

Public Health Director's Report  
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Dates Covered: August 19 - September 12, 2024

## **A. Equity and Engagement**

1. *Upcoming Events and Opportunities: (reach out to [GSoulen@arapahoe.gov](mailto:GSoulen@arapahoe.gov) if interested)*
  - i. Food Justice Fair for NW Aurora 9/21, 10am-2pm at Fletcher Plaza, in front of MLK Library
  - ii. NW Aurora Resource Fair with Aurora Police Department 9/21, 11am-2pm at former Walmart parking lot at Colfax and Havana
  - iii. East Community Center/Littleton Public Schools Community Resource Fair 9/21, 10am-1pm at East Community Center 5933 S. Fairfield St., Littleton, CO 80120
  - iv. Sheridan Celebrates Fiesta in the City, 9/28, 9am-3pm at 4101 S. Federal Blvd.
  
2. *September Conference Presentations:*
  - i. Colorado Environmental Health Association, Annual Education Conference Presentations:
    1. Garage Gone Aquatic: A Dive Into an Unexpected Pool Complaint (Marty Easter – Division of Health Protection and Response)
    2. Tales of One State's Experience with Contractor & Inspector Certification Board Establishment (Diana Rashash – Division of Health Protection and Response)
    3. ADUs and Extra People: What To Do (Rachel Gamache – Division of Health Protection and Response)
    4. Pools: To Swim or Not to Swim? How do you evaluate and communicate risk during a pool inspection? (Rachel Gamache – Division of Health Protection and Response)
    5. Mobile Food Trucks and The La Plaza Paradigm (Michael Roy and Conner Gerken – Division of Health Protection and Response)
  - ii. Public Health in the Rockies Presentations
    1. Legionellosis Outbreak Associated with a Hotel in Arapahoe County (Jeremy Lozano and Marty Easter – Division of Health Protection and Response)
    2. PHIRST Things First: Building Capability in Arapahoe County Public Health (Serena Alvarado and Lindsay Brown – Division of Health Protection and Response)
    3. Introducing Public Health Kiosks and the Prevention Point Mobile Unit: delivery methods that will improve access to harm reduction services for residents who need them most (Elicia Chacon, Kit Matzke, Destiny Giles, Angie DeDios, Arnette Lim – Harm Reduction Team, Division of Community Health Nursing)
  - iii. Maternal and Child Health Conference: A Focus on Nicotine and Cannabis Cessation

1. Panel Discussion: Tobacco, nicotine and cannabis use among pregnant people in Colorado and opportunities for cessation: A community perspective (Heidi Williams – Nutrition Division)

## **B. Mission Moments**

1. Recently, Environmental Health Specialist, Odina Trotman, in the Division of Health Protection and Response was joined by Regional Health Connector, Laura Brayer-Don, in the Division of Community Health Nursing, for a routine retail food inspection at the Mango House located on East Colfax Avenue in Aurora. The Mango House is a shared community space which welcomes refugees and asylees while providing a range of services including healthcare, places of worship, community gatherings, retail and a wide range of ethnic cuisines. During the inspection, Laura witnessed the communication barriers often experienced by field staff as well as the lack of language appropriate educational information. Wishing to bridge these communication and information gaps, Laura graciously offered to assist Environmental Health (EH) by providing grant funding to translate dozens of existing food safety handouts. Thanks to this partnership and funding availability, EH is excited to better serve our diverse community of food retailers by offering handouts in Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, Russian and Amharic (in addition to existing resources in Spanish and Chinese). Providing educational information in an operator's native language not only helps gain compliance through better understanding, but also fosters trust and builds rapport.

## **C. Program Updates**

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

- i. Congratulations to ACPH's Community Health Promotion team, who recently received praise from the State Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership in an annual grant program evaluation for their community engagement, staffing, budgetary management, and policy implementation efforts. The report closed with the following sentiment: "I am extremely proud and impressed with the work this team has done in a short amount of time. You did an absolutely incredible job this year and I'm very honored to be your Project Officer." As a result of strong performance, the team has been invited to serve as a mentor for similar programs administered by other counties. A new addition to the team's work in 2025 will be the creation of a Youth Advisory Board to help inform and guide ACPH's health promotion and chronic disease prevention efforts. CHP will also add a new grant-funded position in 2025 who will partner cross divisionally the Health Protection and Response team to support county residents and business partners in compliance with the Colorado Clean Indoor Act and other environmental impacts of tobacco and nicotine product use and disposal in the community.
- ii. Community Events: Please reach out to [Grace Soulen](#) or visit our [Community Engagement Event Request Form](#) to suggest upcoming outreach opportunities. A few of the events we appreciated participating in over the past month include Bennett Days, International Overdose Awareness Week, Foster Family Carnival, Restoration Outreach Programs 5k, Sheridan Back to School BBQ.

### **2. Nutrition Division**

- i. During the month of August, WIC completed 5,609 appointments and handled 5,099 calls through their call centers. The Breastfeeding Peer Counselors had 830 contracts with pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.
- ii. September is a busy month for staff at outreach events that they will be either enrolling at the event or getting community members connected with WIC and signed up for an appointment.
  - 1. Shots for Tots: September 7
  - 2. Village Exchange Center September: 11
  - 3. Food Justice Fair: September 21
  - 4. Aurora Resource Fair: September 21
- iii. ACPH Leadership met with Maisha Fields on August 27 to discuss food security in Aurora. Walmart, which was a primary retailer for healthy, nutritious, WIC approved food, recently pulled out of NW Aurora creating a food desert in the area. We are exploring ways to restore accessibility to healthy and affordable food.

### **3. Community Health Nursing Division**

- i. Immunizations
  - 1. During the month of August, the program held 19 clinics and administered 880 vaccines: Englewood 224 and Altura/Mobile clinics 656.
  - 2. In addition to the monthly Shots for Tots clinic, we held off-site clinics at the following sites:
    - a. Aurora Back to School
    - b. Jewell Elementary
    - c. Outreach with Meningococcal and Mpox vaccine with Harm Reduction
    - d. National Night Out
    - e. Aurora West Back to School Night
- ii. Sexual Health
  - 1. The Cancer Prevention and Early Detection (CPED) program continues to be successful. During July and August, the program funded 30 mammograms, five breast ultrasounds, and one breast biopsy, which came back benign.
  - 2. This is the first time we've been able to offer mammograms through our partnership with SimonMed. Many of the women we serve are 5 – 10 years overdue for receiving their first mammograms.
- iii. Harm Reduction
  - 1. In collaboration with the Immunizations Program, Harm Reduction provided services at MLK Library during International Overdose Prevention Week. Over 30 people were served, and the majority were Spanish speakers.
  - 2. Program staff offered an in-service training for ACPH staff in acknowledgement of International Overdose Prevention Week, providing education about overdose, opioid use, and how to refer to and utilize our harm reduction program, with over 40 ACPH employees attending.
  - 3. In an effort to strengthen our safety policies, procedures, and guidelines, the program took a pause in both street outreach and providing services

on the Prevention Point mobile unit for the month of August. With a more comprehensive safety plan in place, these activities will resume in September.

#### **4. Health Protection and Response (HPR) Division**

- i. Environmental Health (EH) Programs
  1. Staff from the EH Consumer Protection Program and the EH Early Childhood and Schools Program teamed up to provide both onsite outreach and food safety education at a residential childcare facility for a group of Spanish and English-speaking young men. The residents sometimes prepare their own meals as part of the group home mission to support the development of independent living skills and they were very interested in learning more about safe food handling practices. They engaged with staff to share their life experiences and backgrounds around the common subject of food and taking steps to be healthy, fostering a meaningful exchange of knowledge and experiences. This collaboration also enhanced equity and engagement by empowering the facility's residents with valuable food safety skills while strengthening our community connections and commitment to inclusive public health outreach.
- ii. Emergency Preparedness and Response
  1. National Preparedness Month is held every September and aims to raise awareness about the importance of preparing for potential disasters and emergencies. This year's theme "Start a Conversation" focuses on helping us all start conversations on preparing for emergencies and disasters which can help us take more actions to prepare, and to take steps to be ready and stay safe in an emergency or disaster. For more details on National Preparedness Month and resources visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) and [the CDC's Preparedness Month website](https://www.cdc.gov/preparedness/). Throughout September, the EPR Program has organized a variety of activities, including a combined in-person ICS 100 and 700 course, a preparedness Bingo game, and a raffle for an emergency survival kit to help prepare our staff for future emergencies. Additionally, EPR will host a table at the Public Health BBQ, where we'll be giving out a preparedness item to all employees.
  2. Continuing toward the goal of developing and strengthening our partnerships within the county, the EPR Program met with staff in the Clerk and Records Office to tour the elections facility and begin discussions on how best to work together to increase preparedness around potential hazards associated with biological threats during the election season. This meeting is the beginning of the process to develop a joint standard operating procedure, training for elections staff, and joint cross-department exercises.
  3. The EPR Program participated in the kickoff workshop with state and regional partners to begin a cross-disciplinary planning effort with public health, hospitals, EMS and emergency management to develop a

regional request and distribution plan for assets within the CHEMPACK. The CHEMPACK includes pre-positioned containers of the federally managed Strategic National Stockpile holding nerve agent antidotes for rapid response during a chemical incident. More information is found at: <https://aspr.hhs.gov/SNS/Pages/CHEMPACK.aspx>.

#### **D. Communicable Disease Report**

##### **1. Rabies**

- i. Rabies is regularly found in Colorado wildlife, especially skunks and bats. However, rabies virus can be transmitted among all mammals. Rabies season typically runs from May through October, but rabid animals are found throughout the entire year. As of 9/10/2024, 49 animals have tested positive for rabies in Colorado. Of these 49 rabid animals, 47 were bats and 2 were domestic dogs. Arapahoe County has had 3 rabies positive bats and 1 rabies positive domestic dog so far this year. The Communicable Disease Epidemiology (CDE) Program conducts in-depth investigations for rabies to determine the need for testing and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) vaccine to prevent infection. When rabies PEP is recommended, CDE coordinates all vaccine doses and remains in close contact with the individual to ensure that the full series is completed. CDE has recommended rabies PEP for 63 Arapahoe County residents so far this year, compared to 32 in 2023. In addition, CDE works with the impacted individuals to determine if they have any community resource concerns, such as food or housing insecurity, medical bill assistance, or navigating healthcare to provide linkages to other ACPH programs who can support information for resource eligibility and options.
- ii. On 8/7/2024, a puppy in Arapahoe County was confirmed to be positive for rabies. The puppy arrived in Colorado from another state three weeks prior to symptom onset, which was on 7/29/2024. On 7/20/2024, the puppy (along with 11 littermates) was part of an adoption event held by Moms and Mutts Colorado (MAMCO) Rescue for Pregnant and Nursing Dogs during the puppy's infectious period. The puppy also visited several veterinary offices during their infectious period to seek medical care while their illness was progressing. Due to the large number of human and animal exposures and widespread efforts to identify close contacts quickly, Arapahoe County Public Health activated our Public Health Incident Response and Support Team (PHIRST) for our public health response. Due to multiple jurisdictions involved in the response, CDPHE issued a Public Health Order to MAMCO to provide information to aid in contact tracing efforts and to relinquish the other 11 littermates. Due to the high probability of rabies exposure to the other littermates, public health made the difficult decision to euthanize the remaining puppies to protect additional people and animals from being exposed should they begin to develop symptoms of rabies. All the littermates were tested for rabies and one additional rabies positive result was confirmed. Following contact tracing efforts, 45 humans were recommended to receive rabies PEP to prevent infection. CDPHE issued a Health Alert Network

(HAN) on 8/9/2024 notifying health and medical providers of the situation, the potential increase in patients needing rabies PEP, and the rabies PEP criteria and schedule. An additional 76 dogs (across multiple jurisdictions) were identified as potentially being exposed to the rabies positive puppy. All of these dogs were recommended to receive a rabies booster and are being monitored by their local public health and animal control agencies through an at-home quarantine period, which varies in length depending on the vaccine status of the dog at the time of exposure. All monitoring for potentially exposed dogs will be completed on 10/19/2024. All humans that were recommended to receive rabies PEP have completed their vaccine series.

1. Colorado Rabies Data: [CDPHE Web Page](#)
2. ACPH Social Media: [Facebook](#)

## 2. West Nile Virus

- i. West Nile virus (WNV) season typically runs from May through October. As of 9/10/2024, 41 cases of WNV have been reported in Colorado. Of these 41 cases, 14 were hospitalized, 19 people experienced neurologic symptoms, and 2 people have died. Arapahoe County has had 4 cases so far this season, compared to 56 cases in 2023.
- ii. This season our Environmental Health (EH) program staff conducted mosquito surveillance at 4 designated locations within the county to trap and test mosquitoes for WNV. Twenty-one samples were sent for testing to the state lab, with only one positive lab result on 8/30/24. The CDE and EH Programs worked closely together to monitor positive pool locations and where individuals test positive to help aid in community public education and outreach to support prevention. In addition, the presence of positive pools often results in additional mitigation efforts as recommended by ACPH, such as signage, spraying and larvicide application.
- iii. The Communicable Disease Epidemiology (CDE) Program continues to conduct in-depth investigations for WNV to determine case classification criteria, identify sources of infection as well as trends, and provide education about the illness and how to prevent illness. In addition, CDE works with any affected individuals to determine if they have any community resource concerns, such as food or housing insecurity, medical bill assistance, or navigating healthcare to provide linkages to other ACPH programs who can support information for resource eligibility and options.

1. Colorado West Nile Data: [CDPHE Web Page](#)
2. Arapahoe County [News Post](#)
3. ACPH Social Media: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

## 3. Respiratory Season

- i. Respiratory virus season, including influenza and RSV, runs from October to May each year. While COVID-19 is another respiratory season pathogen, data of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths show that COVID-19 does not follow the same seasonal trend as influenza and RSV. COVID-19 has thus far shown to have winter peaks (late December and early January), as well as summer peaks (July and August). CDPHE conducts enhanced surveillance for

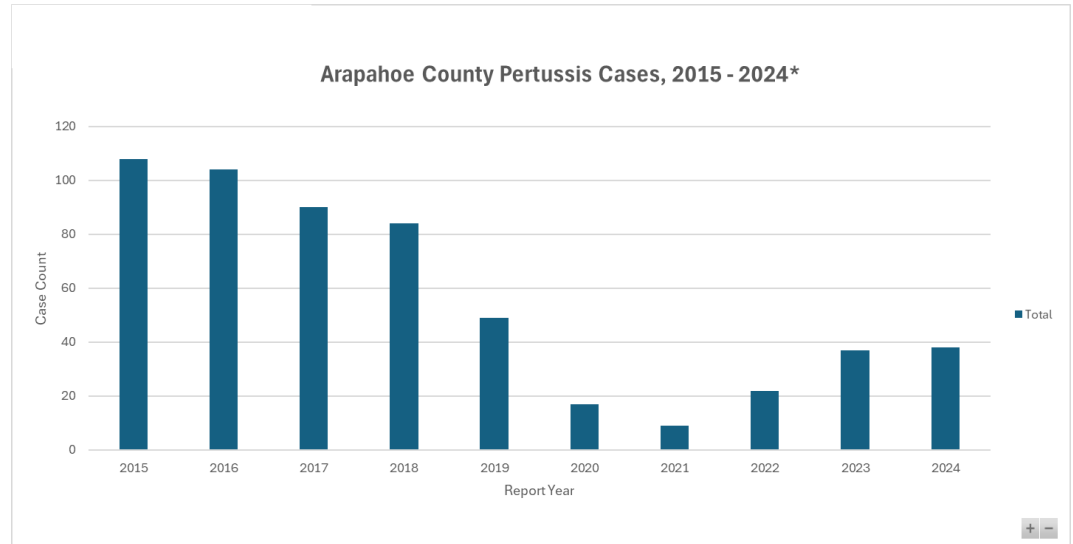
COVID-19, influenza and RSV during respiratory season by tracking statewide hospital admissions, outbreak reporting, test positivity, and syndromic surveillance data. Arapahoe County is one of five counties in Colorado that participates in the Emerging Infections Program (EIP) with the CDC. This is a national viral respiratory surveillance program that helps to provide more information about hospital admissions associated with influenza, RSV, and COVID-19. Data from this program is used to make public health recommendations and to better understand respiratory viruses nationwide. The Communicable Disease Epidemiology (CDE) Program works closely with facility and community partners to identify and monitor outbreaks of respiratory viruses. CDE provides disease control recommendations to reduce the spread of illness, provide education, and monitor for trends to stop transmission. The CDC has released the [2024-2025 respiratory disease season outlook](#), giving the prediction that this fall and winter will have a similar or lower number of combined peak hospitalizations due to COVID-19, the flu, and respiratory syncytial virus.

1. Colorado Viral Respiratory Diseases Data Dashboard: [CDPHE Web Page](#)
  - a. *Once updated for the 2024 –2025 season, Colorado and Arapahoe County data will be summarized in future reports.*
2. ACPH Social Media: [Facebook](#)

#### 4. Pertussis

- i. 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 6 to 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.
- ii. Cases of pertussis in Colorado decreased from 2020 – 2022, averaging 126 cases each year statewide. However, a statewide increase has been observed since fall 2023. As of 8/31/2024, 431 cases of pertussis have been reported in Colorado just this year. For comparison, the five-year pre-pandemic average (2015-2019) for each year in Colorado was 676 cases. 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 (figure below). There have been 38 cases reported so far in 2024 compared to 37 cases reported in all of 2023.
- iii. Arapahoe County Public Health continues to recommend the [pertussis vaccination series](#) as the most effective method to prevent serious infection. The Immunization Program and the Communicable Disease Epidemiology Program worked with Arapahoe County Communications to develop preventive

messaging to share on social media in response to the rise in cases ([Facebook](#)). The Communicable Disease Epidemiology Program conducts in-depth case investigations with pertussis cases to determine source 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.



iv. *\*2024 data for Arapahoe County includes cases reported from January – September 9, 2024.*

**5. Eastern Equine Encephalitis**

- i. Eastern equine encephalitis virus is spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. Only a few cases are reported in the United States annually with most occurring in the eastern or Gulf Coast states near freshwater hardwood swamps. Although rare, eastern equine encephalitis virus is very serious. Approximately 30% of people who develop severe illness die and many have ongoing neurologic programs. Symptoms of eastern equine encephalitis virus can include fever, headache, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, behavioral changes, and drowsiness. There are currently no vaccines or medications to treat eastern equine encephalitis virus. The most effective way to prevent infection is to prevent mosquito bites including using insect repellent, wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants, treating clothing with insect repellent, reducing standing water, and limiting your time outdoors during dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active. As of 9/3/2024, 6 cases have been reported in the United States from Wisconsin, New Jersey, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. While no cases have been reported in Colorado, the Communicable Disease Epidemiology Program remains up to date on the cases reported throughout the country should a case associated with travel be reported in Arapahoe County. If a case is reported in Colorado, a public health investigation would be conducted to identify and monitor clinical status, determine potential exposures, including travel, and provide education on the illness and ways to prevent mosquito-borne infections in the future.