



Clear Creek County



2023-2027 PUBLIC HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN



PUBLISHED JUNE 2023

LETTER FROM DIRECTOR

Clear Creek County Public Health is pleased to present the 2023-2027 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). A CHIP and Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) are customary practices of Public Health, a national standard for all public health departments. The 2022 assessment and planning process were modeled after the Colorado Health Assessment and Planning System (CHAPS).

Assessing and measuring the health of Clear Creek County was a collaborative effort. Numerous organizations and individuals were involved in the various work groups and committees that informed the community health assessment and developed the CHIP. A very big thank you to all involved. The Community Health Assessment (CHA) is comprised of secondary data as well as robust community input collected via surveys and key informant interviews. Together, this assessment illustrates the community's health status, strengths, and opportunities for the future. The assessment presents objective data on the health status of individuals living in Clear Creek County. It also offers valuable insights and opinions on how community members view the quality of life here. Our approach ensured that the process resulted in a community-driven and -owned CHIP.

From the assessment process, community leaders identified the following priorities to improve health, reduce disparities, and advance equity in the community:

- Adult mental health and substance use
- Youth mental health and substance use
- Air pollution
- Expanding health care options
- Connecting people with resources

Although many other health needs are important for Clear Creek County, these priorities are supported by the data analysis and are relevant to the majority of community input. Improving community health is not just the work of public health. No one agency can tackle these complex issues alone, but the collective impact of multiple partners aligning their efforts toward a common goal is a powerful tool. Fortunately, Clear Creek County enjoys a long history of community partners collaborating successfully to address community-wide objectives. By focusing on closing gaps and improving outcomes for vulnerable populations, we can create a healthier community that benefits everyone.

Respectfully submitted,



Timothy Ryan, PhD.
Director, Public & Environmental Health



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Clear Creek County community health assessment process and public health improvement plan is to identify key public health issues in the county and develop a plan to address them in an actionable way. The Colorado Public Health Act of 2008 requires Colorado's public health agencies to implement the Colorado Public Health Assessment and Planning System (CHAPS). CHAPS is a comprehensive methodology that is intended to result in the equitable delivery of core public health services for all Coloradans. Since 2008, both state and local public health professionals have implemented CHAPS every five years and have succeeded in transforming public health services in Colorado to make them more accessible to the community in the areas of disease prevention, environmental public health, maternal and family health, injury prevention, behavioral health promotion, access to healthcare, and more.



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



2018-2022 PUBLIC HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Clear Creek County identified youth mental health, youth substance use, and access to care as priorities during the 2017 CHAPS process and 2018-2022 Clear Creek public health improvement plan.

Mountain Youth Network (MYN) was formed as a result of implementing the Communities that Care approach in Clear Creek County. Communities that Care involves building a community coalition in an effort to address risk and protective factors that reduce substance use and promote prosocial opportunities for youth. MYN now has a dedicated staff, collaborative partners, and engaged community members who analyze data, implement strategies, and develop youth programs with diversified funding sources. MYN offers a variety of programs and services including the TREK Teen Council, TREK Outdoors, and Botvin LifeSkills Training.

MYN developed the TREK Teen Council, a youth involvement and advisory group, to elevate the youth voice in Clear Creek County and increase civic engagement. In 2019, MYN developed TREK Outdoors to provide students with a variety of options to explore nature, learn new skills, build relationships with trusted adults & mentors, and explore career paths in the outdoor industry. In the 2021-2022 fiscal year, 96 students participated in TREK Outdoors activities.

MYN also partners with the Clear Creek School District (CCSD) to implement the evidence-based program Botvin LifeSkills Training with all Clear Creek middle school students. The curriculum focuses on social-emotional

development with the intention of preventing the early initiation of substance use. Last year 38% of those students sought out the instructors outside of class for further conversations ranging from substance use to relationships.

Since 2016, there has been a decrease in substance use among young people, however given the challenges of the pandemic as well as the everyday pressures that young people face in their development, substance use and mental health remain of significant concern in the county.

In response to the access to care priority, Clear Creek County built a new \$7 million health and wellness center in Idaho Springs that co-locates services for community members including public health, human services, and primary care. Development of the wellness center has resulted in the expansion of services as well as greater convenience in accessing a variety of services such as the food bank, primary care, dental care, harm reduction, and immunizations all in one place. The primary care clinic is demonstrating a need for increased capacity due to high rates of patient visits.

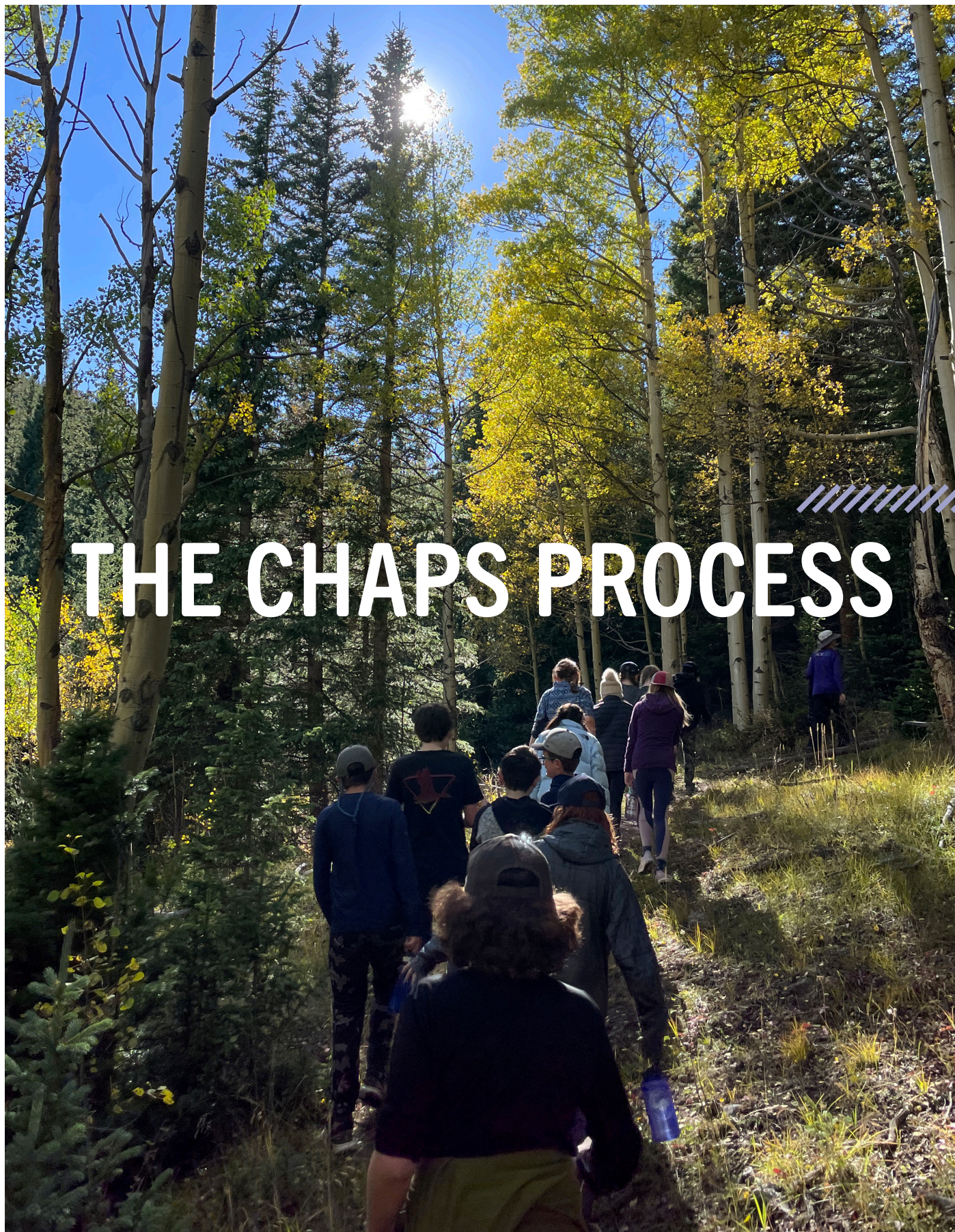
Since 2020, the Clear Creek public health team and community partners focused intensively on addressing the COVID-19 pandemic where they managed every aspect of the response including but not limited to informing county policies, administering community testing programs, and executing on a mass vaccination effort. Clear Creek County's 3 Public Health Nurses, along with EMS staff and CDPHE staff nurses administered 14,885 doses¹. Since March 1, 2020, public health nurses conducted contact tracing for 2100 individuals who tested positive for COVID².

2018-2022 PRIORITIES

- Youth mental health and substance use
- Access to care
- COVID-19 pandemic response

¹ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2022)

² Colorado Electronic Disease Reporting System (2022)



THE CHAPS PROCESS



OVERVIEW OF THE 2022 CHAPS PROCESS

Clear Creek County public health implemented a comprehensive CHAPS process between October 2021 and February 2023 that included the following key steps.

- Establishment and engagement of an Advisory Committee with key stakeholders from different sectors in the county.
- Collection and review of key data indicators that span health status, the environment and social determinants of health.
- Engagement of community members and professional partners through key informant interviews and surveys.
- Facilitation of an internal public health organizational assessment.
- Scan of community capacity to address potential priority issues.
- Prioritization process to identify priority health issues.
- Development of a public health improvement plan that documents strategies to address key health issues.
- Approval of the public health improvement plan by the Clear Creek County Commissioners.

- 1 Engage community leaders.
- 2 Collect and review data.
- 3 Learn from people who live and work here.
- 4 Explore community resources and opportunities.
- 5 Select the health priorities.
- 6 Decide how to address the issues.
- 7 Take action.

2022 CHAPS LEADERSHIP

The Clear Creek County Public Health team implemented the Clear Creek County CHAPS process and developed the public health improvement plan. Andrea Uliano, Clear

Sincere gratitude goes to the community leaders and community members of Clear Creek County who contributed to this effort.

Creek County Public Health Nurse, served as the project manager, while Dr. Tim Ryan, Public Health Director, and Emily Kuper, Public Health Nurse, provided important insight and support.

The Clear Creek County CHAPS Advisory Committee contributed valuable input on the CHAPS process, key health priorities, and public health improvement plan strategies. The committee included community leaders with valuable community perspective and diverse expertise. The advisory group met monthly from April 2022 through January 2023. Thank you to the following members of the CHAPS Advisory Committee for their time, efforts, and expertise.

- Dr. Tim Ryan, PhD, Clear Creek County Public Health
- Andrea Uliano, RN, Clear Creek County Public Health
- Emily Kuper, FNP, Clear Creek County Public Health
- Crystal Brandt, RN, Clear Creek County Public Health
- Gary Hague, Clear Creek County Environmental Health
- Kara Campbell, LCSW Jefferson Center for Mental Health
- Robin Skelton, Mitchell White Residence Manager
- Clark Church, Clear Creek County Emergency Medical Services Captain
- Hannah Miller, Clear Creek County School District
- Joni Albers, Clear Creek County Advocates
- Libby Caplan, Clear Creek County Library District
- John Stein, Town of Empire, Sheriff's Office
- Dr. Terri Bowland, Enlightened DPC & Aesthetics
- Becca Bernal, Mountain Youth Network Manager
- Cameron Marlin, Clear Creek County Metropolitan Recreation District Executive Director
- Megan Hiler, Clear Creek County Communications Director

Finally, thank you to the Clear Creek County Commissioners who have supported these assessment and planning efforts through their input and approval of the 2023-2025 Clear Creek County public health improvement plan.

- George Marlin
- Sean Wood
- Randy Wheelock

THE CHAPS PROCESS

EQUITY FOCUS

The Clear Creek County public health team and the CHAPS Advisory Committee centered equity and considered disproportionately affected populations throughout each phase of the assessment and planning process. Both the quantitative data and qualitative data described who, in Clear Creek County, disproportionately experience health and environmental issues, while the qualitative data provided context and narrative in describing people’s perspective and experience.

In Clear Creek County, disproportionately affected populations include older adults, individuals living in rural communities, children and youth, and individuals who have lived experience with the priority issues. The public health improvement plan incorporates a focus on disproportionately affected populations identified throughout the assessment with strategies that address systemic barriers and challenges to attaining optimal health and well-being.

QUANTITATIVE DATA

The Clear Creek County public health team collected and reviewed a broad array of quantitative data that describes the health and well being of people living in

Clear Creek County. In the Fall of 2021, they used a data collection guide provided by the state’s Office of Public Health Practice, Planning, and Local Partnerships (OPHP). During the Spring and Summer of 2022, they collected social determinants of health data, environmental health data, county health ranking data, and the most recent Healthy Kids Colorado Survey data. The team compiled the data into a presentation that the CHAPS Advisory Group reviewed in July and August 2022. The Advisory Group used the data to identify emerging priority areas to explore further through the capacity assessment.

QUALITATIVE DATA - STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Qualitative data provides validation as well as a deeper understanding of the statistical data collected in the community health assessment process. In May 2022, the public health team developed a qualitative data collection plan that focused on gathering community perspectives from people who both live and work in the community. In designing the qualitative approach, the team considered which population groups experience health inequities and what the best methods were to listen and learn from those individuals.

The public health team developed and disseminated a community survey as well as conducted key informant

THE PROCESS BY THE NUMBERS

<p>1 PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE AND PUBLIC HEALTH CONSULTANT</p>	<p>2 public health student interns. 4 public health team members.</p>	<p>700+ HOURS OF STAFF TIME</p>	<p>16 ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS</p>	<p>6 ADVISORY GROUP MEETINGS</p>
<p>100s OF DATA POINTS.</p>	<p>43 COMMUNITY MEMBER SURVEYS</p>	<p>21 key informant interviews</p>	<p>5 FINAL PRIORITIES!</p>	



interviews (KII) with community partners and service providers. The surveys were disseminated electronically and physically between June and August 2022. Community members completed a total of 43 surveys. In terms of demographic makeup, members from four out of five different towns surveyed were represented. A fairly even number of individuals from each age range took the survey, and both males and females were represented. Finally, multiple race and ethnicity groups were represented among the group but a majority of Caucasian individuals responded to the survey.

The public health team conducted a total of 21 key informant interviews between June and July of 2022. Representatives from the department of human services, behavioral health organizations, community board members, emergency response team members and others participated in the key informant interviews.

The CHAPS consultant coded the community surveys and the key informant interviews in order to identify key themes related to what community members think are the most important strengths and weaknesses in the public health of Clear Creek County. These findings were then presented to the advisory committee during monthly meetings and discussed by the group. The findings from the community survey and key informant interviews informed the final prioritization of public health priorities.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

The Clear Creek County Public Health team participated in a two-part discussion about the public health organization's capacity to provide core public health services. The team used OPHP's public health capacity assessment tool to guide the discussion. Key takeaways from the capacity assessment in regards to community strengths centered around Clear Creek Public Health's ability to provide a wide variety of core services including but not limited to public health nursing (immunizations and school physicals); WIC; health education and promotion; disease outbreak investigation and control; and environmental health. In addition, the county has a dedicated and qualified staff who have historically worked on a broad variety of community issues. They also have strong community partnerships and the capacity to optimize county administration for functions such as communication, procurement, legal services, and more.

Challenges in public health also were identified. Funding streams tend to be categorical, short term, and limited. The post COVID-19 transition has proven difficult in terms of returning to normal operations due to staff transition and several new programs. Finally, the public health team acknowledged the challenges of working in a rural community where it can be difficult to reach the individuals they are serving. Also barriers exist for many people in accessing information and services.

PRIORITIZATION PROCESSES

The public health team implemented a two-part prioritization process for the Clear Creek County CHAPS. For the first phase of prioritization, the Advisory Group, including the public health team, identified six issues that emerged as important based on the review of quantitative and qualitative data. These issues were identified and discussed in August 2022.

The public health team then explored community capacity related to these six topic areas. The team researched what efforts were already underway in the community to address these six topic areas, what potential future plans and funding may be available to address these topic areas, and on which issues public health and other community partners can feasibly make an impact.


The public health team determined that all six priority areas were important to the community including:

- adult mental health and substance use,
- youth mental health and substance use,
- air pollution,
- expanding health care options,
- resource and referral,
- access to nutritious foods,
- transportation.

Both the community capacity assessment and the public health capacity assessment provided insight into the opportunities and limitations in addressing each priority area in the coming five-year period. The public health team decided to organize three of the priorities (resource and referral, access to nutritious foods, and transportation) into one priority that focuses on the social determinants of health and the most feasible public health role: connecting people to resources. Connecting people to resources includes helping the people of Clear Creek County to access health care, mental health support, nutritious foods, transportation, and housing.

The final priorities for the Clear Creek County's 2023-2027's public health improvement plan are:

- adult mental health and substance use,
- youth mental health and substance use,
- air pollution,
- expanding health care options,
- connecting people with resources



2023-2027 CLEAR CREEK COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITIES

- adult mental health and substance use
- youth mental health and substance use
- air pollution
- expanding health care options
- connecting people with resources



CLEAR CREEK COUNTY OVERVIEW

Clear Creek County, Colorado is located in the mountains approximately 30 miles west of the Denver metropolitan area. The county lies along the Interstate 70 corridor, which runs west from Denver through the towns of Idaho Springs, Georgetown, Empire and Silver Plume. The county's area is 396 square miles, 395 of which is made up of land and 1.3 square miles of which is water³. The Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest, Mount Evans Wilderness Area, and the South Platte River are natural treasures located in the county.

Clear Creek County has a rich history dating back to the 1600s, when the county was home to the indigenous people of the Ute, Arapahoe, and Cheyenne tribes. These communities were hunter-gatherers of animals and plants in the region. In the 1800s, mining served as the primary industry in the county until the early 1900s, when outdoor recreation and tourism emerged as important sectors.

³ U.S. Census Bureau (2020)



Today, Clear Creek County is home to 9,574 people⁴. The racial/ethnic makeup of individuals living in Clear Creek County, CO is White (Non-Hispanic) (88.2%), White (Hispanic) (6.48%), more than one race/ethnicity (Non-Hispanic) (2.26%), Asian (Non-Hispanic) (1.12%), and Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) (0.745%). 52.9% of the county are males and 47.1% are females⁵. Clear Creek County has a higher number of older individuals, and less young families with children. The largest population falls between 50 and 64 years of age, and the median age in Clear Creek is 46.6 years in comparison to a median of 35.7 years of age in Denver⁶.

The workforce in Clear Creek County is dominantly geared towards the tourism industry with a majority of individuals working in the lodging and food services industry⁷. Sixty-nine percent of the population ages sixteen and older are in the civilian labor force. Most individuals work outside of the county, and the mean travel time to work in 2020 was 28.9 minutes⁸. The unemployment rate in Clear Creek was at 2.1% in 2019, which was lower than the state percentage of 2.9%⁹. The median income in the county as of 2020 is \$71,919 with 7.3% of individuals living in poverty¹⁰.

With 333 total employer establishments in the county, the total annual payroll in 2020 was \$10,398,000 to serve a total employment to 3,044 individuals¹¹. 166 employer firms are owned by men, with only 43 owned by women, and 233 are owned by non-minorities compared to 28 owned by minorities¹².

Clear Creek has an owner-occupied housing unit rate of 78.4%, with the median value of these units being \$399,000 in 2020. The median gross rent in 2020 was \$1,004¹³. Community members in the county have access to expanding recreational amenities, multiple schools, and well-developed emergency services. Efforts to expand collaborations with neighboring counties have been implemented to develop new recreational opportunities such as open space projects, and the county already offers four fourteens, bike trails, fishing, horseback riding, and more.

In regards to education, Clear Creek County has 2 elementary schools, 1 middle school, 1 high school, and 1 community charter school. The rate of high school graduates or higher in Clear Creek is 97.5%, and the county is considered a public school district with 717 students in grades PK and K-12. According to state test scores, 31% of students are proficient in math and 40% are proficient in reading¹⁴.

Healthcare availability is somewhat limited in Clear Creek, with seven percent of the population having no health insurance. Thus, initiatives are being implemented to address transportation, health care, and mental health and substance misuse. The county recently opened a primary care clinic in Idaho Springs in 2017. Emergency services in the county are made up of various sectors such as Clear Creek EMS, Clear Creek Fire Authority, and the Clear Creek County Office of Emergency Management¹⁵.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau (2021)

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau (2020)

⁶ ClearCreekCounty.US (2020)

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau (2020)

⁸ Colorado Department of Public Affairs (2021)

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau (2020)

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau (2020)

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2020)

¹² U.S. Census Bureau (2020)

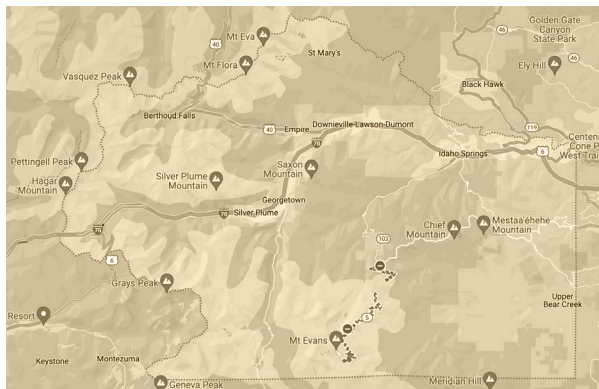
¹³ U.S. Census Bureau (2020)

¹⁴ Clear Creek School District RE-1 home (2022)

¹⁵ Clear Creek County, Colorado Official Website (2022)

PLACE **ECONOMICS**

396 square miles including **4** towns of Idaho Springs, Georgetown, Empire and Silver Plume. Arapahoe Roosevelt National Forest, Mount Evans Wilderness Area and South Platte River



333 total employers

unemployment rate was at **2.1% in 2019**

owner-occupied housing unit rate of **78.4%** with the median value of these units being **\$399,000 in 2020**

EDUCATION

2 elementary schools, **1** middle school, **1** high school, and **1** community charter school.

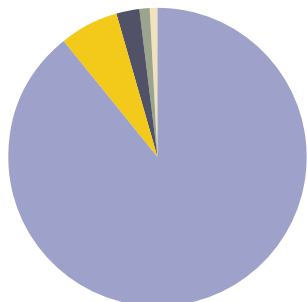
Public school district with **717 students** in grades **PK and K-12**.

High school graduation rate is 97.5%



PEOPLE

9,574 people live here



88.2% White (Non-Hispanic)
 6.48% White (Hispanic)
 2.26% multi-racial/ethnic (Non-Hispanic)
 1.12% Asian (Non-Hispanic)
 0.745% Black or African American (Non-Hispanic)

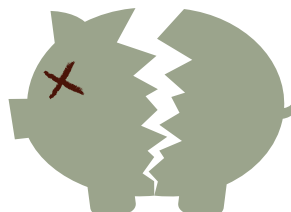
Median age is **46.6 years**

(higher number of older adults than young families)



Median income in the county as of 2020 is

\$71,919



7.3% of residents living in poverty



■ ■ ■ ■ ■ PRIORITIES AND PLANS

WHY ADULT MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE?

Mental Health

Positive mental health and a general sense of wellbeing allow a person to realize their full potential, cope with the stresses of life, work productively, and make meaningful contributions to their community. An individual’s state of mental health is dynamic, complex and influenced by multiple and intersecting social, psychological, and biological factors¹⁶. Mental health and substance use are prioritized as leading health challenges in Clear Creek County that affect both adults and youth. Individuals are experiencing higher rates of mental health challenges and substance use since before the pandemic and also are requiring greater access to prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery services.

In Clear Creek County in 2021, there were 83.8 hospitalizations per 100,000 people related to suicide attempts in comparison to a state average of 52 per 100,000¹⁷. In 2019, the age-adjusted rate of suicide out of every 100,000 people in Clear Creek was 49.7 compared to a Colorado statewide rate of 21.6¹⁸. Suicide is the 8th leading cause of death in Colorado.

Additionally, a slightly higher percentage of individuals living in Clear Creek County have been diagnosed with a depressive disorder than in Colorado¹⁹. The average



I believe consistent mental and behavioral health resources are lacking in our community. From addiction programs to devoted therapists, residents have a lack of trust that the programs and professionals will be available for long lasting support (KII 2022)

number of days that adults reported that their mental health was “not good” in the past month was 2.7 compared to 4.0 in Colorado²⁰.

In the 2022 Clear Creek County community survey conducted as part of the health assessment, respondents identified the need for improved mental health services as a key theme. The need for increased and higher quality mental health services was also reflected in EMS data with 120 EMS calls in 2021 in Clear Creek related to mental health²¹.



In Clear Creek County in 2021, there were

83.8 hospitalizations per **100,000** people related to suicide attempts

in comparison to a state average of **52** per **100,000**¹⁷.

¹⁶ CO Public Health Improvement Plan 2024 (2022)

¹⁷ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2021)

¹⁸ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment(2021)

¹⁹ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2021)

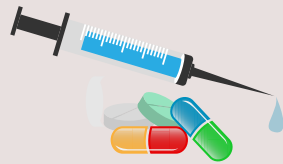
²⁰ County Health Rankings (2022)

²¹ ClearCreekCounty.US (2021)

Substance Use

In Colorado and nationally, opioid use and overdose has been declared a public health emergency. The rates of opioid addiction and overdose are devastating communities, families and individuals. The opioid epidemic is a result of a number of challenges, including a sharp and steady increase in opioids such as hydrocodone and oxycodone prescribed for patients by their doctors, limited access to treatment especially in rural areas, increased use of heroin and injection drug use, deadly additives to the heroin supply such as fentanyl and carfentanil, stigma and the cost of treatment²².

In Colorado and nationally, opioid use and overdose has been declared a public health emergency.



Unfortunately, the opioid and overdose data available for Clear Creek County is from before the pandemic, so may not adequately describe the current situation. More recent data is not yet available but it will be important to monitor. For prescription-related data, the age adjusted rate of prescriptions dispensed to Clear Creek County individuals is 80.4 for stimulants and 166.9 for benzodiazepine, which both are lower than the rates for Colorado²³. In 2018, there were 459.8 opioid prescription fills per 1,000 individuals in Clear Creek compared to 751.6 in Colorado²⁴. Finally, from 2014-2018 there were 4 opioid deaths per 100,000 people in the Clear Creek County health statistic region²⁵.

Based on more recent data, Clear Creek County has higher rates of alcohol and marijuana use than the state average²⁶. In 2021, the percentage of self-reported binge-drinking in the past 30 days was 20% in Clear Creek but was 17.9% in Colorado. In the same year, 46% of driving deaths in Clear Creek County were alcohol related²⁷. The data demonstrate that excessive alcohol use impacts the health and well-being of community members in Clear Creek County²⁸.

The percent of adults who self-reported using marijuana in the past 30 days was higher in Clear Creek County than

the state at 15.2% and 13.5%, respectively²⁹. However, on average, less adults in Clear Creek County smoke cigarettes than in the state of Colorado³⁰. From 2016 - 2018, 10.8% of adults in Clear Creek County reported currently smoking cigarettes, while the statewide percentage of current smokers was 14.5%³¹.

The percent of adults who self-reported using marijuana in the past **30 days** was higher in Clear Creek County than the state at **15.2%** and **13.5%** respectively



In the 2022 Clear Creek County community survey conducted as part of the health assessment, respondents identified the need for substance use services as a key theme. Also, the OMNI Institute conducted a needs assessment in Clear Creek County on mental health and substance use and published a report in December 2020. In addition to the strategies included in the public health improvement plan, the OMNI Institute report contains recommendations for Clear Creek County to implement to address mental health and substance use among its community members.

Mental health and/or substance use are prioritized by more than half of Colorado's local public health agencies (52%)³². Furthermore, Colorado's 2024 Public and Environmental Health Improvement Plan prioritizes mental health and substance use. Statewide strategies for mental health and substance use have a 51% and 42% alignment with local public health improvement plans, respectively. State-level strategies focus on transforming the behavioral health care system to create more demographically sensitive programs and highlight the social determinants of health by collaborating with communities. Another major aspect of the statewide plan is preventing substance abuse death and overdose³³.

²² Colorado Behavioral Health Administration (2018)

²³ Colorado Health Indicators Database (2019)

²⁴ Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention (2022)

²⁵ Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention (2022)

²⁶ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2021)

²⁷ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2021)

²⁸ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2021)

²⁹ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2021)

³⁰ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2021)

³¹ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment VISION (2018)

³² Local Public Health Agency Priority Grids (2022)

³³ 2024 Colorado Public Health and Environment Improvement Plan (2022)

WHAT WILL WE DO ABOUT IT?

GOALS

To reduce substance use among adults in Clear Creek County.

To improve mental health and well being among adults in Clear Creek County.

STRATEGIES

Develop and implement a substance use harm reduction program for Clear Creek County including evidence-based strategies.

- Identify partnerships and protocols for naran distribution.
- Coordinate and implement the CRAFT program.

Participate in the regional opioid resettlement planning and implementation process.

Expand treatment and recovery services to Clear Creek County residents.

Work with key partners such as Jefferson Center for Mental Health to coordinate and co-locate services in the Wellness Center in Idaho Springs.

Lead efforts to coordinate and optimize mental health screening, resource, and referral efforts in Clear Creek County through the Behavioral Health Alliance and key partnerships in order to improve access to mental health screening, detection, and treatment services among community members.

Raise awareness and educate community members on substance use and mental health issues and resources through community workshops and events.

MEASURES

By December 2027, decrease the average number of poor mental health days in the past 30-day period among adults in Clear Creek from 3.5% to 2.5%.

By December 2027, decrease self-reported marijuana use in past 30 days among adults in Clear Creek from 15.2% to 13.7%.

By December 2027, decrease self-reported binge drinking in past 30 days among adults in Clear Creek from 23% to 20.7%.

From December 2024 to December 2027, reduce the number of EMS calls related to overdose of all drugs from baseline (TBD) to target number.

By December 2027, reduce the average annual age-adjusted rate of hospital admissions for overdose involving all drugs per 100,000 residents from 78.1% to 70%.

WHY YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE?

In May 2021, Children’s Hospital Colorado declared a “State of Emergency” in youth mental health in Colorado, a first in the 117-year history of the hospital system. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, young people have dealt with chronic stress for the past several years that has interrupted their development. Suicide has become the leading cause of death among children and youth in Colorado³⁴.

Data in Clear Creek County reflects trends at the state level. Therefore, mental health and substance use are prioritized issues for youth as well as for adults in this plan. While successful prevention programs like the Mountain Youth Network have made a notable impact on substance use rates among adolescents in the past three years, the mental health data indicate that there is still important work to be done.

The Healthy Kids Colorado Survey was conducted in Clear Creek County in 2021. A total of 151 high school students and 62 middle school students participated in the survey with response rates of 63.2% and 67.4% of the total student population for high schoolers and middle schoolers, respectively³⁵. According to the survey, 39% of Clear Creek middle school students, who responded to the survey, considered suicide in 2022 compared with 17% of middle school students in Colorado³⁶. Nearly 17% of middle school students, who responded to the survey in Clear Creek, had ever attempted suicide in their lives compared with 8.2% of middle school students in Colorado³⁷.

According to survey data, 17.6% of high school students in Clear Creek had seriously considered suicide one or more times in the same 12 month period compared with 17.5% in Colorado³⁸ and 8.2% of high school students who responded to the survey, attempted suicide one or more times in the past 12 months which was the same for Colorado high school students³⁹.

Fortunately, 76.6% of Clear Creek high school students and 73.8% of middle school students reported that they



**I appreciate the investment in youth through the youth network.
(Community Surveys August 2022)**

felt comfortable going to their parents or guardians with a serious issue⁴⁰.

With regards to substance use, the majority of Clear Creek County students perceive that the adults in their lives disapprove of them using substances⁴¹. However, less than 50% of Clear Creek high school students believe marijuana is dangerous, and 20.2% of high school students who participated in the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey had used marijuana one or more times in the past 30 days in 2021⁴². In addition, 13.0% of high school students from the same sample had binge drank one or more times in the past 30 days⁴³. Finally, 18.1% of the high school students in the sample had used an electronic vapor product in the past 30 days⁴⁴.

Mental health and suicide among youth are included in Colorado’s 2024 Public and Environmental Health Improvement Plan and are prioritized by many of Colorado’s local public health agencies. (Note: It was unclear how many local public health agencies focus on youth within their mental health/substance use priorities).

A total of **151** high school students and **62** middle school students participated in the survey with response rates of **63.2%** and **67.4%** of the total student population for high schoolers and middle schoolers, respectively.

39% of Clear Creek middle school students, who responded to the survey, considered suicide in 2021 compared with 17% of Colorado Middle School students in the same year.

³⁴ Children’s Hospital Colorado (2022)

³⁵ Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (2021)

³⁶ Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (2021)

³⁷ Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (2021)

³⁸ Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (2021)

³⁹ Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (2021)

⁴⁰ Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (2021)

⁴¹ Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (2021)

⁴² Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (2021)

⁴³ Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (2021)

⁴⁴ Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (2021)

WHAT WILL WE DO ABOUT IT?

GOALS

To reduce youth substance use in Clear Creek County.

To promote mental health and connection in the community for youth in Clear Creek County.

STRATEGIES

Implement evidence-based programs for social-emotional learning to combat early initiation of substance use.

Launch social media campaigns for Positive Community Norms to combat perception of substance use in Clear Creek County.

Organizing community members in coalition-based workgroups to implement the Communities that Care model.

Strengthening TREK Teen Council as a community youth advisory committee which will also provide substance related presentations throughout the community.

Increase pro-social opportunities in the community for youth involvement, specifically in the outdoors.

Provide community-wide Positive Youth Development training.

Engage partners in direct services in youth involvement opportunities to connect young people with resources. (CCMRD, Resilience1220, Jefferson Center)

MEASURES

By December 2027, decrease the rate of 30-day tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana use by 5% through evidence-based programs and outdoor leadership programming.

By December 2027, engage 50 more youth who will participate in Trek Outdoors program.

WHY AIR POLLUTION?

Air pollution is prioritized as an issue of concern in Clear Creek County that will require ongoing monitoring. Overall, the Clear Creek community experiences clean air and meets air quality standards⁴⁵. However during the

Overall, the Clear Creek community experiences clean air and meets air quality standards .

months of November through April and particularly on the weekends, there is an increase in pollution as a result of the traffic on the I-70 interstate as people drive their vehicles to access recreational opportunities west of the Denver area. Data gathered using air quality monitors in the county found that the daily highest 8-hour average ozone concentrations exceeded the air quality standard in 2018 for 13 days, compared to only 6 days in Arapahoe county and 7 days in Denver⁴⁶.

In addition, the percentage of adults in Clear Creek County who are diagnosed with asthma is also almost double that of the state of Colorado⁴⁷, which may be partially attributable to air quality.

Finally, community members have expressed concern about their air quality in the community survey that was part of the health assessment. Six out of the 43 respondents mentioned traffic, air quality, and/or air pollution as barriers to health in the county.

Clean air is prioritized by 11 local public health agencies in Colorado, and by many local agencies located near to Clear Creek County⁴⁸. Colorado's 2024 Public Health and Environment Improvement Plan identifies climate action and air quality as one of their 6 priorities and discusses the adverse impacts of long term exposure to ozone and other types of air pollution, especially in light of COVID-19 and respiratory diseases such as asthma⁴⁹.

The daily highest **8-hour average ozone concentrations exceeded the air quality standard in 2018 for 13 days.**



⁴⁵ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Air Quality Data (2018)

⁴⁶ Colorado Environmental Public Health Tracking (2021)

⁴⁷ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2021)

⁴⁸ Colorado Local Public Health Agency Priority Grids (2022)

⁴⁹ 2024 Colorado Public Health and Environment Improvement Plan (2022)

WHAT WILL WE DO ABOUT IT?

GOALS

To collect accurate data that describes the level of air pollution affecting the people living in Clear Creek County.

To educate Clear Creek County stakeholders and community members about the health impacts of air pollution.

To participate in county, regional, and statewide meetings to address air pollution and its impact on health and wellbeing in Clear Creek County.

STRATEGIES

To conduct monitoring and surveillance of air pollution levels in Clear Creek County using existing monitors and disseminate data and information to the community about air pollution to raise awareness and inform decision making.

Pursue funding to replace the three existing air quality monitors with EPA-approved monitors and add two additional monitors.

Participate in local and regional transportation planning to provide subject matter expertise on the health impacts of air pollution and the community context of Clear Creek County.

Promote public and alternative transportation options such as the Roundabout and the Pegasus.

MEASURES

By December 2026, to collect more comprehensive and accurate air pollution data for Clear Creek County.

By December 2027, to decrease the number of days that the daily highest 8-hour average Ozone concentrations were above the air quality standard from 13 in 2018 to 11 days.

WHY EXPANDING HEALTH CARE OPTIONS AND CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH RESOURCES?

Chronic disease has proven to be a significant public health issue in Clear Creek due to various environmental and social factors in the county contributing to notable rates of diabetes, heart disease, asthma, and more. Clear Creek County has high rates of coronary heart disease with 8% of individuals in Clear Creek County experiencing heart disease compared to 3% in Colorado⁵⁰. Furthermore, individuals in Clear Creek County have a slightly higher rate of diabetes than individuals in Colorado as a whole. The statewide percentage of individuals with diabetes is less than 8%, whereas the percentage in Clear Creek is almost 10%⁵¹. Clear Creek County has an obesity prevalence of 16.8% among adults in 2018 compared to a Colorado average of 22.6%⁵². And while the percentage of overweight and obese individuals may be lower in Clear Creek County than in Colorado, many individuals still struggle with high blood cholesterol levels and high blood pressure⁵³.



Because people are spread out and isolated, it is more difficult to access resources. A lack of funds and employees also limit the public transportation. (KII 2022)

Clear Creek County has a large older adult population who are more likely to experience high rates of chronic conditions. Clear Creek County is also a rural county where there are barriers to accessing health care including screening, early intervention, and treatment for chronic health conditions. In addition, community resources related to the social determinants of health are also limited, such as access to nutritious foods, transportation and housing. Thus, it is important to

address access to care and social determinants of health when developing prevention strategies for chronic disease.

Healthcare Access

Healthcare availability is somewhat limited in Clear Creek. Centura opened a primary care clinic in Idaho Springs in 2017. There are other providers who offer behavioral health, dental, and medical care but their hours and capacity are limited. There are no urgent care clinics or hospitals in the county. Clear Creek County does provide emergency services through Clear Creek EMS and Clear Creek Fire Authority⁵⁴.

More adults in Clear Creek County report having some form of health insurance coverage than the average for the state of Colorado⁵⁵. A small percentage of Clear Creek County individuals are eligible for, but not enrolled in Medicaid⁵⁶. This includes: 67 children who are eligible but not enrolled in medicare, 4 children who are eligible for Child Health Plan Plus but are not enrolled and 159 adults that are eligible for medicare but not enrolled⁵⁷. Seven percent of the population has no health insurance .

In the community survey, community members expressed their concerns about the distance from health care services as well as the limited options for care in the county. Access to care is prioritized by 11 other local public health agencies in Colorado⁵⁸. Colorado's 2024 Public and Environmental Health Improvement Plan describes the importance of understanding the role of social determinants of health and addressing them to improve community health⁵⁹.

Clear Creek County has high rates of coronary heart disease with 8% of individuals in Clear Creek County experiencing heart disease compared to 3% in Colorado .

⁵⁰ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2021)

⁵¹ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2021)

⁵² Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2021)

⁵³ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2021)

⁵⁴ Clear Creek County, Colorado Official Website (2022)

⁵⁵ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2021)

⁵⁶ Colorado Health Institute (2017)

⁵⁷ Colorado Health Institute (2017)

⁵⁸ Local Public Health Agency Priority Grids (2022)

⁵⁹ 2024 Colorado Public Health and Environment Improvement Plan (2022)

WHY CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH RESOURCES AND EXPANDING HEALTH CARE OPTIONS?

GOALS

To provide health care services (non-urgent and out of hospital) in people's homes to meet unmet needs in Clear Creek County.

To expand family planning services provided in Clear Creek County.

STRATEGIES

Clear Creek County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will develop and operate the Community Integrated Health Care Services (CIHCS) program in Clear Creek County.

Clear Creek County EMS will participate in CIHCS regional training and collaboration.

To develop and operate a family planning program as a core service of Clear Creek County Public Health.

MEASURES

By December 2023, establish a CIHCS program that provides non-urgent, home-based health care services in Clear Creek County.

By December 2027, the CIHCS program provides 200 people with necessary health care services in their homes.

By December 2023, establish a family planning program that serves Clear Creek County.

By December 2027, the family planning program provides 75 people with family planning services per year in Clear Creek County.



Access to Nutritious Food

Accessing nutritious food is a social determinant of health that is a challenge for many individuals living in Clear Creek. According to US News & World Report, 12.3% of the Clear Creek population does not have access to a large grocery store and their food environment index score is 6.95 compared to the state average of 12.35⁶⁰. Overall, Clear Creek scored a 38/100 on the food availability metric developed by US News and World Report⁶¹.

In the CHAPS community survey, community members highlighted that their access to healthy and inexpensive food was limited. This lack of access to nutritious food is a social determinant of health that can be addressed to combat obesity and to prevent chronic disease.

Transportation

Transportation is also a barrier for Clear Creek community members in accessing resources. According to the US census, the mean travel time to work for ages 16 and up is 28.9 minutes. In the community survey, community members identified distance to resources and a lack of transportation services as barriers to health. This was particularly salient for the older adult community who may

no longer feel comfortable driving, especially in winter weather or with increased traffic in the area. Colorado's 2024 Public and Environmental Health Improvement Plan has identified not only increasing choice and accessibility when it comes to transportation, but also making transportation options more sustainable and environmentally friendly⁶².

Housing

The median value of owner occupied houses in Clear Creek County is \$378,300 in comparison to that of the state of Colorado being \$343,300⁶³. The median rent in Clear Creek County is \$938/month in comparison to a Colorado state average of \$1,271⁶⁴. Clear Creek County consists mainly of housing units that are occupied by their owner with 77.2% of units reflecting this, whereas only 22.8% of units are rentals. Of these units, most are single units, followed by mobile homes⁶⁵. While the housing data presented here for Clear Creek County is relatively positive, as older adults transition out of their owner-occupied units, the median cost of buying a house in the county may make it difficult for younger individuals and families to move into the county. Compared to other parts of the U.S., Clear Creek housing costs are higher than average⁶⁶.

⁶⁰ US News & World Report (2021)

⁶¹ US News & World Report (2021)

⁶² 2024 Colorado Public Health and Environment Improvement Plan (2022)

⁶³ Colorado Department of Public Affairs (2021)

⁶⁴ Colorado Department of Public Affairs (2021)

⁶⁵ Colorado Department of Public Affairs (2021)

⁶⁶ National Association of Realtors (2022)

WHAT IS THE PLAN?



GOALS

To improve Clear Creek County community members' knowledge of and access to resources and services that promote health and well-being including clean air and water, healthcare, behavioral health, transportation, housing, jobs, nutritious foods, and physical activity.

STRATEGIES

To build partnerships, coordinate programs and services, strengthen resource and referral networks, and provide subject matter expertise across sectors as Clear Creek County Public Health implements its core public health services. As examples:

- Public health nurses will share resources and information about specific social determinants of health when providing WIC, immunization, and family planning services.
- Public Health Director will provide subject matter expertise on the health impacts of different county and regional initiatives on social determinants of health (such as transportation, housing, economic development, etc.).

To co-lead the Behavioral Health Alliance to improve services and access to resources related to behavioral health in Clear Creek County.

MEASURES

By December 2027, increase the number of food pantry sites from 6 to 10 in Clear Creek County.

By December 2027, increase the number of resources and referrals to clients provided by public health staff. (Data source to be identified in 2023).



IN SUMMARY

As a result of the 2022 community health assessment and planning process, Clear Creek County Public Health has prioritized key public health challenges that they are dedicated to addressing in partnership with community organizations, leaders, and members. The prioritized issues of substance use, mental health, air pollution, health care access, and connecting people to resources are complex and persistent public health issues. They are also issues that are not new, or unique, to Clear Creek County. Many

Colorado counties, especially rural or resort communities, have identified similar public health challenges in their past and current public health improvement plans. Clear Creek County's 2023-2027 public health improvement plan is evidence-based, feasible, and supported by community partners. It aims to improve and protect the health and well-being of the people of Clear Creek County. Now is the time to put the plan into action!

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