



## Apache County Public Health Services District

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### APACHE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.

Calendar Year 2021

According to A.R.S. §§ 36-186 it is a requirement of the Director of the Public Health Services District to report the health and well-being of the residents of the county to the Board of Supervisors annually. In this report, specific diseases, expenditures, and any recommendations will be shared with the Board to keep them informed as to the general health related welfare of their constituents.

Apache County residents in 2021 were generally healthy. Other than large numbers of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) infections, most disease outbreaks were minimal throughout the year. One ongoing concern to all those who officiate over Apache County residents is access to proper health care and sanitation. Another concern is the lack of hospital services in the area. Travel to hospitals or care clinics can be extensive, and in some instances has led to lack of proper healthcare. This, alone, can have a detrimental effect of the overall health of a county population, but despite some of these challenges, county residents have been healthy overall.

The Apache County Public Health Services District has been continuing its efforts in public education and promotion of healthy lifestyles. Our clinical services department offers COVID-19 testing, vaccinations, blood draws, and education opportunities from trained nursing staff. The Health District provides a wide variety of immunizations for both children and adults. We also offer special programs for youth helping them to make appropriate decisions in their life's choices, spanning from personal relationships to proper nutrition. We have home visitation programs helping mothers preparing for parturition, and those who have already given birth, regarding proper childhood nutrition, and how to help their children develop both physically and mentally. We continue to monitor our bars, restaurants, hotels/motels, and other food establishments helping them to comply with the health and safety guidelines and to form healthy habits that will keep them in compliance. We are continually supporting new construction in our county with residents who are interested in septic systems and wells on their property. We also respond to complaints of waste, and other practices that have an overall detrimental effect on our health and overall environmental well-being.

The following information reported on specific diseases below is based on these specific diseases rates of occurrence, their character, and their overall impact on county residents throughout 2021.

## **REPORTABLE DISEASES IN APACHE COUNTY VS. STATE OF ARIZONA**

The diseases listed below are for calendar year 2021 and appear pertaining to their occurrence.

Source: azdhs.gov

<b>Disease</b>	<b>2021 Apache County</b>	<b>2021 State Total</b>
Cryptosporidiosis	1	107
Campylobacteriosis	58	1,635
Salmonellosis	17	866
Coccidioidomycosis	29	11,617
E. Coli (Shinga Toxin-Producing)	4	276
Shigellosis	1	374
MRSA (Invasive)	10	1,443
Streptococcal Group A (Invasive)	22	932
Streptococcus Pneumonia	8	758
West Nile Virus	2	1,691
Yersiniosis	1	72
Novel Corona Virus (COVID-19)	16,196	1,373,767

**Cryptosporidiosis:** Caused by a parasite found in stool that causes diarrhea in humans. This infection is caused by eating or drinking water that is contaminated with stool. This is most often spread by swallowing recreational water (swimming pools, lakes, rivers, and waterparks that are infected).

**Campylobacteriosis:** Causes diarrhea in humans. Other symptoms can be abdominal pain, malaise, fever, nausea, and/or vomiting, and bloody stools. Typically carried by cattle, but also known to be carried by sheep, cats, swine, and dogs. Usually foodborne, and associated with eating raw, or undercooked food. Can also be in water sources that have had contact with raw meats.

**Salmonellosis:** Causes diarrhea, stomach cramps, and fever. Certain strains can cause infection in blood, bones, urine, and nervous system. Can cause severe disease in some cases. Infected persons can get it from a variety of sources, but typically it is from eating contaminated food or water, or touching infected animals, their feces, or their environment.

**Coccidioidomycosis:** (Valley Fever) Symptoms include fatigue, cough, fever, headaches, night sweats, muscle, or joint pain, and possibly a rash on upper body or legs. Caused by breathing spores from a fungus that lives in the soil in many parts of the southwest.

**E. Coli (Shiga Toxin-Producing):** Is a bacterium that normally lives in intestines of humans but is also found in the gut of some animals. Some symptoms of E. Coli poisoning could be abdominal cramps, vomiting, and diarrhea, and in some instances, bloody diarrhea. Typically contracted through contaminated food or water.

**MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus)** Is a Staphylococcus bacterium that is resistant to several different antibiotics. MRSA is spread throughout the community by contact with infected people, or things that are carrying the bacteria. This includes through contact with a contaminated wound or by sharing personal items, such as towels, razors, or other products that have touched the skin. Symptoms of MRSA infection depend upon which part of the body is infected. Skin infection can be swelling, redness, pain, and warmth in the infected area. These types of infections generally require IV antibiotics, and patient isolation.

**Streptococcal Group A:** A bacterial infection that is generally found on the skin or in the throat of an infected individual. It is spread via direct contact with infected wounds or sores on skin, or nasal or oral discharge of an infected individual. Most people with GAS are carriers but do not display symptoms of the disease. Risk of spreading disease is highest when the individual is ill, such as having a “strep throat” infection or an infected wound. In wounds, this type of infection can lead to necrotizing fasciitis and streptococcal toxic shock syndrome (STSS). These types of infections are treated with antibiotics.

**Streptococcus pneumoniae:** Is a bacterium that is a common inhabitant of the respiratory tract and cause of pneumonia respiratory infections. Symptoms include chest pain when breathing deeply, a cough, difficulty breathing, an elevated heart rate, and elevated respiration rates. This can lead to low oxygen saturations, sepsis, and death.

**Shigellosis:** A bacteria that causes abdominal pain, fever, dehydration, tenesmus, vomiting, diarrhea, and bloody/mucoid stools. Infection is usually initiated by ingestion (via fecal-oral route). This is common in developing countries where sanitation is poor.

**West Nile Virus:** The leading mosquito-borne disease in the United States. This is spread to people from an infected mosquito bite. These types of infections are generally found during mosquito season (summer through fall). Most people infected with WNV do not develop symptoms. For those that do develop symptoms, most are mild. In rare cases, infections can be fatal. To prevent WNL infections, wear insect repellent, long-sleeves, and pants, which will prevent mosquito bites.

**Yersiniosis:** An infection caused by eating undercooked or raw pork that is contaminated with *Yersinia enterocolitica* bacteria. Common symptoms include fever, abdominal pain, diarrhea. These symptoms usually develop a few days after exposure and can last 1-3 weeks. Generally, the infection will resolve on its own, but if severe, antibiotics can be used.

**Novel Corona Virus (COVID-19):** COVID-19 is a new disease, with the first diagnosed cases (in the United States) occurring in 2020. Signs of an infection include fever, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or a runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. There have been many attempts to slow and stop the spread of COVID-19 across the country since the outbreak. Mask wearing, hand hygiene, isolation and quarantine, testing and vaccinations have been ongoing efforts in attempting to control the outbreak of disease. Even through these efforts, we continue to see increased cases at both the county, state and national level.

According to the December 30, 2021 the Apache County COVID-19 Dashboard, the COVID total cases were:

<b>Positive Cases in AZ</b>	<b>Total Deaths in AZ</b>	<b>*Positive Cases in Apache County</b>	<b>*Deaths in Apache County</b>
1,373,767	24,212	2,422	59

\*Non-Tribal Lands, source: Arizona Department of Health

<b>*Positive Cases on Navajo Nation</b>
13,774

## 2021 Services

Apache County Public Health Services Division (ACPHSD) continues to provide multiple services to the citizens of Apache County. These services include:

### Immunization Program

We continued to offer immunizations to both children and adults in Apache County during 2021. Vaccinations, such as flu, HPV, Tdap, Pneumonia and shingles vaccines were given in both clinics, as well as during vaccination PODS throughout the year.

St. Johns and Round Valley Clinics are open Monday-Thursday from 6:30am – 5:30 pm. We also provided drive-through vaccination services to the general public during Point of Distribution (PODs), which increased the accessibility of vaccine to residents of the county, especially those who are not close to our clinics. This was mainly in response to the increased need for the yearly flu vaccination, as well as COVID-19 vaccinations. Our Clinical Team set up PODS in Chinle, Ganado, Sanders, St. Johns, Springerville, Greer, and Alpine

## **Well Woman/Family Planning Program**

Apache County continued to provide women's health care services for individuals who are uninsured or underinsured.

The Well Woman program has been successful in early detection of certain breast and cervical cancers which have led to a positive prognosis for many of these women who then sought help from specialists in the field of study specifically for their type of cancer.

Our Family Planning Program provided women with initial or annual exams, which included pap smears, STD testing, pregnancy tests, HIV rapid tests, Urinalysis, Breast exam and birth control methods.

## **Tuberculosis Control Program**

ACPHSD continued to provide services to prevent and detect TB in our community. In 2021, no clients were identified with latent or active TB. Apache County Public Health staff work with our partners to ensure that our community was aware of the services we provide including TB skin tests. We offer TB skin tests to the citizens of Apache County for a \$10 fee per test.

## **Maternal Child Health**

ACPHSD continued to offer prevention services to members of our communities. Comprehensive car seat education was provided to families, caregivers and staff who transport children. Apache County Public Health has several car seat technicians that hosted car seat check events quarterly. If a car seat was expired or the wrong seat for the child, Apache County provided one to the parent and ensured proper installation. Program staff have developed strong, working relationships with other injury-prevention programs located on the Navajo Nation and other counties in the state allowing for aid to crossover to both northern and southern geographic areas in our communities.

Also, with the help of our home visitation staff and other programs that serve women, evidence-based and/or evidence informed education regarding sudden unexplained infant death syndrome (SUIDS), was provided to families who had children birth to 1 years of age. Families in need of a safe sleeping environment were provided a pack-n-play with safe sleep supply bag. Safe Sleep supply bags included fitted sheet, pacifier, sleep sack, temperature room gauge, children's reading book, and additional safe sleep information for grandparents/babysitter/or father.

## **Women, Infant, Children (WIC)**

The Apache County WIC program is simply an extension of the Arizona Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). This program provides breastfeeding support services, nutrition education, aid and support for nutritious foods, and referrals to health and social services when necessary. WIC provides for pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum

women; infants; and children under the age of five who are determined to be at nutritional risk. The WIC Program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture.

### **Environmental Health**

This is a multifaceted department within the Public Health Division. Environmental Health issued septic permits, restaurant inspections, food handler certification, complaints, and vector control.

### **Teen Pregnancy Prevention**

The Teen Pregnancy Prevention program utilizes evidence-based curriculum approved by Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), and Arizona Department of Education (ADE). This program was adversely affected during 2021 by COVID restrictions in our high schools. We also experienced loss of staff and have been actively recruiting for this specialized position.

### **Health Start Program**

During 2021, Apache County providing education, support, and advocacy services to pregnant/postpartum women and their infants 0-2 encompassing communities throughout southern Apache County with the Health Start Program. This is a home visitation program and Apache County was one of the few places where face-to-face visits were actively held. Phone visits were also provided to clients who felt more comfortable with this arrangement.

### **Tobacco Program**

ACPHSD assist smokers in disparate or high-risk populations with tobacco prevention and cessation services. This year was a building and training time reorganization and new staff. Many state-lead trainings were attended and we worked closely with our State partners to develop our goals.

### **Health in Arizona Policy Initiative (HAPI)**

This grant addresses the four leading chronic disease deaths, at-or-high risk populations, co-morbidities, and/or health risks. This also was a training year for ACPHSD due to positions being filled with new staff.

### **Arizona Health Zone**

The Arizona Health Zone program is a partnership with the University of Arizona extension where the funding is used to help educate and encourage healthy eating and active living in order to help the people of our communities live healthier and fulfilling lives.

## **Smoke Free AZ**

ACPHSD educators continued to visit local businesses to answer questions about the Smoke-Free AZ Act and offered signage and other resources. Once again, Apache county received ZERO complaints during 2021, so no investigations were necessary. Overall, in the state of Arizona, smoking complaints have dropped state-wide. Efforts are proving to have a positive impact across the state and seen also here in Apache County.

## **Vital Records**

The Vital Records department in Apache County issued certified copies of vital records including birth, death, fetal death and births resulting in stillbirth for events that occurred in Apache County

## **Alternate Medical Examiner**

Per ARS 11 and 36, Apache County provides Alternate Medical Examiner services for Apache County. In 2021, we responded to 101 dispatch notifications of death. 22 autopsies were requested.

## **Expenditure Report**

In 2021, the Apache County Public Health Services District expended \$2,604,455 in program services assigned to Public Health Services District and public health related activities.

Approximately 31% (\$931,824) of Apache County Public Health Services District budget came from specific grants, and 55% (\$1,683,499) was from tax levy and Salt River Project's Coronado Generating Station. Other revenue 14% (\$430,810) was due to charge for services, licenses and permits which made up approximately 8% of our revenue

## **Recommendations from the Director Pertaining to the Overall Health of Apache County**

The general recommendations for all communicable diseases, including the Novel Coronavirus, is to follow the guidance set forth by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS).

We continue reporting to the public, with a weekly COVID-19 update on our Public Health Facebook Page. We continue to provide free testing and vaccinations to the citizens of Apache County. We also require that our nursing staff provide isolation orders and education when individuals are tested in our clinics. We continue to push for good personal hygiene in schools, workplaces, and homes then ever has been in the history of our country, and the world.

We continue to supply our partners with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 rapid test (BinaxNOW) test kits. We continue to follow the isolation recommended by the CDC and ADHS and continue to update the public as the numbers of COVID-cases are reported to our county.

We continue to offer vaccinations for other preventable diseases, such as flu, pneumococcal, tetanus, pertussis, diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, shingles, Rotavirus, measles, mumps, rubella, varicella, polio, haemophilus influenzae type B, human papillomavirus, meningococcal, and Covid-19 vaccines. Ensuring that children and adults continue to get these vaccines allow for other disease outbreaks are better controlled in our community.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie McCarthy', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephanie McCarthy, Interim Health Director

Apache County Public Health Services District