Denver Environmental Health Accomplishments
2011-2015

Overview

- Denver is one of the healthiest cities in the nation, ranked in the top 8 out of 22 peer counties of similar size and demographics for key health outcomes and ranked 4th out of 50 metropolitan areas for Health and Community Fitness by the American Fitness Index.

- We are also one of the most environmentally sustainable cities, ranked 5th on the 2011 Siemens Green City Index and 11th on the 2013 American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy Scorecard. Denver is the first city in North America to have all of its departments and agencies certified through the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System.

- During the past four years, our department has brought in $35,197,450 of non-general fund money and distributed $29,151,815 to other departments and community organizations in pursuit of better environmental health.

- Our Public Health Inspections program is the envy of departments statewide, with half as many food safety violations per inspection as most of our surrounding counties and with violations having fallen by over one-third in the past three years.

- The Denver Animal Shelter has one of the highest live-release rates in the nation, at 91%. Every healthy, adoptable animal has a good outcome at our shelter.

- The Office of Medical Examiner continues to maintain accreditation by the National Association of Medical Examiners, one of only four accredited offices in Colorado and 81 nationwide.

- As a department, we expect to be accredited soon by the Public Health Accreditation Board, which began such accreditations only a few years ago.
Key Outcomes

2005-2013 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Per Capita)

Metric tons CO₂ per capita

- 2005: 23.6
- 2007: 23.5
- 2009: 21.1
- 2010: 21.7
- 2011: 20.4
- 2012: 19.9
- 2013: 20

Target per capita emissions if 2020 Goal is achieved = 16.1

25%+ increase in 2020 from 2005!
Animal Shelter Live Release Rate

Animals Adopted and Returned to Owner (RTO)

(Denver Animal Shelter began returning animals to owners in the field in June of 2012).
Public Health Inspections
Average Complaint Response Time (Hours)

![Chart showing average complaint response time for 2011 to 2014.]

Public Health Inspections
Critical Food Safety Violations / Inspection

![Chart showing critical food safety violations per inspection for 2011 to 2014.]

www.denvergov.org/deh
Employee Morale
Semi-Annual Pulse Survey Date

Percentage of Autopsy Reports Completed in Less than 30 Days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>67%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Employee Has Input & Input is Valued

- July-’13: 66%
- January-’14: 68%
- July-’14: 68%
- January-’15: 74%

Positive Workplace Climate

- July-’13: 52%
- January-’14: 59%
- July-’14: 63%
- January-’15: 72%

Teamwork & Collaboration Promoted

- July-’13: 58%
- January-’14: 71%
- July-’14: 65%
- January-’15: 73%

"Agree" or "Strongly Agree"
New Programs

- Launched a comprehensive collaboration to reduce the feral cat population.
- Initiated the Corner Store Initiative to help bring healthy food to areas with few grocery stores, starting with five pilot stores.
- Introduced the “Culture of Wellness” curricula to bring healthy food/active living to child care agencies in Council District 3. There are a total of six child care facilities in this pilot program.
- Launched the Mile High Health Alliance, a partnership of 55 agencies to increase access to health care and improve coordination of health services citywide.
- Worked with other stakeholders to create the Colorado Fresh Food Financing Fund, now capitalized at $14 million, to provide loans and grants to grocery stores interested in locating in underserved areas.
- Restarted the Safe Routes to School program, under DEH leadership.
- Launched the City Energy Project in 2014 to reduce energy use and greenhouse gases associated with commercial buildings.
- Created the Sustainable Neighborhoods program with 3 widely attended kick-off meetings; we have now enrolled 5 neighborhoods in the program.
- Launched the Sun Valley EcoDistrict project with the Denver Housing Authority to create a sustainable development in the Sun Valley area.
- Supported the Public Works Department with funding in 2014 to begin the removal of dumpsters from alleys in northwest Denver neighborhoods.
- Implemented a “Citizen Ride Along” program in Public Health Inspections.
- Launched the lead poisoning prevention program, aimed at reducing the incidences of lead poisoning in children less than 8 years of age.
- Implemented an improved risk-based inspection model in the food safety inspection program.
- Helped launch a regional alliance to reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Inspected over 265 marijuana grow operations for environmental issues and marijuana dispensaries for food safety issues.
- Restarted inspections of tattoo parlors and swimming pools.
- Launched a Proactive Animal Protection campaign to inform citizens on basic pet care, owner responsibility, Denver animal ordinances, etc. This included several free pet wellness clinics that served over 100 animals.
- Promoted humane education & responsible pet ownership to schools, presenting to more than 300 students.
- Launched the Healthy Communities Awards to recognize community partners for work towards improving public and environmental health.
- Installed 12 electric vehicle charging stations.
New Plans and Reports

- Issued Denver’s first 5-year Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) in early 2014.
- Inaugural signatory to the Resilient Communities for America
- Completed Denver’s first Climate Adaptation Plan
- Submitted an application for national accreditation as a public health department, comprised of over 350 documents
- Completed Health Impact Assessment for the Globeville, Elyria & Swansea neighborhoods in 2014
- Issued a Food System Policy Report in early 2015
- Published annual water quality and lakes reports indicating the health of Denver’s waterways
- Released the 2014 Health of Denver Report
- Released HEALTHY FOOD FOR ALL: Encouraging Grocery Investment in Colorado in 2011
- 2013 Roadmap to Commercial Waste Reduction

Changes in Laws & Policies

- Revision of Chapter 11 (Child Care)
- Revision of Chapter 23 (Food and Food Handlers)
- Revision of Chapter 24 (Health and Sanitation)
- Revision of Chapter 51 (Pools)
- Ordinance to allow residential sales of “cottage foods”
- Revised XO 99, extending smoking restrictions in city facilities to e-cigarettes
- Ordinance to make burial of humans on residential property illegal.
- DEH policy change to allow dogs on restaurant patios under certain conditions
- Letter from Mayor to state health department indicating that DEH is the official public health department for the City/County of Denver

Improved Outcomes

- Cumulative annual kWh saved: 30,000,000 through the Certifiably Green Denver and Denver Energy Challenge programs
- Cumulative annual savings by residents and businesses: $3,680,000 through Certifiably Green Denver and Denver Energy Challenge assisting 1,673 businesses and 8,953 residents
- 30% of the shelter animals were reunited with their owners (higher than the national average of 16%)
- Reduced wait time in citation appeal process by 25%, from 2.84 days in 2012-13 to 2.14 days in 2014-15.
- Partnered with Public Works to fund and build a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling station at Central Platte Campus
Improved Outcomes (Cont.)

- Awarded an $850K Brownfields grant that has spurred $104M in capital investment through public-private partnership.
- Worked with Public Works to double the residential curbside composting program in 2014 and triple it in 2015.
- Partnered with Public Works to convert alley dumpsters to two bin system and increased residential recycling rate above 15% for first time.
- Continuing to maintain accreditation by the National Association of Medical Examiner.
- Transitioned 2,800 Ryan White program clients to Medicaid and marketplace plans.
- Identified $500,000 savings in outpatient medical services in the Ryan White program that will be redirected to address other client needs in 2015.
- Decreased incidence of HIV in the Denver metro area by 50% in ten years.
- Helped four grocery stores to open and seven smaller food retailers to expand their healthy food offerings in Denver’s underserved neighborhoods. Helped many retailers plan for new healthy food retail development, such as funding for Re:Vision’s food hub in Westwood.
- Decreased incidence of critical violations in the commercial food service industry by as much as 30%.
- Increased health insurance coverage for Denver residents from 79% to 94%, working with Denver Public Health, Denver Human Services and other stakeholders. Over 65,000 residents now have coverage who did not have coverage previously.
- Reduced the percentage of appeals of citations for food retail and animal citations from 3.8% to 2.5% between 2011 and 2014.
- Hosted the first Peak staff member to embed within a City division resulting in improved internal processes and a soft and hard savings of approximately $1M.
- Animal Live Release Rate increased to 91% in 2014 from 78% in 2010 and 53% in 2005.
- Conducted improvements to water quality in South Platte River and the storm sewer outfalls through active collaboration with Public Works.
- Conducted more than 30,000 food safety inspections of regulated facilities.
- Investigated over 10,000 food, childcare, noise, residential health and other public health related complaints.
- Conducted approximately 2,583 inspections of licensed childcare facilities and 106 inspections of swimming pools.
- Signed off on more than 1,000 food licenses.
- Completed the first health impact assessment in coordination with the Community Planning and Development office.
- Managed 232 emergency response efforts on issues ranging from environmental spills to public health outbreaks and drills.
Improved Outcomes (Cont.)

- After only 2 months, the Healthy Corner Store Initiative increased access to healthy foods for an estimated 9,931 residents by increasing healthy inventories:
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Increase</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fresh produce</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canned produce</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole grain products</td>
<td>187%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low fat dairy</td>
<td>500%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned beans</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry beans</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Improved Employee Morale

- Initiated a semi-annual DEH Pulse Survey to measure employee satisfaction.
  
  Improvements from 2013-15 include:
  
  **Teamwork and collaboration:** 57.8% rose to 73%
  **Division communication:** 55.6% rose to 60%
  **Employee has Input and Input is Valued:** 66% rose to 74%
  **Positive Climate at Work:** 58% rose to 72%

- Created the On-the-Spot awards program, in which staff can recommend other staff for outstanding performance using administrative leave hours, resulting in over 400 awards in 2014
- Launched an internal web page, DEHWEB, for postings about new employees, columns from the Executive Director, and other information

Better Customer Service

- Streamlined the license approval process for food retailers
- Faster complaint response for health inspections, with all responses occurring within 24 hours
- Began the Return-to-Owner program for Animal Control, which resulted in 219 dogs being returned directly to their owners in 2014, rather than requiring a shelter stay and recovery
- Extended hours at the Animal Shelter to be open seven days and a total of 54 hours/week
- Improved the behavioral evaluation process at the Animal Shelter, hiring a behavioral specialist to provide a consistent, professional approach
- Significantly decreased the turn-around-time for autopsy reports, with 67% completed within 30 days during 2014.
- Produced public health informational segments for residents, which now air on channel 8 for the Child Care, Noise, Residential Health, and Food Safety programs
- Responded to more than 100,000 calls and complaints to animal control
- Hosted the first Peak staff member to embed within a City division resulting in improved internal processes and staff with a soft and hard savings of approximately $1M
- Investigated 3,150 environmental complaints related to hazardous waste, air quality, odors, vector and lead
- Raised $30,739,337 in federal funds and assisted 6,502 people living with HIV/AIDS with their medical and support services to enhance their quality of life
Internal Management Changes

- Peak Performance training to date: 156 green belts (nearly entire department) and 28 black belts.
- Initiated quarterly meetings of DEH supervisors in 2013 to discuss managerial issues.
- Worked with the Office of Human Resources to create a 13-part Leadership Development Training Program for supervisors in 2013-2014.
- Abolished the position of Deputy Manager for DEH, reorganized the Environmental Quality, Animal Care and Control, and Community Health Divisions, and made numerous personnel changes to improve performance and morale.
- Established several internal employee committees, the Employee Communications Committee, Employee Recognition Committee, Building Management Committee, Training Review Committee, and Social Activities Committee.

External Communications

- Launched monthly DEH newsletter, News for Healthy Communities, which is now distributed to 6,400 internal and external stakeholders.
- Launched Be Healthy Denver campaign with Denver Public Health to create awareness of Denver’s most pressing health concerns.
- Partnered with KMGH Channel 7 and Azteca Colorado to launch a bilingual media campaign aimed at reducing incidents of lead exposure in children as a kick off to a more comprehensive childhood lead poisoning prevention program.
- Completed DEH department communications risk/crisis communications plan.
- Successfully planned and executed Denver’s Annual Earth Day Fair in Civic Center Park.
- Completed comprehensive DEH Social Media Audit, Social Media Policy.
- Created in-house comprehensive media training program with Channel 8 that is now being modeled to launch citywide.
- Managed more than 1,500 local, national and international media requests on issues ranging from food-borne illness outbreaks, childcare inspections, dog bites, homicide investigations, asbestos spills, lead poisoning, feral cats, marijuana odors, to environmental lawsuits, dead ducks and Ebola.
- Launched department Twitter account, which has resulted in significant positive department exposure, including 143,000 impressions in 2014.
- Launched partnership with Nextdoor.com to increase and better target communication with Denver residents.
External Communications (Cont.)

- Clarified to the state health department that DEH is the public health department for the City and County of Denver.
- Launched the Denver Healthy Communities Awards to recognize community organizations working to make Denver healthier, and enhance Denver’s livability.
- Worked with Technology Services to overhaul, streamline and redesign the DEH web site, including the implementation of new policy, training and management strategy to support “calls to clicks.”

Community Collaboration

- Participating as an active partner in the North Denver Community Collaborative, Regional Public Health Directors meetings, Metro Denver Shelter Alliance, and Sustainability Advisory Council
- Executive Director is a Board member of the National Association of County and City Health Officials and participates as a member of the Colorado Association of Public Health Organizations, Big Cities Health Coalition and American Public Health Association
- Function as the department liaison for the Sustainable Food Policy Council, a coalition of 28 organizations aimed at improving Denver’s food systems.
- Office of the Medical Examiner (OME) participates in outreach programs to local schools, providing information on career options in forensic medicine. OME also operates a forensic investigator internship program in partnership with local colleges and universities.
- Chief Medical Examiner is a governor appointed member of the Colorado Coroners Standards and Training Board. OME has physicians sitting on the Infant/Child Mortality Review Committee, the Maternal Mortality Committee, and the working group for the Denver Office of Drug Strategy