



Safe Food

Each year, approximately 1 in 6 Americans get sick from eating contaminated food.¹ While most recover, some may suffer complications such as kidney failure, miscarriage or brain and nerve damage. From 2007 to 2011, each year there was an average of 41 foodborne outbreaks reported and investigated in Colorado. This frequency underscores the need for vigilance and highlights the importance of food safety programs to identify foodborne illnesses; to regulate, inspect and give technical guidance to major food industries; and to inform consumers about food recalls. Colorado's economy and the health of the public benefit from a safe and successful food industry.

Colorado currently has a high capacity for outbreak monitoring and reporting, but has faced challenges due to the use of numerous unique inspectional information data systems across the state. Across the nation, evidence has shown that disseminating easy to understand results of restaurants inspections to the public provides an incentive for restaurant operators to comply with food safety guidelines. Colorado is working towards establishing uniform rating systems, high quality food retail standards and standardized data collection systems to establish a more effective statewide retail food program.

Currently under state law, food safety programs include inspections and regulatory oversight of restaurants, grocery stores, food manufacturing facilities, school and prison food programs. Exempt are food service operations within health facilities. Initiatives are underway to ensure these vulnerable populations have the same level of assurance in the safety of their food as the general public.

STATEWIDE GOAL: Establish high quality standards that will assure an effective statewide retail food program that will in turn assure safe food throughout Colorado.

STRATEGIES:

- 1. Standardize statewide retail food inspection data by: continuing to work towards statewide data sharing; expanding data standardization to include additional compliance factors for comparison; and determining new and innovative ways to collect and use data for continual improvement of the statewide food safety program.**

Objective 1: By 2018, 100 percent of databases statewide will be able to produce standard reports focused on foodborne illness risk factors (Four initial reports by 2016).

Objective 2: By 2016, increase the number of reports for assessing uniformity and comparing traditional enforcement methods with compliance assistance tools to determine effectiveness for sustained compliance.

Coordinating Agency: CDPHE, LPHAs

Partners in implementation: Colorado Food Program Managers, Colorado Environmental Health Directors, Decade Software, Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, Jefferson County Public Health, Pueblo City-County Health Department, Summit County Environmental Health Department, Tri-County Health Department (All LPHAs and database providers in the state will implement the work of these individuals)

2. Achieve statewide adherence to state and national program standards.

Objective 1: By 2019, with local public health partners, review existing records, policies and procedures to develop new methods for meeting state and national standards statewide. Completion of all 9 standards statewide by 2019; at least 2 per year.

3. Create and implement a uniform rating system for restaurants with broader access to inspection reports for the purpose of communicating risk to the general public. The optional rating system will weigh heavily on foodborne illness risk factors and provide a mechanism to relay severity of risk to the public through websites and traditional and social media channels.

Objective 1: By 2016, complete and implement a uniform, statewide restaurant inspection rating system that clearly communicates food safety and severity of risk to the public.

Baseline: 15 percent complete in 2014

Objective 2: By 2017, increase the number of local public health agencies utilizing websites and media channels to make inspection data and ratings available to the general public to 70%.

Coordinating agencies: CDPHE, LPHAs

Partners in implementation: Colorado Food Program Managers, Colorado Environmental Health Directors, Colorado Restaurant Association, Boulder Public Health Department, El Paso County Public Health, Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, Mesa County Health Department, Montrose County Health and Human Services, Pueblo City-County Health Department, San Juan Basin Health Department

4. Improve inspection and enforcement of food service operations associated with health facilities by assuring inspections meet the expectations set forth in state and national standards for retail food establishments and are conducted by trained food safety staff.

Objective 1: By 2016, review current food safety oversight for food service operations in all health facilities license types to determine which do not meet state and national standards for quality and frequency of inspections to determine which health facility license types should be included in statutory change requiring retail food licensing.

Objective 2: By 2016, implement a pilot project that assesses how best to address food safety standards for the health facilities industry.

Coordinating Agency: CDPHE

Partners in Implementation: Health facility operations, LPHAs, Colorado Food Program Managers, Colorado Environmental Health Directors and other stakeholders identified through the process.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2011. Making Food Safer to Eat. Retrieved from website: <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/FoodSafety/>