

Garfield County

Public Health 2014 Report



Garfield County



“The greatest reward of the Public Health field is being able to make a difference in the lives of people in the entire community.”

Garfield County Public Health is working to make this difference by building educational programs, developing policies, expanding services, and conducting research to improve the health and well-being of the population.

This year, our team has worked on projects ranging from improving school lunch menus, to ensuring healthy air and water for our citizens, to monitoring the global outbreak of Ebola.

Public Health has a responsibility to improve and protect the health of everyone across all lifespans, from the youngest of infants, to our senior citizens.

Our challenge is to find collaborative, multifaceted approaches to respond to our communities' unique needs.

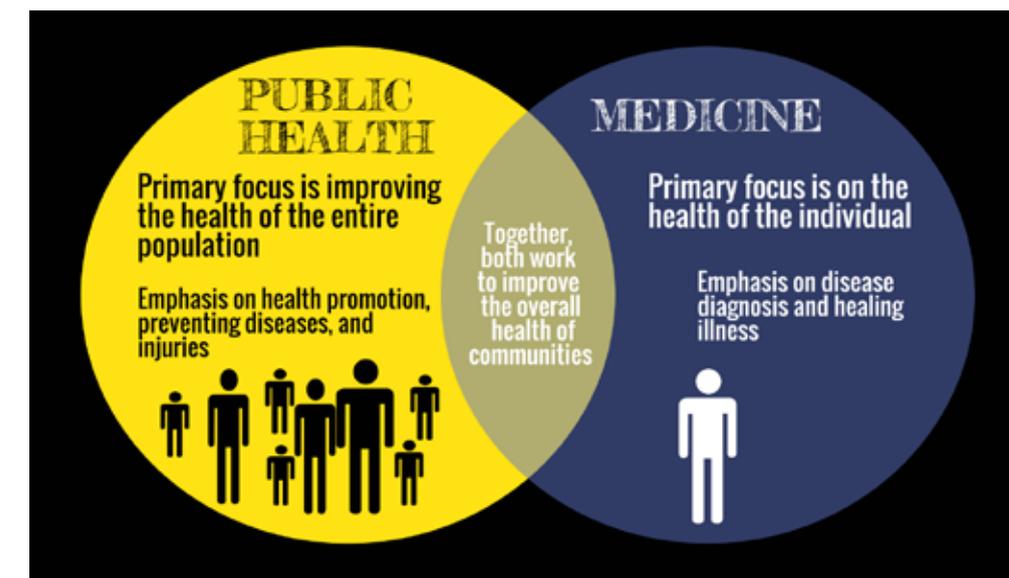
We exist to improve health care quality and delivery, to influence policy, and to provide information that promotes health, prevents disease and empowers people to make sound health decisions.

This report serves to highlight ways in which our team has made a difference in Garfield County this past year. As we move forward, Public Health will continue to monitor the ever changing needs of our population, and continue to provide the preventative health care that we need to grow stronger, healthier communities.

Yvonne Long
Public Health Director



2014 Garfield County Public Health

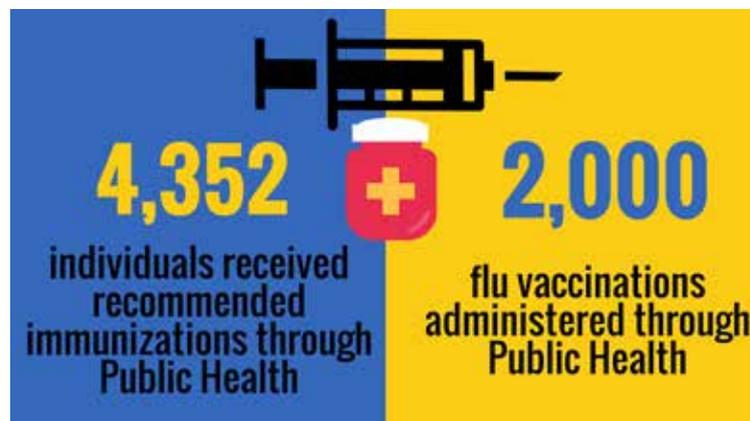




Immunizations

Vaccine preventable diseases like whooping cough, polio, and measles previously have killed thousands of people every year. As vaccines were developed, these diseases became rare. However, rates are increasing among unvaccinated people. If, and when, citizens make the choice not to vaccinate, they put the entire community at risk for these preventable diseases.

This year, 4,352 people in Garfield County received recommended immunizations through public health clinics. The health department also administered over 2,000 flu vaccinations. This is a slight decrease from the past year's total, because of a vaccine manufacturing delay. Even though health care facilities experienced a delay, vaccines were available at private pharmacy locations throughout the community. Through the travel clinic, 224 people received vaccinations for travel to foreign countries.



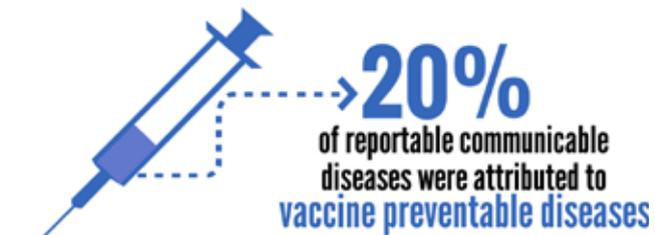
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Communicable disease prevention

The health department monitors local disease outbreaks, alerts clinicians to public health threats, and investigates cases to control the spread of infectious diseases. This year, there were 133 cases of reportable diseases.

- 40 percent were food or waterborne diseases
- 20 percent were vaccine preventable diseases
- 19 people were hospitalized for flu (influenza)
- 37 people tested positive for Hepatitis C



Ebola

The 2014 Ebola outbreak marked the first time the disease's spread reached epidemic levels. With the total number of cases exceeding 20,000 worldwide, Garfield County Public Health focused on local preparedness efforts. By hosting mock exercises and coordinating protocols with other response agencies, the emergency preparedness team was able to assess readiness and the ability to handle a local infectious disease outbreak.

Emergency preparedness

In any type of an emergency where the health of the public is at risk, public health departments must be prepared to respond. Therefore, the preparedness team meets routinely with emergency officials (fire, emergency medical, hospitals, law enforcement, etc.) and local emergency planning committees to practice emergency scenarios, and to review protocols and procedures.

Women, Infants & Children (WIC)

An average of 60 new clients were added to the WIC program each month in 2014. This year, WIC provided 1,100 women and children with nutrition information, breastfeeding support, vouchers for free healthy foods, and referrals for health care or other community services. In 2014, \$800,000 was spent through the WIC program at businesses in Garfield County.

Health Care Program for Children with Special Needs (HCP)

HCP places nurses in contact with families that have children with physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional conditions, and who need help coordinating care for their children. HCP nurses tailor services to fit the needs of individual families to ensure the best possible health outcomes.



Baby and Me Tobacco Free

Offering free diapers for up to one year, the Baby and Me Tobacco Free program encourages pregnant women to stop smoking for healthier pregnancies and babies. The program enrollment locally doubled in the past year, with 34 women staying smoke-free during their pregnancies.

Breastfeeding support

The benefits of breastfeeding extend well beyond basic nutrition. Breast milk is all a baby needs in the first six months of life, which is why the health department has taken on the challenge of increasing breastfeeding initiation and duration rates. Garfield County is above the state average, with an initiation rate of 91 percent. Last year, 48 clients participated in a peer-to-peer breastfeeding support program, finding the encouragement to continue nursing for the health of their babies.

Child Fatality Prevention and Review Team

The leading cause of child fatalities in Garfield County is motor vehicle accidents. Loss of any child is devastating to a community. The focus of the team is to review any preventable deaths and explore new prevention strategies.

Car seat safety inspections

Ninety-six percent of parents believe their child safety seats are installed correctly. However, research shows that seven out of 10 children are improperly restrained. Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians are available through the health department to provide free child safety seat inspections by appointment, and at local health and safety fairs. The department performed more than 200 car seat inspections in 2014.

CAR SEAT SAFETY



7 out of 10

children are improperly restrained

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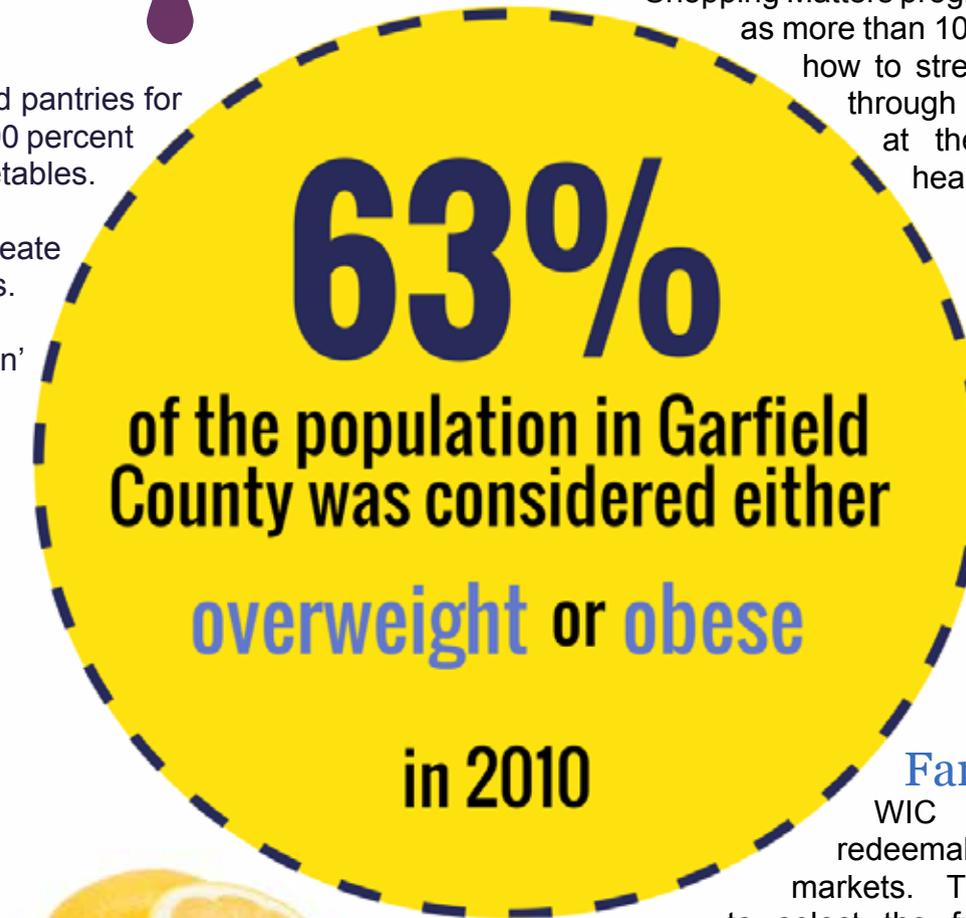
LiveWell Garfield County

Focused on healthy eating and active living, LiveWell Garfield County had an active second year. The program had participation from community members in each of the county's six municipalities.

Community gardens yielded over 3,000 pounds of produce. The Gleaning Project requested community members bring produce that would otherwise be discarded to farmers markets and food pantries for the needy. This effort increased fresh produce availability in pantries by 90 percent in the summer months, bringing in over 6,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables.

With help from LiveWell, one school district revamped its menus to create new healthier recipes, increasing student participation in school lunches.

LiveWell Garfield County also took part in the statewide Get Movin' Challenge, where participants logged their daily physical activity.



Cooking Matters and Shopping Matters programs

Cooking Matters allows low-income families to work with nutrition educators to gain hands-on experience preparing nutritious foods. The Shopping Matters program doubled this year, as more than 100 women were taught how to stretch their food dollars through selective shopping at the grocery store for healthier foods.



Senior wellness

Public health nurses provide services at local senior lunch sites that includes everything from blood pressure checks to information on fall prevention. Nurses also provide local tai chi classes for physical fitness.



Farmers markets

WIC checks are now redeemable at local farmers markets. This enables clients to select the freshest locally-grown produce at these markets to feed their families. Last year, \$15,000 in vouchers were redeemed, making 2014 the largest recorded year for voucher use at farmers markets.

Environmental health

Environmental health responded to 65 complaints on air quality, water quality, waste management, food safety, and other environmental issues that had an impact on human health.



Air quality

Garfield County's air has been the subject of national news for several years, and 2014 was no exception. With so much interest in air quality, environmental health has created one of the strongest local air monitoring programs in the country. The department monitors air for pollutants and tracks trends over time. Live air quality data, including a visibility index, is available on the county's website.



Vehicle idling

Idling vehicles are a major source of air pollution. Warming up vehicles through idling is not necessary for today's electronic engines. In fact, it is harder on vehicle batteries and engines, costs more money in gasoline, and spews hazardous pollutants into the air and into the cabs of idling vehicles. The department worked with public entities, including school districts, to craft idling policies for their fleet vehicles.



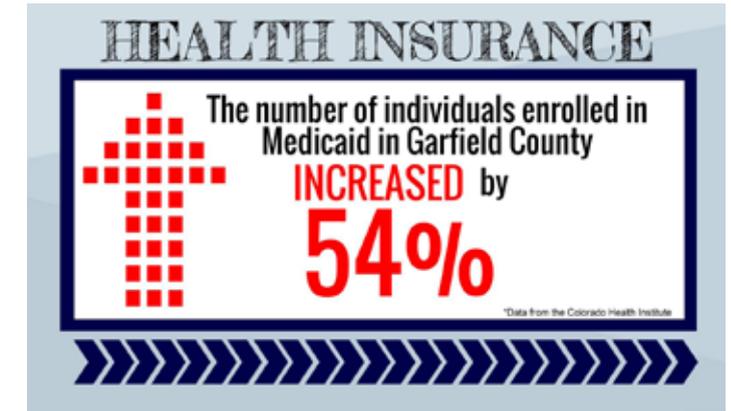
Radon

Exposure to radon in the home is responsible for an estimated 20,000 lung cancer deaths in the United States each year. Free radon test kits are available at the health department. This year, environmental health worked with local pediatricians, to integrate radon awareness into children's well child appointments.



Reach Out and Read Program

Having a parent read aloud is the most important activity for developing language and early reading skills. Staff gave out 1,854 new, age-appropriate books to children in clinics. Parents are shown techniques for reading to their children at home.



Healthy Communities Program

Once someone signs up for Colorado Medicaid or Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+) health insurance, it can be tricky navigating the system. A family health coordinator walks clients through the process of finding medical care or supportive community services. They listen to family needs, make home visits if necessary, and ensure that families have the resources they need to be healthy. This year the Healthy Communities Program served more than 1,500 new clients.

In addition to serving clients, the Healthy Communities Program works with medical providers to ensure patients make it to scheduled appointments, understand the medical process, and follow through with treatment plans.



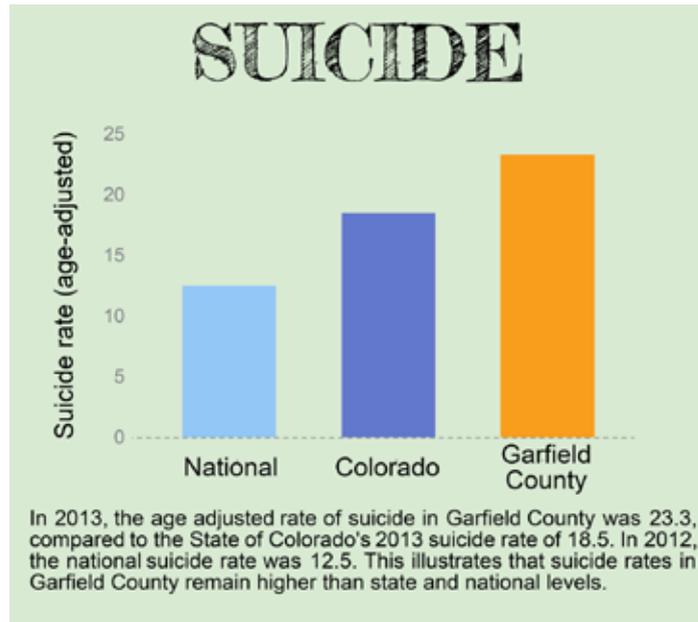
Smiles for Students Program

More than half of Colorado third graders get cavities that are preventable. Using mobile dental equipment, a team of registered dental hygienists traveled to 16 schools to provide 1,293 middle and elementary students with free dental cleanings, oral health education, dental sealants, and fluoride varnishes. The program identified 330 students with severe dental needs and referred them to treatment.

Connect for Health Colorado

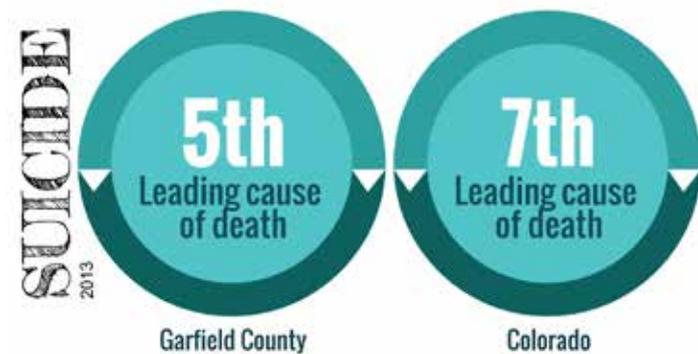
In its first year, the Connect for Health Colorado Health Insurance Exchange (part of the Affordable Care Act) enrolled 1,026 Garfield County residents for 2014 healthcare coverage. Before healthcare reform, many families were unable to afford health insurance or unable to obtain coverage due to pre-existing conditions. The Affordable Care Act helped to ensure that thousands of people would have access to comprehensive healthcare coverage. Through Colorado's Medicaid expansion, the number of individuals enrolled in Medicaid increased by 54 percent.

The Federal Department of Health and Human Services selected the region of Garfield, Eagle, and Pitkin County as one of only seven in the nation for a study on how state and local health departments can aid in increasing health insurance enrollment. Our region was selected because of the strong regional collaborative partnerships and strong relationships with local human services departments. The region was studied to identify promising practices and innovative models that might be replicated nationwide.



Suicide prevention

Colorado is consistently among the top 10 states in the nation with the highest suicide rates. To prevent suicide, we must first understand the warning signs, and then know how to respond. The Garfield County Suicide Prevention Coalition offers free suicide prevention trainings and partners with mental health groups to talk about ways of improving our local mental health system.



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When Wyatt was born, he appeared to be a healthy baby boy. However, at just three days old, he was rushed into emergency surgery and had to have 50 percent of his small intestine removed. He was hospitalized for a month, and unable to gain weight. When his mother, Rhianna, came to Garfield County for WIC assistance, she

was distraught. Her son was not absorbing nutrients and she was afraid he was not going to survive. On top of that, he now required specialized formula that cost \$51 per can.



“From the beginning, I was treated so kindly at WIC. The whole team was so warmhearted, always welcoming and offering solutions.” shared Rhianna.

“As part of the program, WIC was able to special order the formula Rhianna’s baby needed and provide it to her free,” said WIC Educator Lori Gish. “We listened to what she

needed, and helped her walk through solutions. Her baby is now a healthy and thriving little guy!

“The whole team was so warmhearted, always welcoming and offering solutions.”

“It’s the wonder of WIC,” continued Lori. “We aren’t doctors, but what we do have is that extra time to really talk to moms and find out what they need, even if it is just a shoulder to cry on.”

making a difference!