

ANNUAL REPORT FOR FY2024





A MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM HEALTH DIRECTOR

It is my privilege to present the 2024 Annual Report from the City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH). After a necessary pause during the COVID-19 pandemic, this report offers a comprehensive overview of the programs and services delivered by DPH staff across our community.

Over the past year, our department has worked tirelessly to ensure equitable access to critical public health resources. From disease surveillance and immunization services to health education, food safety regulation, and nutritional support for women, infants, and children, our efforts aim to improve community well-being and extend life expectancy. These accomplishments are the result of the unwavering dedication, professionalism, and compassion of our public health workforce.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges for our city and the broader public health system. As the SARS-CoV-2 virus evolved and with the rollout of vaccines and antivirals, we saw a significant reduction in disease severity and mortality. Through strong collaboration between city and county agencies

and support from local partners, El Paso achieved a vaccination rate exceeding 75%—a remarkable milestone and an example for other communities nationwide.

As the pandemic's immediate threat subsided, we turned our attention to understanding and addressing the evolving health needs of our community. A comprehensive Community Health Assessment (CHA) was conducted with input from both internal and external stakeholders. The findings were shared with the City Council and Commissioners Court and will guide our priorities forward.

The CHA identified three key areas of focus: Chronic Conditions, Behavioral and Mental Health, and Access to Care. These priorities will shape DPH initiatives in the coming years, including the deployment of a new state-of-the-art mobile clinic to deliver care to underserved and high-risk populations.

Public health success is rarely the result of a single intervention; rather, it stems from the collective application of evidence-based strategies that uplift entire communities. Every life we touch, every smile we encounter, reflects the commitment and collaboration of our public health professionals. I am deeply grateful for their service and impact across the borderland.

Though my time as interim director was brief, it was profoundly rewarding. I had the opportunity to engage with our dedicated staff, community leaders, and residents. As we face future public health challenges, continued interdepartmental collaboration will be essential to maintaining and expanding our services.

With the leadership of our new Public Health Director, Mr. Veerinder “Vinny” Taneja, I am confident that the Department will continue to move forward committed to addressing community health needs and improving the quality of life for all El Pasoans.

Thank you,

Hector Ocaranza M.D.

**Health Authority & Interim Health Director
City of El Paso Department of Public Health**

LOOKING AHEAD

A MESSAGE FROM THE INCOMING HEALTH DIRECTOR

It is an honor to serve as the Health Director for the City of El Paso Department of Public Health and to lead a department with a long-standing commitment to protecting and promoting community health.

The achievements outlined in this report reflect the dedication of a strong public health workforce and the impact of programs that address our community's most pressing needs, from disease prevention and emergency preparedness to nutrition, education, and clinical services.

As we look ahead to 2025, we are excited to continue building on this momentum. A major milestone on the horizon is the opening of our newly renovated Department of Public Health headquarters, located at 9566 Railroad Drive. This facility will bring many of our essential services under one roof, allowing us to better coordinate care, improve efficiency, and increase access for the residents we serve.

Moving forward, we remain focused on expanding services, strengthening partnerships, and developing innovative strategies that promote health equity and resilience across the region. Through collaboration, accountability, and a shared vision for a healthier El Paso, we will continue to make meaningful progress for the individuals and families who count on us every day.

A professional headshot of Veerinder Taneja, a man with dark hair, wearing a brown suit jacket, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera.

Veerinder Taneja

Veerinder "Vinny" Taneja

Health Director
City of El Paso Department of Public Health



CITY LEADERSHIP

FY 2024

Oscar Leoser
MAYOR

Cary Westin
INTERIM CITY MANAGER

Brian Kennedy
CITY REPRESENTATIVE | DISTRICT 1

Alexsandra Annello
CITY REPRESENTATIVE | DISTRICT 2

Cassandra Hernandez
CITY REPRESENTATIVE | DISTRICT 3

Joe Molinar
CITY REPRESENTATIVE | DISTRICT 4

Isabel Salcido
CITY REPRESENTATIVE | DISTRICT 5

Art Fierro
CITY REPRESENTATIVE | DISTRICT 6

Henry Rivera
CITY REPRESENTATIVE | DISTRICT 7

Chris Canales
CITY REPRESENTATIVE | DISTRICT 8

MISSION

Reduce health inequities by providing and promoting diverse, proactive services for our community through empathy, engagement, education and disease prevention

VISION

Excel as a leading health authority through innovation, integrated technologies, and collaborative efforts by developing highly trained and versatile professionals to meet and exceed the growing needs of our community

VALUES

Transparency, Trust, Empathy, Honesty & Integrity, Respect, Performance, Customer Service, Continuous Improvement, Teamwork, Innovation, Enforcement, Collaboration, Communication, Embracing Change, Learning Through Experience

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2024, the Department of Public Health advanced its mission to protect and improve the health of El Paso residents through expanded services, strengthened partnerships, and data-informed practices.

Several programs earned formal recognition for their contributions. The City of El Paso issued a proclamation naming February 11 “2-1-1 Day,” acknowledging the program’s role in connecting residents to essential services. The Health Education and Promotion Division received the Texas Healthy Communities (TXHC) Silver Recognition for leadership in chronic disease prevention, while the HIV/DIS Program was honored as the “Best Organization Serving El Paso” at the National LatinX Conference on HIV, HCV, and SUD.

The Department focused on expanding access to care and strengthening public health infrastructure. The Immunization Program administered over 47,000 vaccines through school-based clinics, outreach events, and in-clinic services. The Rawlings Dental Clinic completed more than 20,000 procedures and secured a \$130,544 Title V grant to enhance pediatric dental services across the county. The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program contributed to food security and the local economy, with an estimated \$27 million in food benefit redemptions.

Progress was also made in infrastructure and emergency preparedness. Construction began on a new facility at the Medical Center of the Americas that will integrate sexual health and other public health services. The Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) team distributed emergency response kits to all Independent School Districts to support rapid deployment of Points of Dispensing (PODs).

The Department also prioritized professional development, strategic planning, and operational excellence. The Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG) Team completed departmental assessments to improve data flow and guide resource allocation. Laboratory Services achieved a zero-deficiency rating during the 2024 CLIA inspection, affirming its compliance with federal standards. The Epidemiology Program participated in several national conferences, contributing to improved disease surveillance and regional coordination.

In addition, staff from the Medicaid Waiver Program presented innovations in cancer prevention and mental health at national conferences, and the Respiratory Diseases Clinic hosted the first tri-state TB Summit to address tuberculosis challenges across El Paso, New Mexico, and Juarez.

These accomplishments reflect a year of progress and continued commitment to advancing public health throughout the region.

DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

211



49,102
Total Callers

Connect the
Community to
48,886
Resources

RAWLINGS DENTAL CLINIC



Dental Procedures:
19,761

New Patients:
622

EL PASO COMMUNITY CLINIC



SEXUAL HEALTH

Patients Served: **3,679**
Treatments Provided: **2,430**

RESPIRATORY DISEASES

Patients Served: **1,606**
Treatments Provided: **4,258**



EPIDEMIOLOGY



2,351
Reports Received of
Notifiable Conditions

772
Cases Investigated

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Reached
11,855
community members

Registered
192

Community Members into STEAR
State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry



FOOD SAFETY

Regulatory
Inspections: **8,362**

Food Handler
Cards Issued: **336**



HEALTH EDUCATION & PROMOTION



Community Members Reached:
62,748

Presentations:
728



DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

HIV PREVENTION



1,698 HIV test conducted

Total number of outreach events: **109**

IMMUNIZATIONS

Immunizations: **48,699**

Health Fairs & Outreach Events: **100**



LABORATORY

15,011

Clinical Tests Performed

392

Environmental

2,075

Dairy

3,216

Water



MEDICAID WAIVER

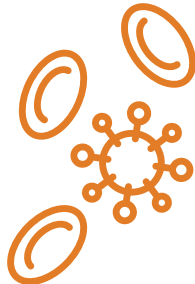
Total Community Members Served: **5,812**



94
Community Outreach Events

PUBLIC HEALTH FOLLOW UP

12,123 HIV/STD Labs Reported



PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT (PHIG)

Conducted the Employee Engagement Assessment



WOMEN, INFANT & CHILDREN



2,151

Breast Pumps Distributed

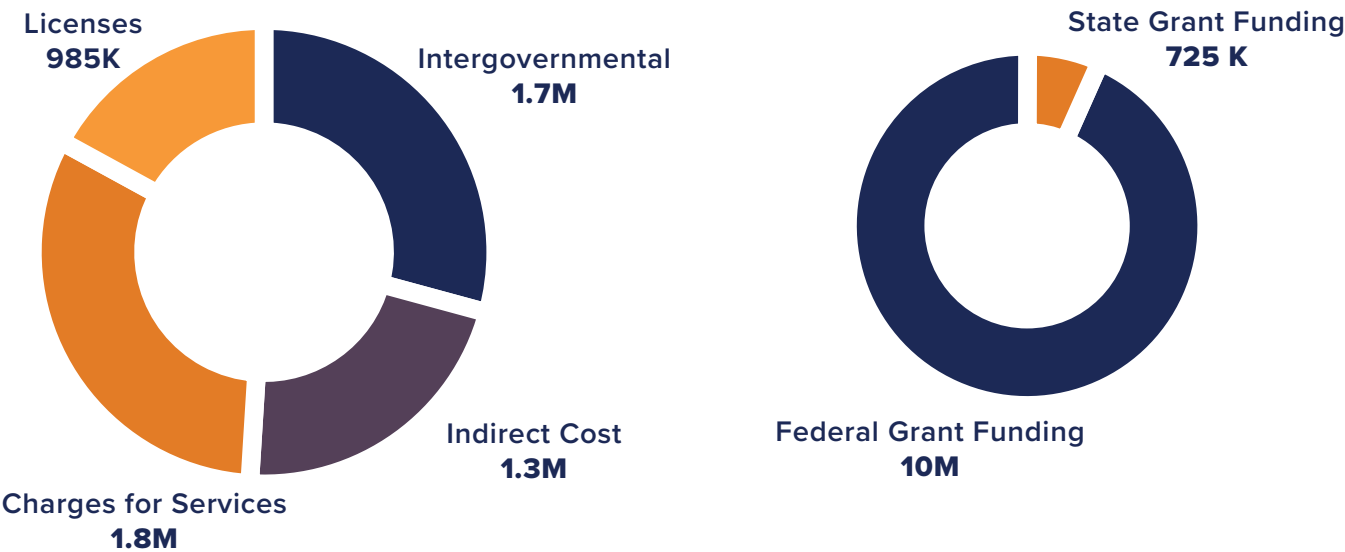
27,298

Total Clients Enrolled

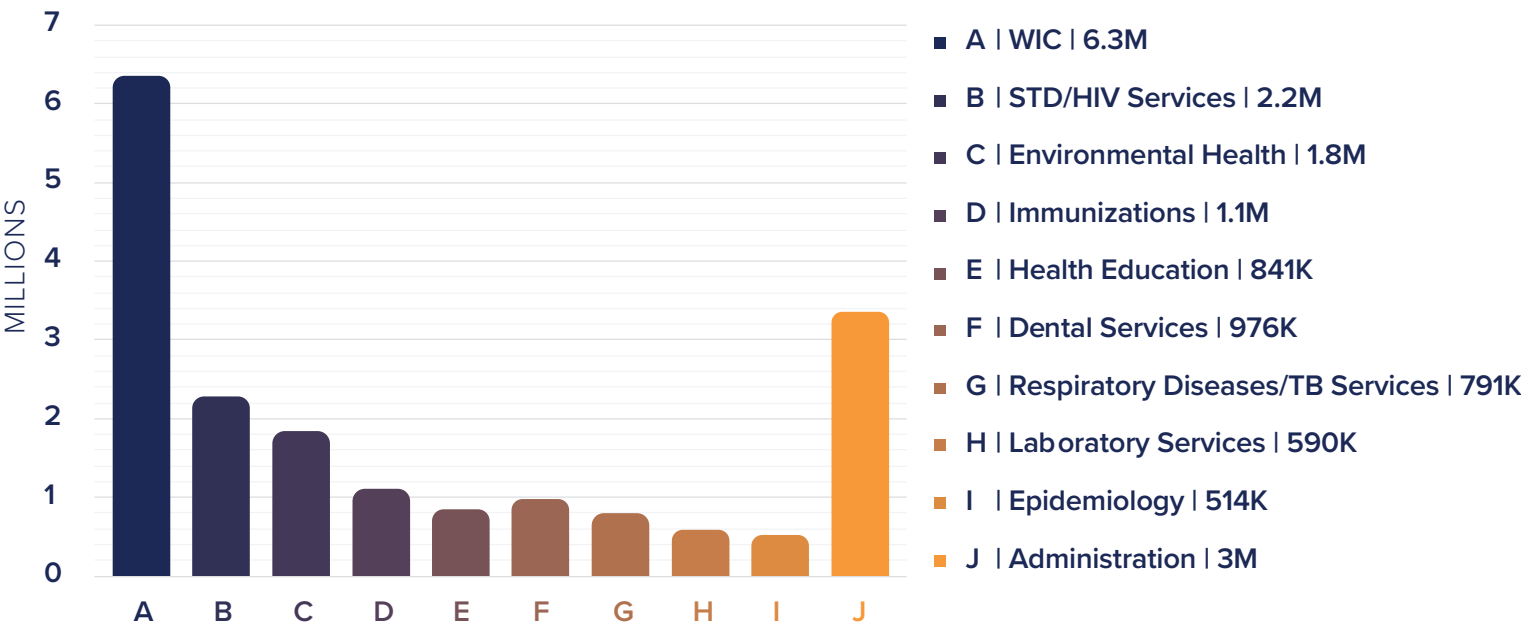


FINANCIAL

FY 2024 HEALTH REVENUES



FY 2024 HEALTH ADOPTED EXPENSES (ALL FUNDS)



LEAD DPH STAFF



Dr. Hector Ocaranza
Health Authority &
Interim Health Director



**Dr. Veerinder
"Vinny" Taneja**
Health Director



Sara Cera
Health Assistant
Director



Melissa Hawthorne
Deputy Director



Soraya Ayub Palacios
Lead Public Affairs
Coordinator Strategic
Communications Office

NO PHOTO AVAILABLE: **Ruth Castillo**, Deputy Director

DPH MANAGEMENT STAFF



Asa Aguilar-Ornelas
Public Health
Information Officer



Adriana Archer
WIC Program Manager



Dr. Semone Ben-Bani
Public Health Laboratory
Services Manager



Kelley Brooks
Chief Dentist



Annett Gonzalez
MSN, APRN, FNP-C
Program Manager for TB & STD
Clinics & Family Planning



Joy Leos
Health Training &
Promotions Manager



Raymond Lucero
Organizational
Analyst



Cristina Macias-Lopez
Public Health Emergency
Preparedness Program
Manager



Antonio Martinez
Public Health
Workforce Officer



Anthony Morales
Sanitary Services
Manager



Cecilia Mungaray
Employee Relations
Officer



Jacob Ortega
HIV Prevention
Program Manager



Sarah Ortiz
Administrative Services
Manager



Aleczis Padilla
Public Health
Accreditation Manager



Yahaira Perez
Dental Office
Manager



Juan Saenz
Grant Project Manager



Crystal Salcido
Immunizations Manager



Yvonne Vasquez
Epidemiologist



Sylvia Ware
Compliance, Quality &
Improvement Program Officer

NO PHOTO AVAILABLE: **Ivonne Marquez**, Medicaid Waiver Program Manager





PUBLIC HEALTH

CITY OF EL PASO

EPHEALTH.COM

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