACPH communications team is

currently working on a social media campaign as well as a webpage for firearm injury prevention. **This initiative aligns with the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) objective to increase access to community safety.**

- c. Maternal and Child Health (MCH) staff partnered with Denver Health and Elephant Circle to host a bilingual “Medicaid and Mingle” informational and networking event for community-based doulas. Over 30 doulas attended, along with representatives from HCPF and Colorado Access. Doulas gained a clearer understanding of the Medicaid enrollment process and available support resources. Colorado Access gained valuable insight into barriers doulas face when enrolling. MCH staff also identified communication challenges between systems and doulas and plan to continue facilitating clearer communication and translation between these groups. **This initiative aligns with the ACPH Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) goal of increasing economic security and mobility by improving access to affordable physical and behavioral care.**

**Please see the Doula Workforce Development Program flyer attached in subsequent document*

- d. MCH and RHC staff launched an internal Social Determinants of Health resource-finder database using Airtable to improve access to community resources and referral coordination. ACPH staff from across multiple teams were trained as ‘vetters’ and have collectively reviewed 170 organizations across Arapahoe County, covering areas such as healthcare, housing, mental health, financial assistance, and parenting support. We continue to enhance and promote the “Collaborative Resource Hub,” which allows staff to share referral advice, brochures, and curated resources. Ongoing, interactive trainings support staff adoption and effective use of both tools. **This initiative aligns across all areas of the ACPH Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).**

3) Immunizations

- a. The Immunization Program saw the largest volume of clients for the calendar year so far in October – 482 – and administered 1344 vaccines.
- b. COVID vaccine is now available nation-wide for all populations 6 months and older, regardless of insurance status after a delay for Vaccine for Children Program eligible individuals – children on Medicaid or who are uninsured.
- c. More than 100 people in the Arapahoe County Detention Center received flu vaccine and other needed immunizations.
- d. Annual respiratory virus vaccines were provided through home visits to homebound county residents.

4) Sexual Health

- a. Sexual Health received communication from the CDPHE lab that some STI test results from the last 5 years may have been inaccurate. We are in the process of reaching out to the 9 affected patients and scheduling them for retesting, if possible.
- b. Sexual Health RNs are working with peer navigators from the Wellness, Opportunity and Resilience through Health (WORTH) program at CU Anschutz to provide linkage to health care to people newly released from the Arapahoe County Detention center. WORTH staff will work with community members to ensure they are able to complete their STI treatment, access prenatal care, and manage chronic health conditions.
- c. October is Breast Cancer Awareness month and to acknowledge this Kara Lenhoff, RN and Kristen Ball, NP presented an education session on breast and cervical cancer screening and prevention to residents of an Aurora Housing Authority property on 10/29/2025.

- d. Carrie Knowlton, Nurse Manager, was accepted as a member of the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) HIV, STI and Viral Hepatitis workgroup. She will be participating in discussions to shape NACCHO's strategy and initiatives to address these syndemic issues.

5) Harm Reduction

- a. Harm Reduction leadership met with law enforcement and mental health co-responders from Littleton, Englewood and Aurora to provide education about Harm Reduction services and discuss how to better collaborate. The team has been invited to continue the conversation and present to AllHealth co-responders in Englewood and Littleton in January 2026.
- b. Harm Reduction is working with a Regis University Nursing student to plan brief educational modules to deliver to clients, with a goal of delivering short, powerful messages to every client who accesses services. Planned modules include substance use treatment and recovery, HIV/STI/Hep C, First aid and infection prevention, and overdose prevention. Planned kickoff is January, 2026.
- c. Elicia Chacon, Harm reduction supervisor, spoke on a panel at the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council (COAC) conference. She shared program successes as a COAC grantee.
- d. Increased funding from the Region 9 Opioid Abatement Council was received.
- e. The team will be doing joint outreach with the City of Aurora Homeless Services team. Kiera Davis, Sexual health RN, will also be presenting to the team on distribution of first aid supplies and appropriate education on infection prevention.
- f. Raquel Isaac and Arnette Lim have completed their Community Health Worker training and will be taking the certification exam in November.

6) Nurse- Family Partnership

- a. On October 22, 2025, the ACPH Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) hosted a client gathering at The Urban Farm, Denver. The Urban Farm is a community farm and educational center that is focused on hands-on agricultural learning for youth. The program had 21 families attend the event, many with extended family members like grandparents. The farm hosted three farm tours, one solely in Spanish. NFP children and family members were able to learn about all the farm animals while being able to have hands on experiences with animals like goats, cows, chickens, and bunnies. Who knew goats expel heat from their horns-we all learned something. At the end of the event, NFP children took home a bilingual touch and feel farm book and a pumpkin after visiting the NFP photo booth. Events like this help enhance our clients' ability to provide a variety of learning experiences for their children while being in community with other NFP families to reduce isolation. Many new toddler friends were made.



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

1. Environmental Health (EH) Programs
 - a. Early Childhood and Schools:
 - i. The EH Early Childhood and Schools program continues to strengthen partnerships with local and state agencies to support safe, compliant learning environments through a collaborative, solutions-oriented approach. This includes working in coordination with fire departments, the Colorado Department of Early Childhood, Institute for Racial Equality & Excellence (IREE) licensing staff, and other key partners to ensure facilities meet fire, building and sanitation standards. ACPH is also partnering with the Aurora Public Schools After School Contract team on new in-house before- and after-school programming and will co-host a Health and Sanitation Regulations webinar with IREE on November 12, 2025, to promote consistent understanding of requirements across childcare and school-based programs.
 - b. Solid and Hazardous Waste:

- i. EH staff attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Waste Management (WM) of Colorado's new Denver South Transfer Station. This new 71,000-square-foot facility, located on a 5.7-acre site at 2400 W. Union Ave. in Englewood, replaces a building that was destroyed by fire in 2022. WM invested more than \$25 million in the project to revitalize and modernize the site. The new facility will better meet the waste removal and recycling service needs of Englewood, Centennial, Denver, Aurora, and surrounding communities. The facility also plays an important role in reducing truck traffic on local roads by consolidating waste, which improves operational efficiency and helps minimize environmental impacts through lower fuel consumption and emissions. Waste collected at the transfer station is transported to the Denver Arapahoe Disposal Site (DADS) landfill. WM has served Colorado communities for more than 62 years and employs more than 2,300 people across 40 facilities statewide.
- c. General Environmental Health
 - i. Colorado Directors of Environmental Health (CDEH) is a professional association comprised primarily of directors and managers of Environmental Health Programs from local public health departments across Colorado. In collaboration with CDPHE staff, CDEH meets quarterly to provide a platform for EH professionals to share knowledge, develop policy, improve practices, and network. 2026 Executive Committee leadership includes President Claire Lewandowski from Eagle County, Secretary **Mark McMillan** of Denver County and Treasurer **Dylan Garrison** of Arapahoe County.

2. Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Program

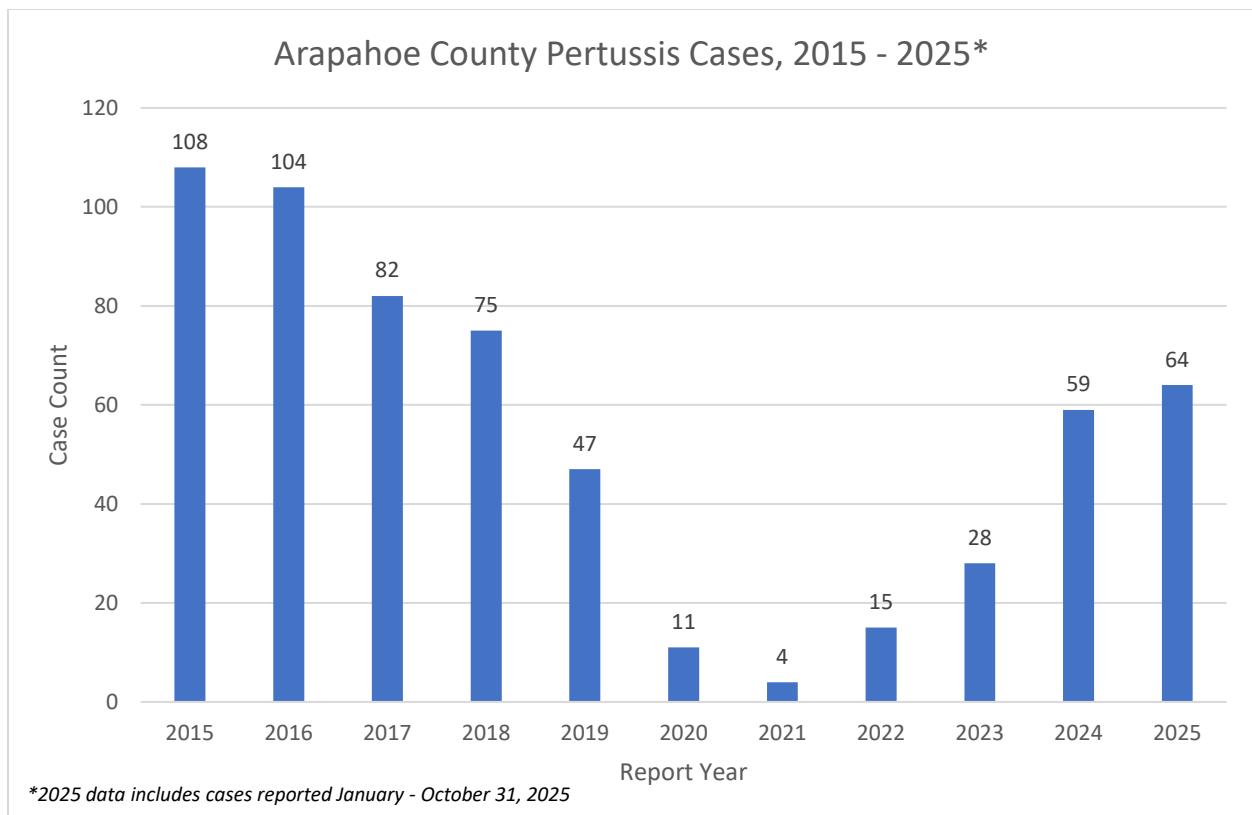
- a. This month, the North Central All-Hazards Region hosted a three-day Bioterrorism Exercise utilizing an anthrax scenario that would heavily impact the public health and medical infrastructure within the metro area. ACPH and the County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) partnered closely during this three-day exercise to simulate how the county would respond to this type of incident. As part of this effort, the ACPH Public Health Incident Response and Support Team (PHIRTS) participated in a discussion-based exercise with OEM, the Sheriff's Department Public Information Officers, and the County Communications Team. This portion of the exercise outlined roles and responsibilities, formalized ongoing information sharing processes, and explored operational coordination. Also, as part of the three-day exercise, the CDE staff practiced case investigation for a non-communicable disease incident, strengthening their capabilities for any type of public health response. The EPR staff facilitated a PHIRST situation briefing, led a county wide ESF #8 coordination call for hospitals, behavioral health, FQHCs, and the Coroner's Office, and participated in a cross-jurisdictional briefing with the state health department and LPHA counterparts throughout the region. These ongoing opportunities to practice information sharing and coordination continue to strengthen relationships throughout the response community and increase our capability to respond to all incidents impacting Arapahoe County and the surrounding metro area.
- b. In October, ACPH hosted the second cross-jurisdictional workshop with LPHA partners from fourteen counties along the Front Range. Building on the measles scenario from the April 2025 workshop, CDE, Nursing, and EPR staff shared lessons learned, planning efforts, training materials, and safety considerations to increase the testing capacity for measles within and across Front Range LPAs. Staff from the CDPHE Lab were also present to provide

clarification on sample collection and packaging requirements, how best to access just-in-time guidance during incidents, and how to access supplies from the lab when testing is needed. Like the first workshop, this workshop provided the opportunity to ask questions, share expertise and resources, and strengthen relationships. Participants requested and the group will engage in ongoing in-person workshops twice a year.

3. Communicable Disease Epidemiology (CDE) Report

- i. *Pertussis*: Pertussis (Whooping Cough) is caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis* which causes respiratory illness. Pertussis is transmitted person-to-person via the respiratory route through large aerosolized respiratory droplets or direct contact with secretions from the respiratory tract. Pertussis causes a long illness lasting approximately 6 weeks but can last up to 3 months. Pertussis is characterized into three distinct stages of illness (catarrhal stage, paroxysmal stage, and convalescent stage) with progressively worsening symptoms. Symptoms of pertussis include an onset of nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, mild dry cough which develops into coughing fits, high-pitched inspiratory whoop, vomiting, and apnea.

Cases of pertussis in Colorado decreased from 2020 – 2022, averaging 126 cases each year statewide. However, there has been a statewide increase since fall 2023. CDPHE is expecting that statewide pertussis cases are returning to pre-pandemic levels. Cases in Arapahoe County are following a similar trend where cases were declining until 2022, with the lowest number of cases reported in 2021 (see figure below). There have been 64 cases reported so far in 2025 compared to 59 cases reported for all of 2024. In addition, outbreaks of pertussis are also increasing statewide. Arapahoe County has had one confirmed pertussis outbreak in a school reported so far in 2025. ACPH continues to recommend the [pertussis vaccination series](#) as the most effective method to prevent serious infection. The CDE Program conducts in-depth case investigations with pertussis cases to determine sources of infection, monitor illness, identify public events the individual may have attended while infectious, and recommend post-exposure prophylaxis antibiotics to close contacts to prevent infection. In addition, the CDE Program collaborates with schools, childcares, and other organizations to provide education, notification letters, monitor illness trends, and guidance on disease control measures to reduce the spread of illness during outbreaks.



ii. **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:

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

In the United States, reports of norovirus generally increase from 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 51 norovirus outbreaks in Arapahoe County in 2024. Thirty-four (34) norovirus outbreaks have been reported in Arapahoe County so far 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.

- ii. *Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease:* Outbreaks of Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD) have continued to increase in Colorado and Arapahoe County in both schools and childcare centers. While HFMD is usually most common in younger children, Arapahoe County is monitoring an increasing trend of illness reported among older students in middle and high schools. Fourteen confirmed and 6 suspect outbreaks have been reported in Arapahoe County since mid-July 2025. The 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 help stop transmission.