

Spring 2011

Colorado's Public Health Improvement Plan Update

Greetings Public Health Partners,

Spring has arrived and so far 2011 has brought many new and exciting changes, most notably our new executive director, Dr. Chris Urbina, who is committed to public health improvement in Colorado. The Public Health Improvement Steering Committee (PHISC) also made some leadership changes at the start of the year. CDPHE Executive Director and co-chair, Dr. Chris Urbina, announced that Bonnie Koehler, Director of Delta County Public Health, is the new local co-chair of the PHISC. Jeff Zayach, Director of Boulder County Public Health, will preside in absence of the two co-chairs. The PHISC welcomed Jeff Kuhr, the new Director of Mesa County Health Department.

We've tried to capture all the great activity in 2010 and to give you an idea what's on the horizon in 2011. Click to view [2010 COPHIP Timeline](#) and [2011 COPHIP Activities](#).

Read further about the last quarter's progress on improvement activities identified in Colorado's Plan:

COPHIP: Core Services and Standards

- In the last update, we mentioned that the Office of Planning and Partnerships would be working with CALPHO to gather an accurate baseline review of what public health services and activities are being done by our local public health agencies. While the process is time-consuming with an inventory tool and site visits, the information is invaluable as we consider rule-making for core services and funding allocations. To date, we have completed 19 site visits with 24 scheduled in the next month. It is wonderful visiting with the leaders at each agency, hearing their stories, and finding out how we can strengthen our public health system in Colorado. (I. Recommendation 1)

COPHIP: Assessment and Planning

- Alyson Shupe, chair of the Public Health Indicators Task Force presented the [indicator list](#) with the health equity [framework](#) and [final report](#) to the Public Health Improvement Steering Committee during the January 2011 meeting. The steering committee approved the indicator list and acknowledged the great work from the [TaskForce](#). CDPHE's Health Statistics Section welcomed Alison Grace Bui, MPH, Local Public Health Data Coordinator who will be focusing on compiling data around the Public Health Indicators. (II. Recommendation 1)
- The seven pilot sites including two regional planning partnerships are moving along on the public health improvement journey! The pilots are analyzing data from existing surveys, their own community survey, or reviewing other public health indicators. Pilot sites Weld and Pueblo counties are gaining support from MPH students taking the Community Health Assessment course with Judy Baxter and Holly Wolf at the Colorado School of Public Health. The agencies have been seeking stakeholder input by determining partners, establishing steering committee, and/or gathering community data. The West Central Partnership,

Boulder and Weld counties have all held stakeholder meetings to determine priority areas to focus on in the next few years. The experiences and ideas from these pilots are helping define Colorado's Health Assessment and Planning System (CHAPS). (II. Recommendation 2)

- State priorities - During the March meeting, the Public Health Improvement Steering Committee reviewed data and went through a process facilitated by Dr. Alyson Shupe to develop potential priorities for Colorado. These priorities can help local public health focus on issues that are public health concerns for the state and the nation, as most of these priorities align with [CDC's Winnable Battles](#). Expect more on how Dr. Urbina plans to address Colorado's Winnable Battles in the coming months!

COPHIP: Financing and Funding

The [Grants Administration Task Force](#) continues to meet as two teams: Team Invoice and The Streamliners.

- *Team Invoice* is continuing to work towards consistent invoicing processes for all contracts from CDPHE to local public health agencies. The overall goal is for CDPHE programs to reduce the reimbursement documentation by ensuring that local public health agencies have systems in place to meet audit requirements, therefore reducing their administrative burden. Three local public health agencies (Grand, Pueblo, and Tri-County) have agreed to be part of the pilot program. The group plans to update on progress and upcoming plans to the Public Health Improvement Steering Committee at the May meeting. (III. Recommendation 2)
- *The Streamliners* mapped the front end of the contracts administration process, using a payoff matrix (to map impact against difficulty) to determine focus areas for the group. Areas determined to be of high impact on the process and low difficulty to execute selected were: standardizing the contract package and instructions for LPHAs; creating a process for CDPHE to notify LPHAs of funding opportunities; and conducting a comprehensive CDPHE contract training/orientation for LPHAs. The first two processes are being tested and the training is under development.(III. Recommendation 2)

COPHIP: Workforce Development Progress

- There has been significant activity this quarter within the newly funded Colorado Public Health Training Center ([CO-PHTC](#)) at the [Colorado School of Public Health](#). The CO-PHTC is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and aligns, supports, and advances the workforce development recommendations in COPHIP. Over 20 different in-person and distance trainings are planned for the first year of the CO-PHTC. Additional trainings will be developed and offered each year to address the identified needs of Colorado's public health workforce and the emerging national and local trends and issues in public health. There has been high demand for all CO-PHTC trainings offered to date, with each of the trainings filling to capacity. (IV. Recommendation 4)
- The CO-PHTC is currently conducting six field placement-related activities: 1) a review of other schools of public health practicum programs and their policy and procedures in placing students in hard to reach areas, 2) develop a rural/remote area practicum placement process

based upon review and work with [Colorado AHEC](#) partners, 3) placement of up to 10 students to work in rural or high need areas, 4) preceptor training, 5) curriculum infusion activities, and 6) a practice-based school-wide orientation. (IV. Recommendation 3)

- Finally, the CO-PHTC is building a strong infrastructure to support each of the areas described above. The CO-PHTC website and online training registration system is being expanded and strengthened to support a wide variety of public health-related trainings offered by the CO-PHTC and partners. The online Learning Management System is also being expanded and support is being provided to instructors to develop online trainings and courses to ensure broader accessibility across the state. (IV. Recommendation 1)

Last, but not least, the Office of Planning and Partnerships has gone through a major reorganization to address staff retirements, along with hiring new members to provide breadth to our team. Kathy Brown, Nurse Consultant for the south and southeast region of the state retired at the end of 2010. We wish her well in her retirement. Sadly, we also share the loss of Zulema Flores Smith, RN, MPH who passed away in early February. The Minority Health Advisory Commission will recognize Zulema's contributions to the elimination of health disparities by creating the Zulema Flores Smith Health Equity Award. This award will be given to qualified individuals and/or organizations at the commission's annual Town Hall meeting. The first award will be dedicated to honor Zulema and will be presented to her husband at the June 2nd Town Hall meeting in Ignacio.

Please welcome our new staff to assist CDPHE and local public health agencies with public health improvement planning, as well carry on the work of implementing the Public Health Act of 2008.

- Ariadne Romano is our new office manager and joined us from the Preventive Services Division in mid January.
- Kate Lujan, RN, MPH, Disease Control and Public Health Nurse Consultant, is working part-time with the office to cover nurse consulting on the western slope and is providing back-up support to the rest of the state while Tsering Dorjee is out on maternity leave (baby boy born on April 16). Kate is also the field epidemiologist housed in CDPHE's Grand Junction office.
- Kierston Howard, MS, Performance Improvement Manager joined us in March as part of CDC's National Public Health Improvement Initiative. She is working with Dr. Urbina on CDPHE's quality improvement projects.
- Shannon Rossiter, JD, MPH, Public Health Planner joined the staff in April. Shannon's focus will be on administration and governance. Her first tasks will be leading the rule-making processes on core services and the new funding formula for local public health.
- Sharon Adams, REHS, Environmental Health Planner also joined us in April. Sharon will serve as a liaison among CDPHE and local environmental health and ensure that environmental health is included in planning at the local level, particularly in areas that are underserved.
- Heather Baumgartner, MS, Assessment and Planning Manager joined us mid May to manage the assessment and planning activities around the state and lead the development of the next statewide public health improvement plan. You can read more about the staff [here](#).

Thanks to all who helped with selecting our new team members and a special thank you to Alyson Shupe for her help and support while we were short-staffed. With new people and renewed energy, we are set to spring forward with strengthening Colorado's public health system!