

Gila County
Health & Emergency Management

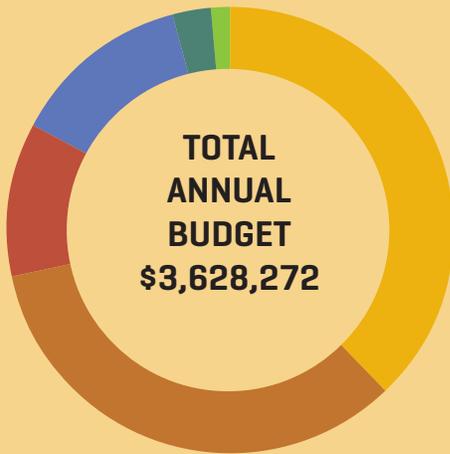
2015 Annual Report

2015



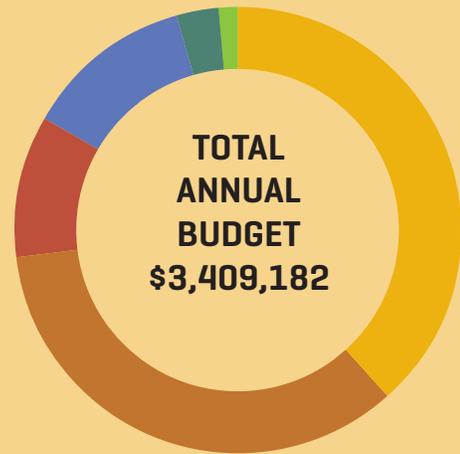
Fiscal Budget & Funding Information

FY2016 BUDGET



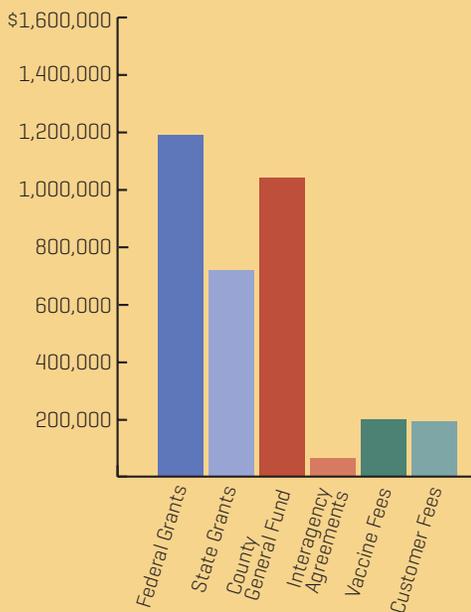
- Health Services
- Prevention
- Animal Care & Control
- Emergency Management
- Environmental Health
- Other [Accreditation]

FY2015 BUDGET

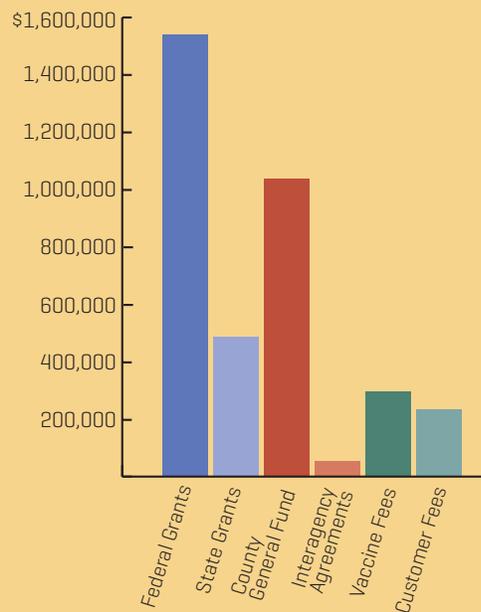


- Health Services
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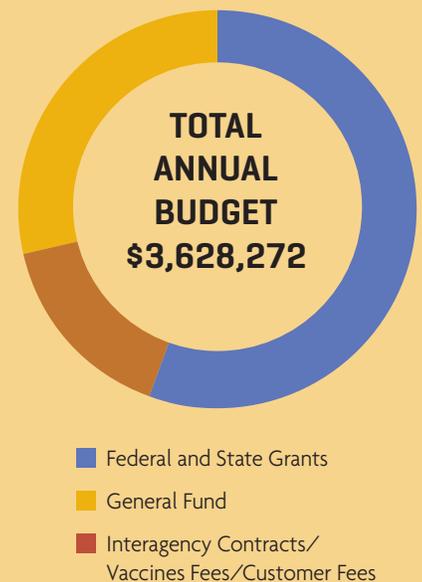
FY2016 REVENUE SOURCES



FY2015 REVENUE SOURCES



FY2016 COUNTY FUNDING



- Federal and State Grants
- General Fund
- Interagency Contracts/Vaccines Fees/Customer Fees

Source: Gila County Health & Emergency Management budget data.



Dear Gila County residents & friends:

Gila County Health & Emergency Management was formed years ago to maximize public health and safety, protect our communities, and improve the lives and livelihood of our residents. We do this by providing best-in-class health education, environmental health programs, nursing services, pet and animal support, emergency preparedness and response, and more.

We are very proud of what we have accomplished in the last several years. **Gila County Health & Emergency Management now stands as a critical resource in answering the diverse public health needs of our residents.** We deliver more than 20 specialized programs and services to the 53,000 residents of Gila County every year. In 2015, our staff directly served nearly every county school, public health agency, hospital, and humane society, as well as thousands of individuals, including seniors, new mothers, families, teens, and children.

This inaugural annual report highlights our specific 2015 accomplishments and services.

Most notably, we completed two year-long initiatives — the Gila County *Community Health Needs Assessment* (CHA) and the Gila County *Community Health Improvement Plan* (CHIP) — which provide insights on demographics and health indicators, along with plans to proactively address the pressing needs of our residents. In response, many of our divisions introduced new services, launched new communication tools, upgraded facilities, or otherwise expanded their support, visibility, and impact. The pages that follow detail the specifics and implications of these efforts. Rest assured that our 46-member county team remains steadfast in our vision to sustain a culture that promotes optimal health, safety, and well-being.

Heading into FY2016, we are energized as we continually define new ways to best support you, our residents, now and in the future. We encourage you to utilize our health and immunization services, educational offerings, websites [www.gilacountyaz.gov and readygila.com], and emergency communication tools, or to get involved in our great community's efforts through our Community Emergency Response Teams [CERTs] and other initiatives.

Sincerely,

Michael O'Driscoll, MPH
Director, Health & Emergency Management

“We deliver more than 20 specialized programs and services to the 53,000 residents of Gila County every year. In 2015, our staff directly served nearly every county school, public health agency, hospital, and humane society, as well as thousands of individuals, including seniors, new mothers, families, teens, and children.”

Gila County Health & Emergency Management Leadership Team [from left to right]: Ginnie Scales, Health Services Program Manager; Michael O'Driscoll, Director; Samantha Jerome, Nutrition Services Manager; John Castaneda, Animal Control Manager; Paula Horn, Deputy Director; Josh Beck, Emergency Management/Public Health Emergency Preparedness Manager; and Nancy Rutherford, Health Programs Manager.



Programs at a Glance

Department



HEALTH SERVICES

2015 Key Accomplishments

- We served 2,350 Gila County residents, administering 889 influenza shots, 609 TB skin tests, and 5,302 vaccinations.
- We were proud to be recognized by The Arizona Partnership for Immunization (TAPI) as well as the state immunization program for having one of the highest children's immunization rates among all counties in the state.



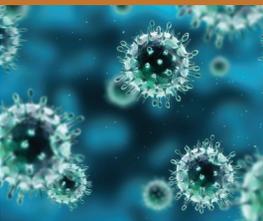
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- We are proactively working with the CDC, other counties, and the state in monitoring mosquito populations, to contain the spread of Zika Virus, Chikungunya, and other vector-borne illnesses.
- Our sanitarians conducted 566 inspections to ensure safe food handling in restaurants, community facilities, daycares, and schools.
- We took over management of the county's Onsite Wastewater Inspection Program, working with residents to reduce septic system failures and their potential damage.



ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL

- Through our new mobile adoption vehicle, community relationships, and increased collaboration with humane societies and animal shelters, we supported the adoption of more than 200 unwanted animals to responsible homes.
- We increased our "live release" rate of owner-surrendered and adoptable animals, reducing euthanization rates of impounded/shelter animals by more than 37% over 2014.



PREVENTION

- Our teams pursued and were awarded more than \$400,000 in grants to create our new SnapEd, Prescription Drug Prevention, and School Health Liaison Programs.
- We sponsored Read-On Express (a children's literacy program), distributing 1,135 donated books to young readers.



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT/ PHEP

- We revamped our Emergency Command Center, providing for state-of-the-art communications throughout Gila County.
- We launched Everbridge®, a comprehensive, communitywide notification system that informs residents of all pressing situations, hazards, and emergencies.
- We expanded community involvement with the growth of our Northern Gila County CERT and Southern Gila County CERT.

Our **Health Services Department** is core to our function within the community. Through this department, we provide life-saving immunizations, low-cost wellness screenings, and health services education. We also issue birth and death certificates.

Our 11-person team spans registered nurses, communicable disease specialists, medical case managers, medical services billing specialists, and vital records specialists, who collaborate closely with Gila County healthcare organizations, state officials, and physicians to address any pressing issues.

Immunizations

Gila County takes pride in providing low-cost immunization options to ensure the health of our residents. In this capacity, we provide CDC and American Academy of Family Physicians-recommended immunizations, including MMR, Hepatitis A & B, DTap, Varicella, HIB, IPV, HPV, as well as annual flu shots. This program has been welcomed by county residents and considered one of our most popular services. In fact, in 2015, we were recognized by The Arizona Partnership for Immunization (TAPI) as well as the state immunization program for having one of the highest children's immunization rates among all counties in the state.

In 2015, our work included our annual "Kindergarten Roundup," hosted at our Globe facility every April, which provides children with immunizations required by the school system. We also offered a number of immunization clinics throughout the year. Through these programs, we administered vaccinations to 1,607 children. We also collaborated with Native Air in Payson to provide flu shots and TB skin tests for first responders and emergency personnel.

Additionally, we provided immunizations to 743 adults. This number included vaccines provided free of cost to uninsured and needy individuals. **In sum, Gila County Health Services served more than 2,300 individuals, administering over 5,000 health-promoting and wellness vaccinations.**

Nursing Services

Nursing Services is comprised of four Registered Nurses, two medical case managers, one communicable disease specialist, and two administrative professionals, who all provide for on-site nursing support to community residents at both our Globe and Payson offices.

Our largest service is Communicable Disease, which manages monitoring, testing, and reporting for infectious diseases in Gila County. In 2015, we investigated 116 cases of influenza, 62 cases of RSV, and 59 STD cases — including 2 positive HIV cases — among other diseases.



Our highly trained and caring nurses provide for vital screenings, immunizations, education, and support for our community.

We also administered a total of 609 TB skin tests. For all positive diagnoses, we assisted individuals by providing educational materials and support in finding a primary care physician, if they did not already have one. In instances of HIV and some STD's, we handled required state reporting and home visitations to ensure these individuals get the ongoing care and medication they need.

In addition to being well received by our community, our services have demonstrated to be effective and safe, with no deficiencies found by the state licensing board during its annual inspection and evaluation.

Vital Records

Gila County Health Services also serves the important role in issuing and recording vital records. Using birth and death information provided by the Arizona Department of Public Health, we recorded the county's births and deaths, issuing corresponding certificates. In 2015, we issued 937 birth certificates and 17,634 death certificates. This number included all requested copies. All information is reported to the state to maintain in its database.

Environmental Health

Assuring environmental health and safety across our county is critical. The **Gila County Environmental Health (EH) Department** oversees food safety and environmental sanitation through regular monitoring, code enforcement, and investigation.

Our four-person team administers a comprehensive program that ensures safe practices in restaurants/food service operations, hotels/motels, community pools/spas, recreation facilities, daycares, children's camps, schools, and other institutions. Our registered sanitarians also perform epidemiological (e.g., foodborne illnesses) investigations, onsite wastewater inspections, sanitation of grounds, and air/soil quality studies, along with handling vector control, smoking complaints, and other environmental complaints and issues.

Food Safety & Sanitation

Contaminated or improperly prepared or handled foods can be a source of serious illness or disease, including salmonella, shigella, and *e coli*. Our proactive approach toward preventing such illness for 2015 included 566 inspections and permitting of food service operations, 39 followups, and 42 complaint investigations. Critical violations were corrected during inspection. Though 140 *Salmonella Poonta* cases were reported in Arizona during the year, none presented in Gila County.

Our team also ensures proper startup procedures for new and temporary food service operations. In 2015, we oversaw the opening of all new establishments, reviewing architectural plans for proper sanitation measures, hand-washing sinks,



Our sanitarians inspect more than 350 food establishments every year, working closely with operators to swiftly correct any potential safety issues.

and refrigeration equipment. Our team also managed food safety inspections of 25 mobile units (e.g., food trucks) and 178 temporary food vendor inspections, at county fair booths and other special events.

Onsite Wastewater Inspection Program

In November 2015, the Onsite Wastewater Inspection Program was transferred to our department. Our staff now reviews onsite wastewater plans (e.g., installation of septic and sewer systems), monitors installations, and investigates system failures, following Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) standards.

System age and misuse (i.e., maintenance and pumping neglect) are significant issues in our county, accounting for numerous failures every year. These failures can produce public health hazards by producing raw sewage on residential properties. We are evaluating strategies to better educate homeowners on maintenance issues to reduce the number of failures in 2016.

By integrating the Onsite Wastewater Inspection Program with Environmental Health, we are able to leverage sanitarian skills in managing wastewater complaints and mitigating potential hazards as we fully integrate the program over the coming year.

Public Health Nuisance

Our EH team also handles other environmental issues and complaints, including vector-borne illnesses (see **Vector Control Update**, left), property maintenance complaints, domestic water pollution, potentially hazardous building and structures, storage collection/waste disposal, feral animals, insects, and public area tobacco use.

In 2015, we investigated 80 public health nuisance cases, with the typical complaint being responded to within 24–48 hours. No personal injury, property damage, or other harm resulted from any Gila County case.

VECTOR CONTROL UPDATE

Zika Virus, Dengue Fever, and Chikungunya

Recent outbreaks of mosquito-borne illnesses have caused concern across the nation. Deriving from the same mosquito species, *Aedes aegypti*, Dengue Fever, Chikungunya, and Zika Virus can cause serious illness, including birth defects, neurological symptoms, and even death.

As of April 30, 2016, there were no confirmed Arizona cases of Dengue Fever or Chikungunya, and only 1 travel case of Zika Virus. Nonetheless, Gila County Environmental Health & Emergency Management is proactively working to contain the spread of these illnesses, by collaborating with the CDC, other counties, and the state in monitoring mosquito populations, identifying and eliminating potential mosquito breeding grounds, and testing all individuals who present with symptoms.



Animal Care & Control

Gila County's Animal Care & Control Department provides comprehensive animal control services to promote health and safety in our communities. Our staff includes four animal control officers, a department supervisor, and a shelter manager. Our core activities ensure the safety and well-being of our county's residents and animals by:

- Preventing and controlling animal-borne diseases and supporting the health of community pets through proper animal registration and vaccination.
- Investigating animal attacks, dog-at-large, neglect, rabies, coyote/wild animal in inhabited area, feral animal issues, and other community/neighbor complaints.
- Enforcing state and county animal control and welfare laws and promoting responsible pet ownership.
- Collaborating with local shelters on spay/neuter programs and managing stray and owner-relinquished animals to help adopt animals to responsible homes.



Our climate-controlled Mobile Adoption Trailer transports unwanted animals to adoption sites and rabies clinics.

Complaints & Investigations

In 2015, our team investigated 1,060 animal-related complaints, roughly the same as in 2014. This included 64 incidents of rabies, 49 dog bites, 455 dog-at-large calls, 453 neighbor complaints, and 39 other issues.

Meeting our goal, 100% of incidents were responded to within 1–2 hours, with resolutions being made within 24 hours thereafter. No significant personal injury or fatalities were charted.

Vaccinations & Registrations

Arizona state law and county ordinances require that all dogs be registered, and be current with rabies vaccinations. County tags are valid for one year and cost as low as \$10 if the pet is spayed/neutered. Tags must be renewed each year regardless of whether the pet has a one- or three-year rabies vaccine.

In 2015, Gila County licensed 2,776 dogs — or approximately 23% of the estimated county's total domesticated dog population. Our team is expanding community education efforts to improve this percentage for 2016, an effort we believe can drastically reduce rabies incidents and pet mortality.

During the year, we also provided for five low-cost rabies clinics in partnership with local veterinarians. Set up in both Northern and Southern Gila County, these clinics offered discounted (\$10 versus \$25 veterinarian average) rabies shots along with other pet health support. This program provided for more than 250 rabies vaccinations, 220 registrations, and 20 adoptions. We aim to improve these numbers by 10% in 2016, by publicizing dates and locations of these clinics on Gila County's facebook page.

Animal Adoptions

A key focus area for our county is animal adoptions. **In 2015, we increased our “live release” rate, reducing euthanization rates of impounded/shelter animals by nearly 37%.** We attribute this achievement largely to the introduction of our Mobile Adoption Trailer and closer collaborations with key Humane Societies and other adoption agencies.

Indeed, our Mobile Adoption Trailer has increased visibility for animal adoptions while providing important information on pet treatment and care. Equipped with 12 cages and proper sanitation equipment, the colorful, well-recognized trailer has been a draw at many adoption events. The trailer is also used to transport shelter animals for vaccinations and other care.



In 2015, Gila County's Animal Care & Control department facilitated the adoptions/transfers of more than 200 unwanted or abandoned animals.

Prevention

The best way to promote health in any community is to provide for ongoing education, support, and other critical prevention tools. To this end, the **Gila County Prevention Department** delivers five key programs, along with a number of ancillary educational resources. In 2015, we served thousands of Gila County residents through this combined effort. In fact, a growing demand for our prevention services resulted in the creation of three new offerings: our *SnapEd Program*, *Prescription Drug Prevention Program*, and *School Health Liaison Program*.

Our team is comprised of 15 full-time staffers, which include five WIC employees, six community health specialists, one policy development specialist, one Registered Dietitian, one nutritionist, and one program manager. Staffing is funded 100% by grants.

Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program

Gila County's WIC program provides nutrition education and "vouchers" to low-income pregnant women and new mothers to help them purchase nutritional foods to promote their health and that of their children. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), WIC also provides growth monitoring to ensure healthy child development and referrals to local health and human services as necessary.

In 2015, our WIC program provided services for 12,486 clients. Our Registered Dietitian supported this program, providing parents of high-risk children with personalized dietary and nutrition assessments and evaluations to improve healthy development.



Gila County provided counseling and support services for 2,386 new mothers and families through our WIC program.

SnapEd Program

In 2015, we pursued and received \$200,000 in grant funding to develop a Supplemental Nutrition Education Program (SnapEd). A federally funded grant program, SnapEd focuses on providing nutrition education and obesity prevention through education, multi-level interventions, and community and public health services. With nearly one-third of our population

considered obese (per our 2015 *Community Health Needs Assessment [CHA]*), SnapEd is vital.

Starting this program, we created a health index team for the Miami school district, which is using our resources to perform assessments and determine what is needed to launch health improvement plans in their schools. With full funding in 2016, our efforts will expand to additional populations.

Prescription Drug Prevention Program

Substance abuse continues to be a significant challenge. Indeed, our *CHA* charts it as our county's #2 health concern. We pursued and received a grant to support work in preventing prescription drug misuse, abuse, and overdose — especially with opioid pain relievers — through education, nursing advisory support, and healthcare referrals.

Through our Sharps program, we provide for safe and sanitary disposal of needles, reducing unintentional injury.

As we roll out the full program in 2016, we hope to reduce prescription drug abuse and addiction throughout our communities, along with related illness and effects.

School Wellness Program

Forming healthy habits in young people is especially important. Our School Wellness Program aims to improve the quality and amount of physical education in schools. Through this program, we collaborate with Payson USD and Miami USD to ensure at least two teachers at each school, as well as two county health employees, are trained to administer FITNESSGRAM®.

School Health Liaison Program

A notable 2015 addition was our new School Health Liaison Program. Through this program, we sponsor public health education professionals to present at schools and conferences. In 2015, we coordinated Dr. Adolph Brown as keynote speaker at our *Connecting With Youth* conference, as well as Arizona's Advocate of the Year, Ashlynn Earven, to speak at Miami High School's Anti-Tobacco Club. This program also provides education on Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Tobacco-Free Environments, and Community Health.

Additionally, our prevention team once again sponsored Read-On Express (a children's literacy program) in 2015, distributing 1,135 donated books to encourage new readers.

We will continue to offer these programs in 2016, refining our efforts to align with findings from our *CHA* and *Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)*. This will be important in seeking national accreditation.

Emergency Management / PHEP

Gila County Emergency Management/Public Health Emergency Preparedness (EM/PHEP) monitors and coordinates practitioner response to weather hazards, natural disasters, infectious disease outbreaks, environmental hazards, terrorist concerns, and other public health issues.

Our team is comprised of five emergency experts who partner with staff and outside infectious disease specialists, nurses, and other professionals to mitigate illness and hardship. We also collaborate with neighboring counties, the Arizona Department of Health Services, AZ Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA), and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on larger or imminent issues.

Gila County EM/PHEP aims to:

- Prevent the spread of infection and illness
- Prepare residents for emergencies
- Protect residents' health and welfare

Emergencies & Investigations

Mild weather and improved monitoring tools resulted in fewer emergencies in 2015. Firefighters were able to control wildfires without EM/PHEP support for displacements or evacuations. Additionally, while the county was well prepared for El Niño, no significant hazard materialized. Infectious disease incidence was also down from years prior, with the majority of illness stemming from the *A flu* strain during the latter part of the year. While there were 218 lab confirmed cases this flu season, no hospitalizations or fatalities were recorded.

Other work included support for a minor flood in Tonto Basin, where limited riverbed access restricted egress. During the flood, Gila County EM worked alongside the sheriff's office to deliver necessary prescription medications and supplies to dozens of homes. The flood also caused numerous power outages. All outages were monitored by Gila County EM and mitigated within hours without claim.

In 2016, we are proactively working on containing the Zika Virus. As of April 30, only one Arizona case existed. Although symptoms are typically mild, we remain vigilant in monitoring new incidences and will alert residents of protective measures.

New Control Center & Communications Tools

Gila County EM/PHEP made major strides in monitoring, management, and communications with a number of key additions. First, we completed a \$30,000 renovation of our Emergency Operations Center (EOC), our central location for interagency coordination and executive decision-making during incident response and recovery. **Our new communication systems and equipment make the Gila County EOC one of the most technologically advanced command centers in the state.** Funding for this project came from state and federal grants.



Renovated in 2015, our EM Control Center is equipped with the latest surveillance and communications equipment, enabling us to alert residents immediately of any pending hazard.

Next, we launched our EM/PHEP website, www.readygila.com, providing for late-breaking news, preparedness resources, and other community support. Finally, we finished off the year with our adoption of Everbridge®, a communitywide notification system that alerts residents of every pending weather, natural disaster, disease, and other potential threat. Alerts can be issued via text message, email, or phone. Residents can sign up for alerts by visiting www.readygila.com or by emailing emsdept@gilacountyaz.gov.

Preparedness Training

A key component in preparedness is providing for community readiness. In 2015, our team delivered a variety of free training sessions to manage our community's response to an emergency. Training courses covered hazmat preparedness, storm spotting, and personal protective measures for biological events (offered in response to the potential Ebola threat). These sessions were attended by more than 150 community volunteers and residents.

Community Volunteers / CERT

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) are a FEMA initiative that assembles citizens interested in supporting their communities by learning life-saving emergency skills and collaborating with local EM authorities.

In Gila County, we are proud to have two such teams that support our endeavors. In 2015, we benefited from more than 1,100 volunteers hours from our 33-person Northern Gila County CERT, along with help from our newly formed Southern Gila County CERT.

We are deeply appreciative of such community support. These groups generously volunteer their time to help during local emergencies and special events, while promoting emergency preparedness across Gila County.

Strategic Roadmap

The Gila County Division of Health & Emergency Management has embarked on a number of key public health initiatives that focus on improving the quality of lives of our residents. Our most significant efforts include two year-long initiatives — the Gila County **Community Health Needs Assessment (CHA)** and the Gila County **Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)**, which provided insights on demographics and health indicators, along with plans to proactively address community needs.

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT [CHA]

- From September 2015 through March 2016, stakeholders across Gila County and the Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center (CVRMC) service region engaged in a community-driven process to identify the most pressing health issues facing residents. Led by the Gila County Division of Health & Emergency Management and CVRMC, this effort examined important health indicators, including mortality and morbidity statistics, access to healthcare and quality of such care, pervasive health behaviors, social/societal issues, and environmental effects.
- Key findings of this effort are culminated in our **2015 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHA)**. This 85-page report articulates the 12 most important health issues facing our residents. It is available on our website at www.gilacountyaz.gov.

COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN [CHIP]

- Resulting from the CHA, the **2016–2020 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)** outlines the process and plan to address the 12 key issues to improve resident health. This document will be used as a guide by our division, community hospitals, and other partners to address and change factors that limit residents' ability to lead full, healthy lives.
- The CHIP presents objectives, challenges, and strategies to guide improvement action over the next five years. The four key focus areas are obesity, substance abuse, access to quality healthcare, and sexual health.

HEALTH & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

- To maximize efforts of the CHA and CHIP — and potential improvements within our communities — our division began working on a countywide strategic plan in late 2015. This plan will span all critical resident health issues, while providing for quality improvement across nursing, immunizations, women and infant care, environmental health and vector control, animal care and control, prevention, and emergency preparedness/management.
- We expect to release an initial draft of this critical plan by year's end. Once complete, our **Strategic Plan** will be available on our county website at www.gilacountyaz.gov.

MISSION

The Gila County Division of Health & Emergency Management strives to advocate, educate, improve, and monitor the public health and safety in Gila County, by providing the highest level of quality, integrity, and respect to those we serve.



VISION

To sustain a culture of excellence that promotes health, safety, and well-being for all Gila County residents.



Gila County Health & Emergency Management

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