

Douglas County Health Department

Executive Director's Report to the Board of Health

Date: June 2026

Prepared by: Michael Hill

1. Executive Summary

The Health Department continues to deliver high-quality services to Douglas County residents.

Douglas County recently offered an Early Retirement option for employees; three of our employees decided to take advantage of the option and will be leaving the department effective June 30. We want to thank all of them for their service to DCHD and to our community. And wish them a long, happy and healthy retirement. Among those leaving us, Jon Surbeck is the longest serving employee of DCHD, having started before the department was even formed.

- Carolyn Volkert, Disease Investigation Specialist
- Mary Elliott, Public Health Nurse
- Jon Surbeck, Manager of Emergency Preparedness and Disease Surveillance

2. Executive Director Activities

- Regional Engagement
 - Participated in Region 12 Opioid Council meetings: the council awarded additional opioid mitigation funding and has issued a Request for Proposals seeking new programs and providers for our county.
 - Ongoing involvement with the Douglas County Homeless Initiative and Metro Denver Partnership for Health.
 - Participated in a statewide Executive Directors Retreat at the State Health Department.
- Department Initiatives
 - Published completed Public Health Improvement Plan based and Community Health Needs Assessment to the web for public information.
 - We are seeking quotes to find a consultant to facilitate a new strategic plan that will align with the new Public Health Improvement Plan.
- Community Health Collaboration
 - Continued partnership with Human Services on the Healthy Families Partnership, focusing first on infant safe sleep education.

- Several successful meetings with local hospital partners to encourage their participation in health-related initiatives to benefit Douglas County.

3. Infectious Disease Update

- Seasonal Respiratory Illnesses
 - Flu and RSV: current hospitalization numbers were similar to the same period in 2025; Flu and RSV cases have moved down as their normal season ends.
 - COVID-19: Data that is available suggests case levels remain slightly lower than 2025.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
 - Numbers are very low this year.
- Measles Surveillance
 - We have monitored ongoing outbreaks around the country and sporadic cases around Colorado.
 - While there have been some reported exposures, no confirmed cases in Douglas County yet; coordination with metro health departments on messaging and vaccination access continues.
- Hantavirus
 - Sadly, we had one fatality in the county this year from Hantavirus, a strain which is endemic in Colorado and not related to the recent cruise ship cases.
- Ebola
 - Luckily, we have not had any cases or suspects in our county. Federal, state and local health departments receive lists of those who travel to their jurisdictions from the Ebola impacted areas, those travelers are monitored during the Ebola incubation period so that any symptoms will be responded to quickly.
- Epidemiology
 - Team continues to enhance public health communication and disease surveillance.
 - We are starting to make more use of available hospitalization data, including in the areas of Mental Health, Substance Misuse and Chronic Disease.
 - Some new data initiatives at the state will allow us to provide even more information to our staff and to the public.

4. Strategic & Operational Planning

- Professional Development
 - Staff attended:
 - Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists Annual Meeting - June

- Staff to attend:
 - National Association of County & City Health Officials Annual Meeting – July
 - National Environmental Health Association Annual Meeting - July

- Abstracts submitted:
 - American Public Health Association Annual Meeting
 - Public Health in the Rockies Conference

- Future Initiatives
 - The department continues expanding the use of Artificial Intelligence in our work. Several staff are participating in a series of trainings related to Douglas County’s new financial management system.

5. Health Administration Update

- Finance & Administration
 - Continued progress in streamlining accounting procedures.
 - Continued coordination with County Finance and Budget teams.
 - Filling of three existing positions will be frozen until 2028 as an impact of the county’s early retirement program; we have plans in place to reallocate workload to accommodate this.

- Vital Records
 - March - May performance:
 - 2,967 Birth Certificates
 - 2,367 Death Certificates
 - \$120,865 in revenue