

Community Health Improvement Plan 2020

Update April 2023

OUR VISION

Empowering all individuals, families and communities to pursue healthy behaviors, and enhance physical environments, for improved mental, physical, spiritual, and social health and wellness. Assuring an environment where communities flourish and people are connected.



PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Background

Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs) are used by health and other governmental education and human service agencies to guide a community effort to improve health based on data gathered in a community health assessment. This CHIP has helped to direct Two Rivers Public Health Department's (TRPHD's) efforts, including seeking funding, to address community health since 2020.

Beginning in 2019, Two Rivers Public Health Department embarked on a process to complete a robust community health assessment by asking community partners to complete a Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) process in tandem with a community health needs assessment.

Two Rivers Public Health Department completed this process in December 2020 through approval of Community Health Improvement Plan 2020 by the district Board of Health. Approval of a Community Health Improvement Plan is the first step in completing the goals outlined in the document. This report will recall the goals created through the MAPP process and the actions taken toward addressing the goals named by the report.

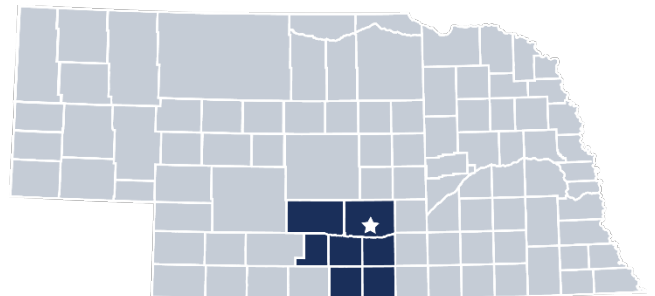
Moving Forward

Two Rivers Public Health Department is working with area partners to align timing of community health assessment work and community health improvement work. Typically, these processes occur on a 3–5-year cycle. TRPHD is currently in year 3 of the cycle for this iteration of the Community Health Improvement Plan.

TRPHD is hoping to begin gathering data for our next community health assessment in early 2024. TRPHD will also conduct the [National City and County Health Officials \(NACCHO\)](#) reinvigorated community planning process called [MAPP 2.0](#), a reinvigorated version of the previous MAPP process. This process focuses heavily on telling the story of the district, creating a process for continuous improvement, and data assessments that show a picture of the health landscape. While the current strategies in this Community Health Improvement Plan address equity issues, the future process will emphasize equity as a foundational practice of community health improvement priorities.

Our District

Two Rivers Public Health Department (TRPHD) serves almost 100,000 residents across about 4,600 square miles. Serving Dawson, Buffalo, Gosper, Phelps, Kearney, Harlan, and Franklin counties, TRPHD is the largest rural health district in the state by population. Through collaborative engagement with partners, community leaders, and the public, TRPHD promotes healthy lifestyles, provides preventative education, assures environmental quality, and strives to create more healthy and safe communities for all who live within the district.



Geography: The Republican River runs through the southern section of the district, and the Platte River runs along the northern area of the district thus the name ‘Two Rivers.’ A small branch of the Loup River flows through the northern portion of the district. The central region of the district is largely cropland. Both the northern and the southern areas of the district tend to be used as grazing land for cattle.

Health Systems: There are nine health systems, one standalone surgical center, and one psychiatric unit across the Two Rivers Public Health District. Seven hospitals are classified as critical access hospitals, while two are short term acute care hospitals. The hospitals are as follows:

County	Hospital Name	City	Facility Type
Buffalo	CHI Health Good Samaritan	Kearney	Acute Care
Buffalo	CHI Health Richard Young Behavioral Health	Kearney	Psychiatric Hospital
Buffalo	Kearney Ambulatory Surgical Center	Kearney	Acute Care
Buffalo	Kearney Regional Medical Center- Bryan Health	Kearney	Acute Care
Dawson	Cozad Community Hospital	Cozad	Critical Access
Dawson	Gothenburg Memorial Hospital	Gothenburg	Critical Access
Dawson	Lexington Regional Health Center	Lexington	Critical Access
Phelps	Phelps Memorial Health Center	Holdrege	Critical Access
Kearney	Kearney County Health Services	Minden	Critical Access
Harlan	Harlan County Health System	Alma	Critical Access
Franklin	Franklin County Memorial Hospital	Franklin	Critical Access

Rural vs. Urban: The majority of the population is near the I-80 corridor. The largest urban areas are Holdrege (~5,515 people), Lexington (~10,348 people), and Kearney (~33,790 people), with about 51% of the population in the district residing in three cities, while the remaining is rurally located.

Linkages to Strategic Planning

TRPHD completed a Strategic Planning process and implemented a plan for 2022-2025. This plan further emphasizes the need for specific actions by the health department. The four strategic goals are:

- Strengthen collaboration and increase service availability
- Improved access to care for underserved populations
- Enable sustainable organizational systems and infrastructure
- Become a trusted resource for local data

These strategic goals enhance TRPHD’s ability to further address the priorities noted in the CHIP emphasizing the need to link individuals to care through collaboration with partners. Efforts to become a trusted resource for local data enhance the TRPHD’s ability to serve partners and the public through sharing hyperlocal information for data driven decision making.

Access to Care

This community health improvement priority has allowed TRPHD to seek and apply for funding that directly addresses work toward communities experiencing disparities. TRPHD is actively working within the following grants to address this objective: Minority Health Initiatives (NE DHHS), and Partnering for Vaccine Equity (NACCHO).

Improved Education Objective:

TRPHD will create a communication committee within the next 30 days to discuss the best system for consistent messaging (Joint Information Center-like). Ideally the collaborative group will run a targeted media campaign by [January] and evaluate the efficacy of the first campaign for improvement.

Improved Education Update:

TRPHD completed a multilingual educational campaign by December 31st, 2022 within the categories suggested by partners: physical and mental health, domestic violence, or access to dental care. TRPHD has contracted with a translation service to ensure that materials are translated appropriately for the population. TRPHD primarily translates information into Spanish as it is the 2nd most common language in the district.

County	English Only	Spanish	Other Indo-European Language	Asian and Pacific Islander	Other Languages	Total Percent of languages spoken other than English
Dawson	67.60%	27.10%	0.30%	0.90%	4.10%	32.40%
Buffalo	91.70%	5.80%	0.80%	1.50%	0.20%	8.30%
Phelps	95.20%	4.10%	0.70%	0.00%	0.00%	4.80%
Kearney	95.60%	4.00%	0.40%	0.00%	0.00%	4.40%
Harlan	96.20%	2.40%	0.50%	0.90%	0.00%	3.80%
Gosper	96.30%	3.20%	0.50%	0.00%	0.00%	3.70%
Franklin	97.20%	1.70%	0.60%	0.40%	0.05%	2.80%
Nebraska	88.40%	7.80%	1.60%	1.40%	0.90%	11.60%

TRPHD developed and distributed a multi-lingual education campaign through guidance from the Minority Advisory Committee. The content of the educational campaigns included: physical and mental health, domestic violence, access to dental care, minority health, and equity and inclusion.

The image displays four flyers for radon test kits, each in a different language: English, Spanish, Somali, and Arabic. Each flyer features a megaphone icon, a diagram of human lungs, and text explaining the importance of radon testing. The English flyer says "FREE RADON TEST KITS" and "Test Your Home Today!". The Spanish flyer says "GRATIS KITS DE PRUEBA DE RADÓN" and "¡Realízelo así hogar hoy mismo!". The Somali flyer says "BILAASH AGABKA BAARITAANKA RADON" and "Maanta Baaritaan Ku Samee Ertagaaga!". The Arabic flyer says "مجاناً مجموعات اختبار غاز الرادون" and "اختبر منزلك اليوم". All flyers include the Two Rivers Public Health Department logo and contact information.

TRPHD has hired a Marketing and Communications Coordinator to increase and improve overall communications. This position is the point of contact for translation services, creates social media posts and videos, and consults with media personnel.

Increasing Vaccination Rates Objective:

TRPHD and partners will increase initial education efforts and build rapport with our community to encourage our community to appropriately use and follow approved vaccine schedules according to individual needs within the next 30 days.

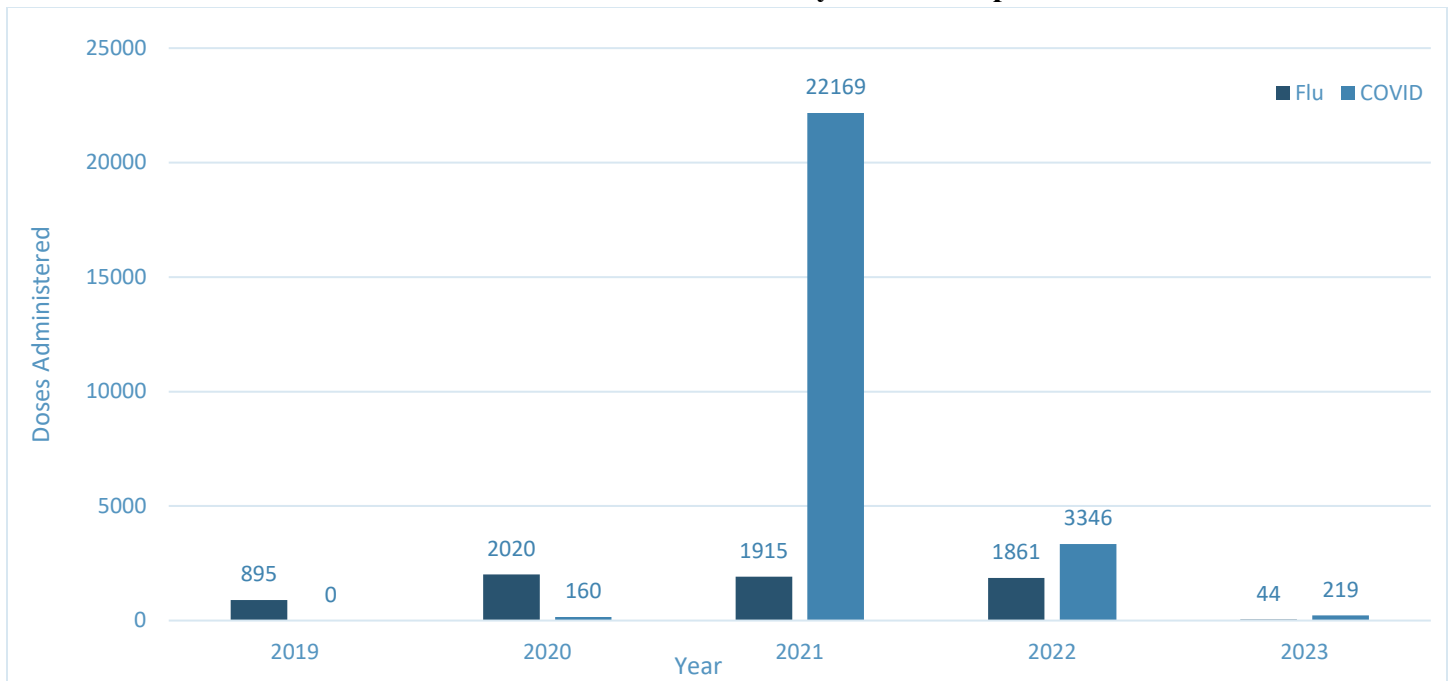
Increasing Vaccination Rates Update:

Much of the focus of funding at this time is directed toward COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations. This work focuses on partnerships with local schools, clinics, hospitals, long term care facilities and pharmacies.

TRPHD is continuing to complete vaccination clinics throughout the district, with a noted decline in attendance at the vaccination clinics. TRPHD will be adjusting this strategy to best suit the needs of the communities going forward.

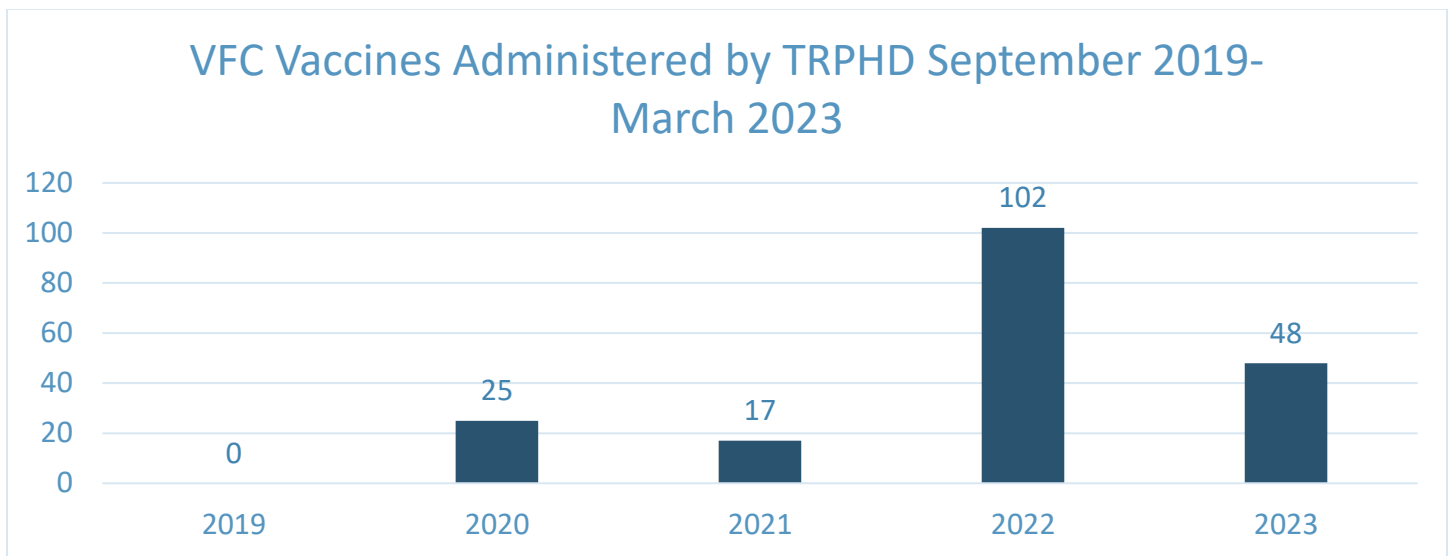
TRPHD continues to distribute COVID-19 vaccine to any clinic in need of vaccine. To date, more partners are able to meet the minimum orders of vaccine.

COVID and Influenza Vaccine Doses Administered by TRPHD September 2019- March 2023



TRPHD is working with local businesses and clinical partners to ensure routine childhood immunizations, COVID-19 and flu vaccines are more accessible and available at convenient locations like workplaces and community locations.

Data in the 2019 Community Health Assessment (CHA) shows the TRPHD population has a low vaccination rate overall. Shortly prior to the beginning of the CHA process, TRPHD acquired the Vaccines For Children (VFC) program through the CDC. This program provides routine childhood vaccines to individuals who are uninsured and underinsured. TRPHD is able to provide vaccinations for children who are fully insured, these vaccines are billed through the child’s insurance.



Safe Environment

Assess Current Efforts Occurring Locally

TRPHD will leverage partnerships with local service providers to improve access to safe environment continuously. Notable partnerships to utilize include: water testing through natural resource districts, addressing substandard housing through South Central Economic Development District and Community Action Partnership, and identifying substandard housing through community service officers.

Effort Assessment Update:

Environmental health focuses on the relationships between people and their environment. It promotes human health and well-being, and fosters healthy and safe communities. Like many public health practices, environmental health works to advance policies and programs to reduce chemical and other environmental exposures in air, water, soil and food to protect people and provide communities with healthier environments.

TRPHD has hired an Environmental Specialist to assist in creating programs to promote a safe environment. This position is working toward grant applications that would allow TRPHD to provide direct services to individuals in need of assistance with home remediation. TRPHD is rapidly acquiring training for this individual to provide the best environmental health services available.

TRPHD acquired funding to improve and grow the department's environmental health program. This funding supports public health infrastructure to protect people from preventable illness and maintain every American's health by making sure food and water is safe, tracking diseases, stopping outbreaks, providing child and maternal healthcare, and monitoring data.



Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Objective

TRPHD will continuously cultivate partnerships with suicide prevention coalitions such as: McKenna's Rae of Hope, Society of Care, and Region 2 & 3 Behavioral Health. TRPHD will also promote the national 988 suicide prevention lifeline.

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Update;

TRPHD is maintaining partnerships with McKenna's Rae of Hope, Society of Care, and Region 2 & 3 Behavioral Health. Through these partnerships, TRPHD has collaborated with local, state, and federal partners to address opioid usage in the district.

According to the CDC's Overdose Data to Action statistics, TRPHD recorded over 64 outpatient visits for drug overdoses between 2017 & 2022, over 85% of which were for opioids or benzodiazepine overdose. A detailed analysis of death certificate data from 2005-2022 recorded 92 drug overdose deaths (mostly accidental opioid poisoning), 55% of which were women. Women aged 40-59 years and men aged 18-29 years seem especially vulnerable. Not including intentional drug overdoses, over 200 deaths due to suicide were recorded in TRPHD during this period, over 87% of whom were men, disproportionately in their 30s and 50s. Mental health and

counseling services are restricted in availability and access, often resulting in longer wait times for appointments and the absence of specialized care.

TRPHD is providing education the public on signs and symptoms of an overdose, what to do when overdose is suspected and to use Naloxone when available. The education included where to get naloxone for free and with no questions asked.

A TRPHD Community Health Worker went to all licensed liquor establishments in the district and educate on overdose and give written materials to be posted in the restrooms of the bars to educate the public on what to look for and what to do when an overdose has occurred. Many of the 37 local bars have been more than willing to partner with TRPHD to get information out to the patrons of the establishments by putting flyers in the restrooms that give information on how to spot an overdose and what to do when there is one. Presently, TRPHD is working on getting Naloxone boxes in each of these establishments that can be used if there is an issue that arises at the establishment.

TRPHD has worked with local partners to further education and reach a wider population base. One of the local partners is the S.A.F.E Center (Spouse/Sexual Abuse Family Education) which is a Domestic Violence program. They are an effective stakeholder as they are currently in the process of developing a program to work with bars to provide standby training for staff. Standby training is training how to spot domestic violence and human trafficking and what response steps.

TRPHD is partnering with law enforcement, EMS and pharmacies to give out laminated opioid information cards. Agencies were asked to hand out the information cards to individuals when responding to reported overdoses. These cards have general information on opioids including the signs and symptoms, what to do when there is an overdose and warnings of opioid misuse. These cards were also distributed to liquor stores, laundromats, and food pantries in the district.

Appendix 1: CHIP Partners

Phelps County Community Foundation

Kara Faber

Becton Dickinson

Sam Auld

Tri-Basin Natural Resource District

Sasha Hahn

Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska

Kristin Holl

Catholic Health Initiatives Good Samaritan

Tracy Dethlefs

Rena Jacobson

Diane Reinke

Ben Rehtus

University of Nebraska Medical Center

Denise Waibel-Rycek

Chrisoma Villa- Christian Homes

Cherlyn Hunt

Tyson

Heidi Revelo

Buffalo County Emergency Management

Darrin Lewis

Central Community College

Ashley Weets

Gothenburg Health

Trudy Chestnutt

Wanda Cooper

Garrett Vetter

University of Nebraska Kearney

Cindy Ferrence, Student Health Services

Peggy Abels

Cozad Community Health System
Alison Feik
Kearney County Health System
Connie Linder
Kearney Public Schools
Morgan Bird
Region 2 Behavioral Health
Robin Schultheiss

Choice Family Health Care
Ryan King
Misty Schaecher
Kearney Parks and Recreation
Scott Hayden

Harlan County Health System
Leanne Bewley
Early Learning Connection
Alexandra Dillion
City of Holdrege
Doug Young
Kearney Regional Medical Center
Trish Olson
Amanda Polacek
HelpCare Clinic
Becky Kraenow

Buffalo County Community Health Partners
Denise Zweiner
Region 3 Behavioral Health
Tiffany Gressley

Appendix 3: TRPHD Strategic Plan 2022-2025

Approved by the Board of Health February 1, 2022



Strategic Plan Priorities 2022-2025



Strengthen collaboration and increase service availability

- Connect with community groups, local health systems, schools, and other partners to improve collaborative efforts to address health.
- Assess services and gaps in service in the district annually
- Grow and maintain partners through regular communication and outreach including an annual assessment of TRPHD's impact on the community



Improved access to care for underserved populations

- Conduct a thorough assessment which specifically notes: disparities in the district, partners who are able to collaborate to address disparities, shows quantitative and qualitative data, and is shared widely.
- Release monthly educational topics of wellbeing through a variety of platforms.
- Expand on TRPHD CHIP priority of access to care
- Seek grant funding opportunities



Enable sustainable organizational systems and infrastructure

- Augment strengths-based coaching to develop staff, utilizing individual development plans
- Foster staff relationships through team building exercises
- Create a workforce representative of our district
- Champion innovative, tech-savvy staff
- Complete an assessment of infrastructure needs in order to create a 10 year plan



Become a trusted resource for local data

- Become THE source of health information for our district
- Increase primary data collection of health issues important to our community
- Develop collaboration with academic partners to increase data analysis capabilities
- Develop internal data competencies

Mission: Two Rivers Public Health Department engages collaborative partners, community leaders, and the public to promote healthy lifestyles, provide preventative education, assure environmental quality, and create more healthy and safe communities for all who live within the district.

Vision: Two Rivers Public Health Department envisions a health district where all are able to safely and actively live, learn, work, and play in their communities. Two Rivers Public Health Department facilitates collaboratives, partnerships, and unique approaches that educate, empower, and engage local community partners, health providers, political decision-makers, community leadership, and the public.

Appendix 4: Community Coalitions

- Aging Coalition
- Alzheimer’s Association
- Buffalo County Community Response
- Kearney Intervention Team
- Lexington Interagency
- Rooted in Relationships- Dawson County
- Buffalo County Tobacco Free Coalition
- Minority Health Advisory Committee
- RadRX
- Inclusion and Diversity Group
- Community Connections
- Consumer Family Coalition
- Healthy Minds
- Buffalo County Housing and Emerging Issues Taskforce
- Positive Pressure
- Prevention Coalition Coordinators
- Unconnected Youth
- Phelps County COAD
- Greater Kearney Area COAD