

Public Health Director's Report
Prepared by: Jennifer Ludwig
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A. Mission Moments

Continued Success of Collaborative Resource Hub

Nurse Liaison Program nurse home visitor Karen Shappee shared this mission moment in appreciation of staff supporting the work of the Collaborative Resource Hub (the Hub). While the formal workgroup behind the Hub includes Laura Brayer-Don, Mikayla Branz, Lindsay Brown, Cherelle Cowan, Kathleen Rebello, Brooke Wagenseller, Laura Taylor, Becca Miles and Kaitlin Wolff, staff across multiple teams and divisions contribute information into the Hub making it a true gem of collaboration (and a little crowd sourcing) and a solution to many of our shared resource needs.

"I regularly use the Collaborative Resource Hub to stay connected to shared resources and events, and I'd like to share one recent highlight that reflects its impact. A colleague in another department at ACPH posted about a summer camp resource event for children with medical and non-medical needs, which I learned about through the Hub. After seeing this post, I attended the event and invited another colleague to join me, allowing us to collaborate, make community connections and gather a variety of camp resources together. One meaningful outcome was finding a specific weeklong summer camp through Children's Hospital that focuses on anxiety for 8–18-year-olds which I was able to immediately share with a family I am currently working with. This experience reinforced the value of the Hub in not only fostering collaboration among staff but also in providing timely, individualized resources that directly support the families we serve. I am especially grateful to the Collaborative Resource Hub workgroup for creating and maintaining the Hub, which has become an essential and comprehensive tool for sharing and accessing resources."

Celebration of Black History Month

Kiera Davis, Registered Nurse in the Sexual Health Program, is leading the team in celebrating Black History Month this year. The work we do in the Sexual Health Program is built on the contributions of people whose stories don't always get told. Kiera wanted to lead this effort because representation isn't just a buzzword, it actually matters. By highlighting folks like Dr. William Hinton for his work in syphilis testing, Henrietta Lacks for the lasting impact she's had on public health ethics, Marsha P. Johnson for her leadership through activism and harm reduction, and Loretta Ross for shaping the reproductive justice framework, we're not just looking back at history, we're pushing back on the erasure of Black brilliance that continues to shape medicine, sexual health, and social equity.

To keep this fun and engaging, the Sexual Health Program staff are also doing a Black History Month BINGO challenge to spark curiosity and deeper learning. Kiera's hope is that this helps us move past surface level facts and really appreciate the diverse perspectives that have always been at the heart of our field. This isn't about checking a box for one month; it's about grounding what we do every day in the truth of who built this foundation and making sure their legacies are recognized and celebrated by our whole team.

Black History Month Bingo

To celebrate Black History Month, we are playing Bingo (sort of)! Each day you will choose a square to complete. The goal is to get 5 in a row and there may be extra prizes for those who complete all 25 squares!

Once you choose a square for the day, you will identify a person/place/thing that matches the description and write the information you gathered on the board in the front!

By the end of the month, we will have a huge board of influential Black people, organizations and history to look at and carry with us during this important month of celebration!

Black Director	Black Educator or Scholar	Black Feminist	Black Artist	Black Musician or Composer
Black Scientist	Black Leader of a Country	Local Advocacy Organization for POC	Black Comedian or Cultural Commentator	Black Journalist
Black Innovator	Black-Owned Business in Your Community	CHALLENGE SPACE (find someone or something not included on this list)	Black Nurse/Doctor/ Healthcare Professional	Healthcare Organization Focused on Black Community 
Civil Rights Activist	Black Athlete	Black Environmental Justice Advocate	Black Advocate for Voting Rights	Black Chef/Culinary Expert
Historically Black College or University (HBCU)	Black Legal Scholar or Judge	Black Author	Black Fashion Designer	Book About Black History or Black Culture (fiction or nonfiction)

B. Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Headlines

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

CHIP Priority: Economic Security

- 1) MCH Team partners to help increase Colorado's non-clinical perinatal workforce
- 2) ACPH awarded funding to collaboratively reduce community transportation barriers

CHIP Priority: Community Safety

- 3) Healthy Aging Coordinator joining statewide workgroup to help improve collaboration and messaging
- 4) Access to child safety supplies increased thanks to ACPH partnership with Children's Hospital Colorado

C. Events and Engagement Opportunities

Recent events: 1/29 Student Resource Fair at Community College of Aurora

Upcoming events: 2/12 Family Health Night at Charles Hay World School in Englewood, 2/19 Aurora Central High School Job Fair and Resource Expo.

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.**

D. Program Updates

Administration

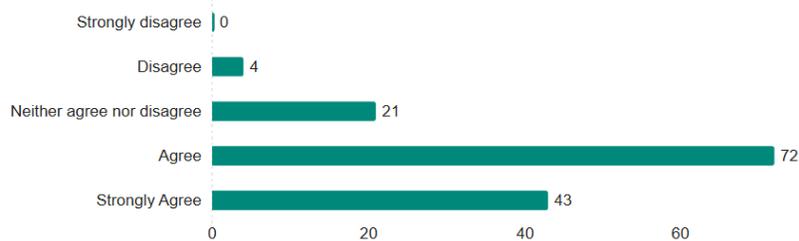
- 1) Metro Denver Partnership for Health (MDPH) – Jennifer Ludwig just ended her 2-year term as co-chair. Over the last two years, the group has been evaluating its purpose and key functions. In 2026, MDPH will be focused on policy that impacts public health in the short and long term.
- 2) ACPH Leadership Team – Jennifer Ludwig shared the fall 2025 Arapahoe County Employee Engagement Survey results with ACPH supervisors. Public Health achieved a strong 75% participation rate and an impressive 84% favorability score. Supervisors will review these findings with their teams, and in March we will gather feedback to identify opportunities for improvement and areas to strengthen in 2026.
- 3) Healthcare Leaders will hold its second meeting on February 26 to discuss policy impacting healthcare delivery and shared messaging.
- 4) Vital Records scored 100% on Q4 audit. The team was recognized for issuing 9318 sheets of security paper with every sheet accounted for in the State system (COVES).

Partnerships, Planning and Community Health Promotion

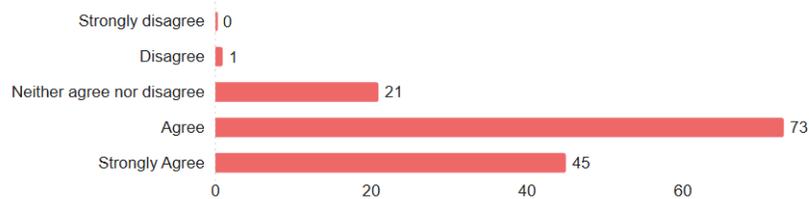
- 1) As part of the ACPH Ambassadors Program, our agencywide initiative to positively impact others through strong customer service and partnerships, we work to continually improve our understanding of staff needs and recommendations related to representing our agency and the field of public health. In our recent all-staff survey, 82% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I feel more comfortable working as an ambassador for the field of public health since

working at ACPH,” and 84% agreed or strongly agreed that, “I feel actively supported by ACPH in being an ambassador for our agency and the field of public health.” We look forward to improving and recognizing these efforts throughout 2026.

Q92 - I feel more comfortable serving as an ambassador for the field of public health since working at ACPH.



Q93 - I feel actively supported by ACPH in being an ambassador for our agency in the field of public health.



- 2) Melissa Smith has accepted an invitation to join the Colorado Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) Empower and Engage Workgroup, being convened as a part of the ADRD Action Coalition. Participation in this workgroup will help strengthen ACPH’s connection to statewide initiatives and will support improved alignment with local healthy aging efforts and recommended best practices, especially those related to educational messaging. **This initiative aligns with the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) priority to enhance community safety.**
- 3) Betsy Craft partnered with Dr. Kate Lemasters, researcher at University of Colorado’s Anschutz Medical Campus, in presenting at a virtual seminar hosted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse Clinical Trials Network on best practices for engaging people who use drugs as research partners and participants. Co-led by the Kaiser Permanente Colorado Institute for Health Research, the seminar series provides a forum on topics like substance use-related prevention, research, and service delivery. Through their presentation, 55 participants from across Colorado and the U.S. learned about projects on which the pair has collaborated in recent years including concrete examples, real-world lessons learned, and practical best practices for equitably partnering with living expertise leaders who use drugs. Feedback included reflections such as, “Wonderful presentation, I am in awe!” and “This is the model of what research should be.”

Nutrition Division

- 1) Billing for Lactation Support Services
 - a. Breastfeeding is crucial for public health because it protects infants and mothers from various illnesses and promotes overall well-being. Legislation (HB22-1289) passed in May 2024 which requires Medicaid to provide breast pumps and lactation support services to Medicaid clients. IBCLCs can become Medicaid providers and bill Medicaid directly. CLC/CLEs

can bill Medicaid under a Medicaid provider/group. To generate revenue to expand our breastfeeding support efforts, the Nutrition Division partnered with the Community Health Nursing Division to utilize the Medicaid Lactation Services Benefit to bill Medicaid through CureMD for families who attend our weekly drop-in Baby Café support group. We have submitted 41 claims and have currently received payment for 15 claims totaling \$1,906.66.

2) WIC 101 for Children’s Pediatric Residents

- b. WIC Supervisors Laura Backhaus, RDN, Natasha Newlin, RDN, and Emily Petty, RDN, co-lead a WIC 101 and pediatric case study for 50 Pediatric Residents on January 27 at the Children’s Hospital of Colorado Aurora Campus. They provided an overview of WIC including breastfeeding promotion, formula and foods provided and how to best reach out to WIC clinics and partner. Through their conversations, a collaborative way to communicate anthropometric measurements was discovered and will be put into place. The team will do another WIC 101 on February 24 for another cohort of 50 pediatric residents.

Community Health Nursing Division

1) Nursing Operations

- a. This summary highlights the Community Health Nursing Division’s 2025 billing performance. Alongside continued billing for clinical services in the Immunizations and Sexual Health Programs, we successfully expanded insurance billing to include Nurse-Family Partnership and Family Connects services, strengthening revenue streams and supporting program sustainability.

- For Fiscal Year 2025, we received a total revenue of \$348,945.70
- Payment Sources included:
 - 66% Colorado Medicaid
 - 23% Self-Pay
 - 7% CHP Plus
 - 4% Private Insurance

i. Total by Program

- Sexual Health: \$189,365.39 or 54%
- Immunizations: \$129,783.31 or 37%
- Nurse Family Partnership: \$29,504 or 9% (Billing began in February)
- Family Connects: \$293.10 or <1% (Billing began in November)

ii. Total by Location

- Altura: \$254,724.05 or 73%
- Englewood: \$64,949.75 or 19%
- Aurora South: \$29,272 or 8%

2) Nurse Liaison Program

- a. As part of our ongoing partnership with Arapahoe County Department of Human Services (DHS) to land on the most effective use of nurse home visitors in the prevention of child abuse and neglect, NLP is prioritizing joint home visits with case workers whenever possible. NLP started tracking this data point in the Fall of 2025. We are proud to report that in Q4 of 2025, 50% of nurse home visits were conducted with case workers. This is a huge coordination accomplishment when you consider each nurse is supporting 5-6 DHS teams of 5 case workers each or 25-30 case workers per nurse home visitor.

3) Maternal Child Health & Regional Health Connector

- a. On Tuesday 1/20, CDPHE hosted a Statewide Local Learning Community event. ACPH MCH staff were one of the few invited speakers to present. The topic was Doula Workforce Support in Colorado, and specifically the opportunities and challenges around the Medicaid benefit, and how local colleagues might support this workforce in their own communities. Based on the surveys collected at the conclusion of the event from participants, CDPHE is pursuing additional opportunities to support cross-county learning spaces in the non-clinical perinatal workforce. **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 was awarded the 2026 RTD Transit Assistance Grant for the third year in a row, including an increase from the amount awarded in the previous 2 years. This grant will allow us to continue to work with our internal programs along with Human Services and Community Resources to distribute transportation vouchers to community members along with information about the income-based reduced fare program, thereby assisting with transportation barriers. The specific award is in the amount of \$42,762.50 or the equivalent of 1,555 standard 10-ride ticket books. Each ticket book is valued at \$27.50. **This initiative aligns with the ACPH Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) goal of increasing economic security and mobility.**
- c. In a previous update, MCH reported on a new procedure initiated in partnership with ACPH Administration & Finance Division to accept financial donations. The MCH team secured its second financial donation in the amount of \$1,000 to purchase additional car seats and pack-n-plays through the Children's Hospital Safety Store. To date, the MCH team has secured \$17,500 dollars through our partnership with the Children's Hospital Safety Store. **This initiative aligns with the ACPH Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) goal of increasing community safety.**

4) Immunizations

- a. In January, the Immunization Program administered 972 vaccines to 347 clients. This is an increase over 2025, primarily due to an ongoing collaboration with the Arapahoe County Detention Center which provided respiratory and other needed vaccines to 63 individuals. The program also supported the Point in Time Count of people experiencing homelessness at Englewood's Giving Heart Day resource center.
- b. Immunization Staff participated in an Emergency Preparedness exercise with Denver Health and CDPHE to improve readiness to respond to an active case of Tuberculosis which resulted in a large contact investigation.

5) Sexual Health

- a. Sexual Health RNs and MAs went through several deep dive trainings with our clinical advisor, Jordyn Bode, to expand their knowledge and keep them working at the top of their scope of practice. RNs learned about how to assess and triage abnormal menstrual bleeding, and MAs honed their intramuscular injection skills, expanding their ability to administer injectable contraceptives in clinic.
- b. Sexual Health leadership joined the CDPHE Jail Learning Collaborative with Weld, Jefferson, Adams, Pueblo and El Paso County – a workgroup designed to share lessons learned and share solutions to challenges with other LPHAs providing STI testing and treatment services in the jail setting.

- c. After reading the Arapahoe County spotlight in the NACCHO Syndemic Solutions in Action services, the local health department serving Mecklenburg County, NC, the largest county in the state, reached out to request that a sexual health RN present on our community outreach strategy at their local STI conference. Christine Doidge, clinic supervisor, will be representing Arapahoe County at this event.

6) Harm Reduction

- a. Harm Reduction and Sexual Health staff participated in the Community College of Aurora's Wellness Den ribbon cutting and Foxy's Mobile Market. The event offered food security resources to students, while also launching their wellness space for student health and wellness. The wellness center includes a food pantry, hygiene items, pregnancy tests and Naloxone for opioid overdoses. See photos below.
- b. We launched a volunteer program and have already seen early progress. One volunteer has completed two shifts, one individual is scheduled to complete training and begin volunteering, and two additional candidates are in the screening process. This program has expanded HRP capacity by supporting kit assembly (hygiene, first aid, etc.) for participant distribution.
- c. The HRP Care Coordinator departed the role on 1/9, leaving the team temporarily more understaffed. The position has since been posted, interviews are underway, and we anticipate filling the role within the next month.
- d. Senior Health Educators Destiny and Angie delivered a harm reduction training for the Nurse Liaison Program staff who requested additional preparation to better support clients who use drugs or may need substance use services. The training was very well received and highly successful.
- e. The Harm Reduction team was awarded \$120,000 for the NACCHO Reimagining Health and Public Safety in Overdose Initiatives (RHAPSODI) grant this month. This will support monthly harm reduction and overdose prevention education at the Arapahoe County Detention Center, keep public health kiosks at the jail and probation offices stocked with naloxone, and strengthen our partnership with Wellness, Opportunity and Resilience through Health (WORTH), an initiative of the University of Colorado focused on connecting incarcerated and recently incarcerated individuals with medical care.
- f. Building community partnerships has been a major focus this month. In addition to building new relationships with community organizations such as the All-Health Network Co-Responder Team and the Behavioral Health Group in Centennial, the Harm Reduction Program continues to coordinate with existing partners to deliver life-saving resources to participants and began co-locating services with partners at our fixed sites in Englewood and at It Takes a Village.



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

1) Environmental Health (EH) Programs

a. Consumer Protection: Mobile Food Reciprocal Licensing

Beginning January 1, 2026, HB25-1295 took effect. HB25-1295 establishes license reciprocity for all mobile food units, allowing mobile food units to operate across county lines with only one mobile license, regardless of what county issued that license. This marks a departure from prior rules, which differentiated a Denver issued mobile food license from a “state” license as issued by CDPHE and all counties other than Denver. While we are uncertain how this change will impact licensing renewals at ACPH over the long term, our January renewal numbers to date are exceeding those from this time last year.

b. Water Quality Program

i. Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority (CCBWQA) Support:

Dr. Diana Rashash, ACPH Water Quality Program, was invited by the Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority (CCBWQA) to review and provide feedback on the Cherry Creek Watershed Plan. She conducted a thorough review of the 190-page document and offered valuable insights and constructive edits. The CCBWQA greatly appreciated Diana’s expertise, attention to detail, and thoughtful edits. Her work also garnered appreciation from an Arapahoe County Commissioner.

ii. Colorado Professionals in Onsite Wastewater (CPOW) Annual Conference:

Dr. Diana Rashash delivered a presentation at the CPOW Annual Education Conference regarding her work on updating and consolidating ACPH permit files to reflect sites where septic systems had been connected to a public sewer or abandoned. This work improves data accuracy and allows for a more precise representation of permitted sites and watershed-level impacts related to septic systems. Additionally, Amara Thomas and Rachel Gamache, also from the Water

Quality Program served on the Conference Planning Committee and enhanced our connections with the industry and the association through their work.

c. Solid and Hazardous Waste Program

- i. Come learn about the Lowry Landfill Superfund Site at the next Open House, which will be held at the Arapahoe County Fairgrounds on February 18, 2026. 5:30-7:00pm. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE), and Arapahoe County Public Health (ACPH) invite you to join them at an upcoming Open House to learn about the Lowry Landfill Superfund Site and the actions being taken to ensure cleanup activities remain protective of human health and the environment. The most recent updates and information on the Site are linked below:

- [Executive Summary](#)
- [Most Recent Site Status Report \(SSR\)](#)
- [SSR Companion Video](#)
- [Lowry Landfill Superfund Site](#)

2) Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Program

a. *Tuberculosis (TB) Tabletop Exercise:*

On January 20, 2026, the EPR program facilitated a tabletop exercise focusing on what a response to tuberculosis could look like in Arapahoe County. ACPH contracts with the Denver Health TB Clinic to investigate, treat, and monitor TB patients and contacts in our county. Participants at this exercise included cross programmatic representation from throughout ACPH including the Health Protection and Response Division, Community Health Nursing Division, Community Engagement Specialist, department leadership, as well as county communications, our partners at the Denver Health TB Clinic, and CDPHE. The exercise focused on notification and response during a small-scale incident to lay the foundation for coordination and information sharing. Partners learned about the capabilities and capacity of the Denver Health TB Clinic, expectations of ACPH for surge support, and avenues for information sharing and public information when a patient is identified in Arapahoe County.

b. *National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) Pilot Program Workshop:*

On February 3, 2026, EPR staff participated in the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) Pilot Program Workshop. The NDMS Pilot Program serves as the foundation of how wounded American Soldiers are transported to and integrated into medical systems across the US during foreign conflict. The metro Denver area serves as one of the sites to which large numbers of wounded, and consequently their loved ones, could come for the duration of hospitalization and rehabilitation during a foreign conflict. The exercise, part of a series of workshops, drills, and full-scale exercises, was used to identify gaps in patient triage, placement, tracking, and support with partners from local, regional, state, federal, private, and military entities.

3) Communicable Disease Epidemiology (CDE) Program

- a. Staff from CDPHE, Denver County, El Paso County, Arapahoe County, Boulder County, and CDC co-authored a CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) on the [2025 measles outbreak associated with an infectious traveler](#), published on 1/29/2026. This report

included key takeaways from the response, lessons learned, and new best practices for future large-scale measles investigations:

- Airplanes and airports continue to be higher-risk environments for the rapid spread of measles.
- While breakthrough cases occurred due to prolonged exposure, unvaccinated cases had more severe symptoms than vaccinated cases.
- Collecting urine samples was vital in identifying cases, particularly among previously vaccinated individuals.
- Healthcare providers should verify measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccination status for all patients prior to travel and consider urine collection for suspected cases to improve diagnostic yield.

b. *Norovirus*: Outbreaks of norovirus and viral gastroenteritis continue to increase in Colorado and Arapahoe County. Twenty-two (22) norovirus or viral gastroenteritis outbreaks have been reported in Arapahoe County since 11/1/2025. The majority of outbreaks have been reported in schools (12), childcares (5), long-term care facilities (4), and healthcare facilities (1). The CDE Program works closely with facilities to provide disease control recommendations, parent/resident notification letters, education, and monitor trends to help stop transmission.

c. *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:

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

Since prior eradication through sterilization methods, NWS has returned to Central America and Mexico, with a pattern of northward movement which increases the risk of re-emergence in the United States. The re-emergence is attributed to farming in prior fly control barrier regions and increased cattle movement. In February 2025, the USDA shifted NWS sterile fly dispersal efforts to Mexico and approximately 50 miles into Texas to help control the spread in addition to increased surveillance and monitoring of livestock, wildlife,

and people. As of 2/10/2026, detection of NWS in Central American and Mexico has continued to expand northward and there have been 992 human cases reported so far in Mexico and Central America. On 1/29/2026, Texas issued a statewide NWS disaster declaration in response to the threat of northward spread. The declaration allows the Texas NWS Response Team to fully utilize all state government prevention and response resources to prevent re-emergence in the state.

The ACPH CDE Program remains up to date on the situation 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. and Colorado.

- d. *Measles*: Measles is a highly infectious respiratory virus, transmitted primarily via large respiratory droplets. Airborne transmission via aerosolized droplets has been documented in closed areas for up to two hours after a person with measles has been there. Approximately 90% of susceptible individuals exposed to measles will become sick with measles. Measles is characterized by a prodrome fever and malaise, cough, coryza (runny nose), and conjunctivitis, followed by a maculopapular rash. Approximately 30% of cases have one or more complications, which are more common among children younger than 5 years and adults older than 20 years. Complications can include diarrhea, ear infections, croup, and pneumonia. Acute encephalitis, which may result in permanent brain damage, and death are rare but can occur. Measles vaccine is incorporated with mumps and rubella vaccine or with mumps, rubella, and varicella as a combined vaccine (MMR or MMRV, respectively). Two doses of MMR are about 97% effective at preventing measles and one dose is about 93% effective.

In 2025 and 2026, significant measles outbreaks have been reported in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. As of 2/11/2026, there are 733 cases in the United States, 135 in Canada, and 1,858 in Mexico. Since October 2025, South Carolina has been managing a large-scale measles outbreak. As of 2/10/2026, they have reported 933 confirmed cases, surpassing the west Texas outbreak in 2025 and is the nation's largest measles outbreak since 2000. Cases from this outbreak have resulted in exposures and outbreaks in other states linked to travel to and from South Carolina. On 2/5/2026, the California Department of Health (CDPH) notified CDPHE of an Arapahoe County resident that tested positive for measles while in California. This is the first confirmed case reported in Colorado in [2026](#). This case is an unvaccinated elementary-aged child who traveled by car to California and was likely exposed while traveling in proximity to known outbreaks in Utah as well as locations where new cases have been identified in California. In collaboration with CDPH, ACPH CDE interviewed the family and determined there are no exposures to anyone in Colorado. CDPH and ACPH CDE will continue to follow up with the family through 2/24/2026 to monitor for symptoms of household contacts.

The ACPH CDE Program continues to monitor the ongoing outbreaks and surveillance trends to respond effectively to cases reported in Colorado.

e. *Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1*: HPAI is a virus that naturally spreads among wild birds and can also infect poultry and other kinds of animals. While rare, HPAI can infect humans. The CDC assesses the risk to the general public as low but considers it moderate to high risk for those in contact with potentially infected animals or contaminated materials.

Recommendations for the general public include:

- i. Avoiding contact with sick birds and other animals.
- ii. If you must handle sick or dead birds or animals, wear recommended personal protective equipment, including an N95 respirator, eye protection, and gloves.
- iii. Drink pasteurized milk.
- iv. Cook poultry and meat products to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F and wash hands and surfaces when handling raw meat and poultry.
- v. Pets can also become sick with HPAI. CDPHE and the Colorado Department of Agriculture recommend against feeding raw poultry products to domestic animals, especially cats.

Since 4/1/2024, the U.S. has reported 78 (confirmed and probable) human cases, including two deaths. Ten (10) cases have been reported in Colorado, and none have been reported since summer 2024. No human cases have been reported in Arapahoe County. On 1/30/2026, Colorado issued a [disaster declaration](#) after confirming HPAI in a commercial farm in Weld County affecting over 1.3 million birds. This is the first commercial detection in Colorado since mid-2024, although backyard detections and detections among wildlife have been reported including a press release on [2/2/2026](#) outlining recent backyard detections. Additionally, the USDA maintains a [list](#) of wild birds that have tested positive for HPAI. Since 2023, there have been 10 wild bird detections in Arapahoe County. Two (2) detections have been reported so far in 2026 among Cooper's hawk and a Cackling goose. CDPHE, the Department of Agriculture, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife are the lead agencies for all animal testing and investigations, and investigations and monitoring of human exposures or cases in the state. CDPHE only notifies ACPH CDE if Arapahoe County residents may have been exposed to HPAI and are being monitored by CDPHE to provide ACPH with situational awareness.