

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

**LARIMER COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT**



RESILIENCY AND INNOVATION IN THE FACE OF A PANDEMIC

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

On the morning of March 9th, 2020, I was attending a Board of County Commissioners meeting, giving updates on the national COVID-19 status, when the phone rang. The Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment was calling to inform us of our first positive COVID-19 case in Larimer County. From that moment on, for all of us, everything changed. By the end of 2020, the novel SARS-CoV-2 virus had infected at least 15,402 of our residents and 157 people lost their lives to COVID-19. I think about this tremendous loss every day.

Even with the all-consuming pandemic, our staff continued to provide innovative solutions for serving our community in new ways. From initiating telehealth services to finding new online systems to serve our clients, our staff found creative solutions to safely continue as many services as possible throughout the pandemic.

As I reflect on 2020, I am in awe of the resiliency of our Larimer County community, one that came together under challenging times to do the necessary work to keep the community safe. The sacrifices that Larimer County residents have made throughout the pandemic are immeasurable, and I will be forever grateful.

At the end of 2020, we were given hope that the end of the pandemic would be a possibility with the emergency authorization of two vaccines. The focus shifted, and we began preparing to vaccinate our community.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas R. Gonzales". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

TOM GONZALES, MPH, REHS

Larimer County Public Health Director

Our Mission

Working to provide everyone in Larimer County the opportunity for a healthy life.

Our Vision

Larimer County is a thriving, health aware community where everyone has access to healthy choices and a healthy environment.

Our Values



Leadership Team

Tom Gonzales, MPH, REHS
Public Health Director

Andrea Clement-Johnson, MS
Deputy Public Health Director

Chris Manley, REHS
Director of Environmental Health

Kelsey Lyon, MPH
Office of Public Health Planning and Partnerships

Katie O'Donnell
Office of Communications and Technology

John Voss
Office of Accounting and Business Operations

Larimer County Board of Health

Jennifer Lee, President (Jan-July)
Bernard Birnbaum, MD (Aug-Dec)
Janna West-Kowalski, MS
Teri Olson, RN
Brian DelGrosso

Larimer County Commissioners

Steve Johnson, District I
John Kefalas, District II
Tom Donnelly, District III

STRATEGIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The Larimer County Department of Health and Environment (LCDHE) has a long history of delivering diverse services to the community. The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan represents the desire to encourage and support staff as they move toward the Public Health 3.0 principles of collaboration and health strategist. The 5-year strategic plan provides direction for the organization and places emphasis on measurable outcomes. By successfully implementing this plan over the next 5 years, LCDHE will be positioned to address the changing demographics and needs of the community.



BE PREPARED FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES AND EMERGING THREATS

LCDHE staff completed training in the FEMA Incident Command System, and the COVID-19 pandemic put that training into practice.



INVEST IN OUR PEOPLE

LCDHE continued to seek ways to develop our staff even throughout the pandemic. COVID-19 brought about virtual meetings and the cancellation of many opportunities, but also highlighted the need to dedicate resources to improving our workforce and celebrating successes in other ways.



INVEST IN OUR INTERNAL PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS

LCDHE staff assessed and analyzed the databases, processes, and systems that are in place to address process improvements.



BE HEALTH STRATEGISTS

COVID-19 brought an immediate need for county-wide data assessment. A population epidemiologist was added to the COVID-19 response to help with data-driven decisions related to the pandemic.

Staff Honored with Larimer County's "Employee of the Month" Awards



November, 2020

Erika Cathey, Communicable Disease Supervisor



April, 2020

Jason Eisenbach, Emergency Preparedness and Response

Erika is always the first point of contact when someone has a question or a problem that needs to be solved. She truly exemplifies what it means to be a public health hero through her service.

Jason's integrity and commitment were especially evident during the COVID-19 response. He helped to coordinate the local response, putting in many extra hours while maintaining his humor and professionalism.

Legendary Service to LCDHE

In September 2020, after over 50 years of dedicated service to LCDHE, Averil (Avie) Strand, RN, MSN, retired from her role as Community Health Services Director. Avie helped shape the department's maternal, child, and family health programs, including Nurse-Family Partnership, Prenatal Plus, and Postpartum Home Visiting. An early adopter of health equity work, Avie represented LCDHE in the community's development of the Food Bank of Larimer County, the Murphy Center for Hope, and the creation of Inspiration Playground, which provides play opportunities to all, no matter age or ability. Avie served on countless committees and boards locally and statewide. Her vast experience, perseverance, and expertise resulted in excellent outcomes for Larimer County and Colorado residents. Her legacy will positively impact the department and community for years to come.



Averil Strand, RN, MSN



Impact of COVID-19 Precautions & Influenza Cases

Not every intervention solely benefited the COVID-19 response. Many of the interventions put in place to protect residents from COVID-19 also helped prevent the spread of influenza. Seasonal flu numbers were low throughout the year, and no pediatric deaths or long-term care facilities had outbreaks related to the seasonal flu this season. The 2020-2021 influenza season was remarkable in that Larimer County had only 3 influenza-related hospitalizations compared to 246 in 2019.



Loveland Tobacco Policy Work

LCDHE staff have consistently served as members of the Loveland Youth Vaping Task Force, which reviewed evidence-based public health practices for addressing the youth vaping crisis. Staff also provided education and support to the Loveland Youth Advisory Commission. LCDHE will continue to assist the City of Loveland and other communities as needed in the implementation and assessment of policy changes related to youth vaping and tobacco use.



WIC Program Ensured Continuity of Services for Families

The Women, Infants, and Children Nutritional Support Program (WIC) transitioned all client services to a fully remote phone model as of April 4, 2020, allowing staff to provide food benefits and personalized nutrition, and breastfeeding support in an uninterrupted and safe manner. WIC participants were very grateful for the services and the ability to receive counseling from educators and dietitians over the phone. One client shared, "I can't tell you how much WIC has helped me during this pandemic! It has been so great to have the help with food and not have to worry about bringing my kids into the clinic."



The Role of Public Health During the 2020 Wildfires

On August 13, 2020, the Cameron Peak fire began burning in an area near Chambers Reservoir. It would eventually burn over 200,000 acres and destroy 450 structures. Shortly after the fire was out, staff began meeting with homeowners who suffered property losses to evaluate drinking water wells and on-site wastewater treatment systems. These systems can be impacted by the fire damaging components, being destroyed by fire fighting vehicles, or be impacted when run-off and erosion occur in the burn areas. While the fire was 100% contained in December, rebuilding is a long process and will continue for many years. Each site is different, so staff will assist homeowners on-site to assess the damage and determine the best way to rebuild damaged systems.

LARIMER COUNTY COVID-19 PANDEMIC TIMELINE

In December 2019, the novel SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 was first identified in Wuhan, China. By January 31, 2020, The World Health Organization had reported 7,818 confirmed cases in China and 18 other countries, including the United States, and declared a Global Health Emergency. On March 9, 2020, the first case of COVID-19 in Larimer County was reported.

MARCH

- Colorado and Larimer County declare a disaster emergency due to the presence of COVID-19 in the state.
- All public and private schools in Colorado move to virtual learning.
- As regional hospital beds and ICUs begin to fill with COVID-19 patients, a Stay-at-Home Public Health Order is issued.

MAY

- By the end of May 2020, 100,000 people have died in the United States from COVID-19.
- Test capacity increases after partnerships with local labs and increased availability of testing supplies.
- Larimer County receives a variance to safely increase capacities for businesses ahead of other counties in the state.

APRIL

- COVID-19 related deaths in Colorado reach 100 and hospitalizations surpass 800.
- The state begins work to build a 200-bed alternative care site at The Ranch in Loveland, planning for hospitals to reach capacity.
- Larimer County and CDPHE issues face-covering orders in all public indoor spaces.
- COVID-19 testing supplies are limited, with results taking over a week to return, limiting local contact tracing abilities.

JUNE

- U.S. COVID-19 cases reach 2 million.
- As the weather gets warmer, cases start to decrease.

JULY

- Rapidly rising cases threaten the variance approved by the State in May, potentially impacting the way businesses can operate in Larimer County.
- Large Independence Day gatherings contribute to an uptick in COVID-19 cases during July and August.

SEPTEMBER

- Colorado's Safer at Home Dial Framework is issued, determining a county's level of "openness."
- Larimer County is in Level Yellow: Concern.

NOVEMBER

- On November 20, Larimer County moved to Level Red: Severe Risk, as COVID-19 cases rise and hospitals reach capacity.
- LCDHE urges residents to stay home and celebrate holidays with just their household members; launches Prevention Starts at Home campaign.

AUGUST

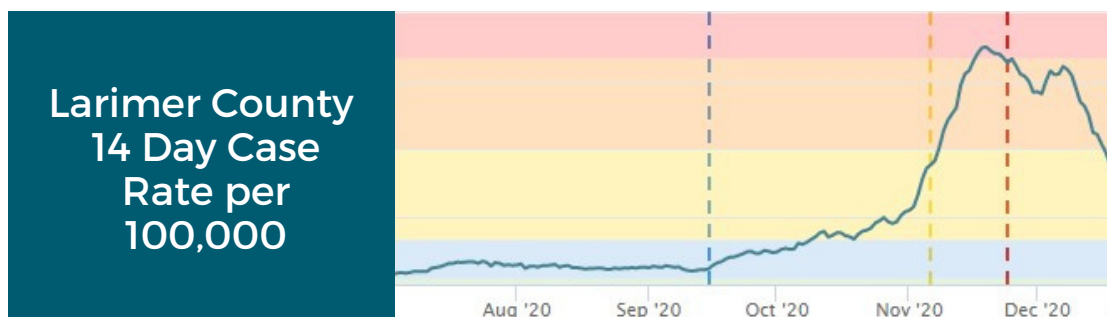
- Larimer County's variance stays in place as COVID-19 cases appear to stabilize.
- COVID-19 becomes the third leading cause of death in the U.S.

OCTOBER

- The 14-day case rate doubles between October 1 and October 31, leading to even greater transmission and case growth during the winter months.
- By the end of October, the third wave and a surge are evident.

DECEMBER

- 61% of Larimer County deaths due to COVID-19 occur in November and December.
- On December 14, the first COVID-19 vaccines are given in Larimer County. Due to limited supply, health care workers and those ages 75+ get their shots first.



2020 COVID-19 PANDEMIC

13,330

Calls Received in the
Joint Information Center

150

Case Contact
Investigators

3.4 million

Visits to Larimer County's
COVID-19 Web Pages

227,634



COVID-19 PCR TESTS GIVEN

Free, mass drive-thru sites were organized throughout the county. LCDHE partnered with Colorado State University's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory to run tests locally, returning results faster than the overwhelmed state labs and increasing the efficacy of contact tracing.



48,000



COVID-19 CONTACT TRACING CALLS

This Larimer County team pursued a technology solution to handle all response activities to COVID-19, including contact tracing, outbreak management, vaccine management, testing services, mass testing, data collection, and reporting.

166



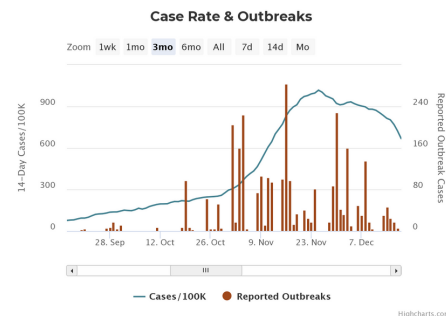
COVID-19 OUTBREAKS INVESTIGATED

The department investigated and addressed 62 outbreaks in healthcare facilities, 36 in offices and at construction sites, 37 in restaurants and breweries, and 31 in schools and childcare centers.

2020 COVID-19 PANDEMIC

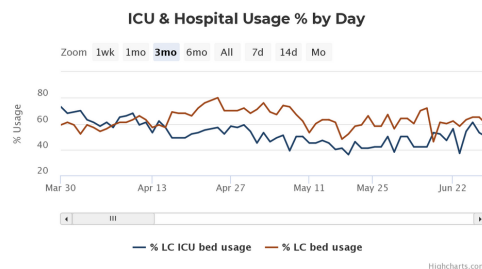
INNOVATION: DATA DASHBOARD

Residents wanted the most up-to-date data available to help understand risk in Larimer County. LCDHE partnered with the Larimer County Information Technology team to provide daily updates for the community. This information was continuously improved as more data became available and state reporting changed throughout the response.



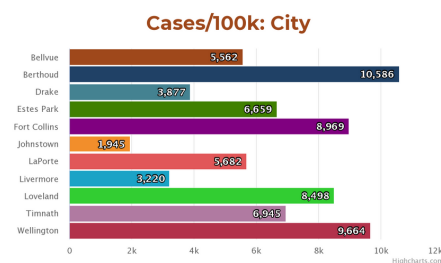
HEALTH EQUITY

In Larimer County, Black and Latino residents had higher rates of hospitalizations due to COVID-19. LCDHE worked on reducing these disparities by implementing strategies to provide broader access to testing. In 2020, LCDHE began outreach to the Latinx community, including hosting community forums in Spanish to provide information and answer questions.



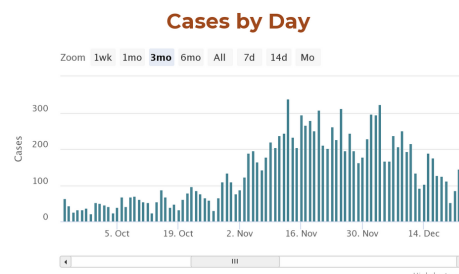
LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

LCDHE held community forums with members of the business community, school districts, child care providers, local municipalities, and many others to provide updates and listen to feedback from those most impacted.



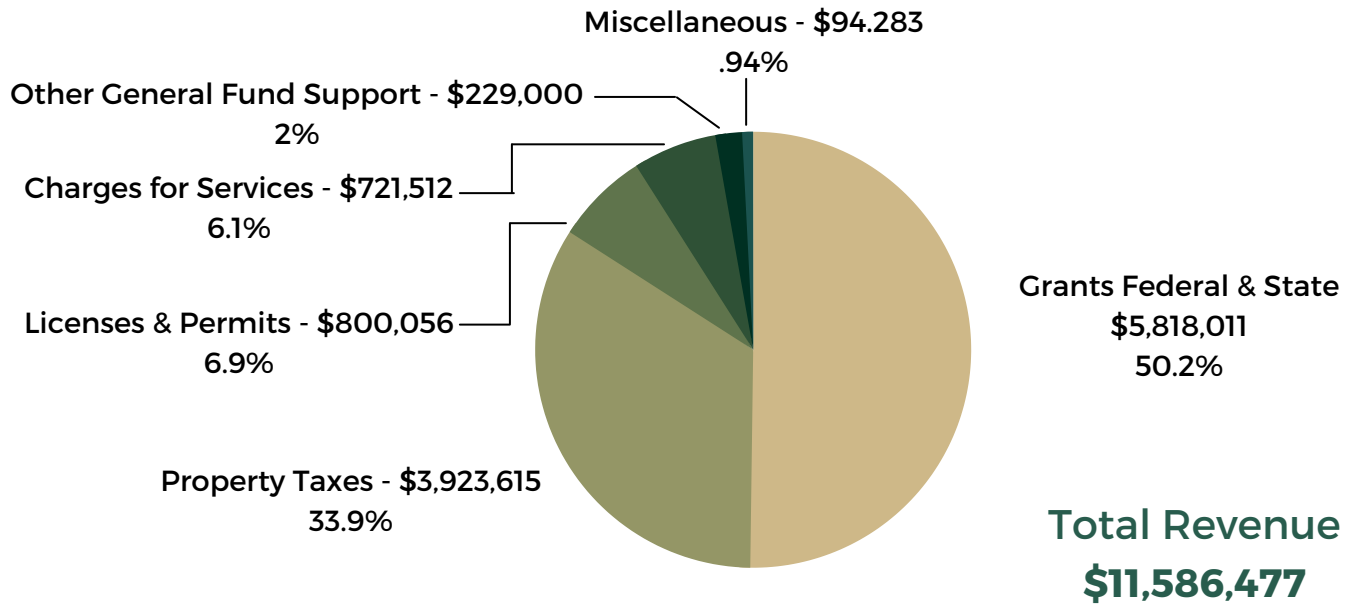
VACCINES

In mid-December, a possible end to the pandemic became a reality with the Emergency Use Authorization of two COVID-19 vaccines.

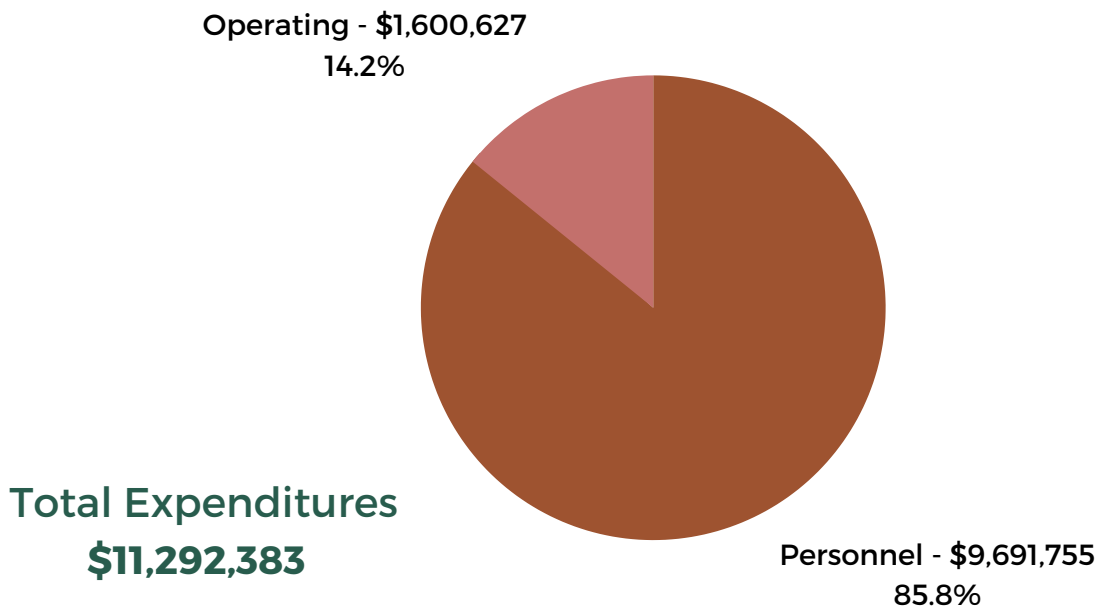


2020 FINANCIALS

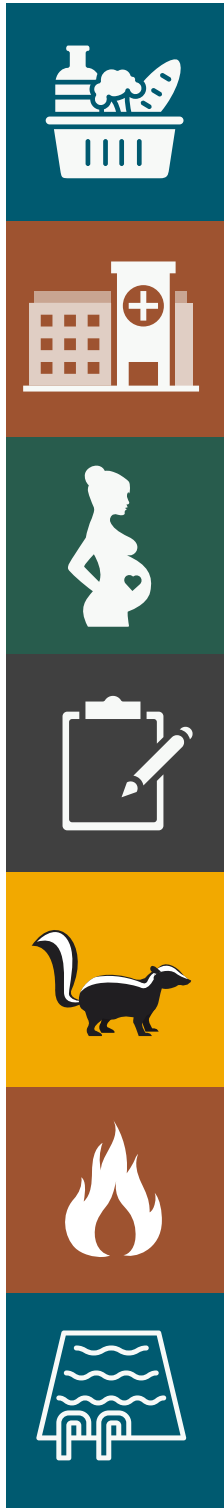
2020 Revenue



2020 Expenditures



2020 DEPARTMENT SERVICES



3,300
WIC PARTICIPANTS
SERVED EACH MONTH

3
INFLUENZA
HOSPITALIZATIONS

217
NURSE FAMILY
PARTNERSHIP FAMILIES

599
RESTAURANT
INSPECTIONS

**10 BATS, 8 SKUNKS, 1 FOX,
1 MOUNTAIN LION**
POSITIVE FOR RABIES

1,221
BURN PERMITS ISSUED

64
POOLS INSPECTED

BIRTH CERTIFICATES ISSUED	6,462
DEATH CERTIFICATES ISSUED	18,407

SEPTIC SYSTEM PERMITS	275
SOLID AND HAZARDOUS WASTE INSPECTIONS	126
CHILDCARES AND SCHOOLS INSPECTED	209
LAND USE REVIEWS	300
FOOD ESTABLISHMENT PLAN REVIEWS COMPLETED	135
RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENT LICENSES ISSUED	1962
LICENSED EMS SERVICES	107

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL CLINIC CLIENTS	72
STI TESTS	1074
CONTRACEPTIVE COUNSELING	1213
PRENATAL PLUS HOME VISITS	139
FAMILIES SERVED - HCP	259
INFLUENZA SHOTS GIVEN	1249

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