empowering people, confronting inequities, influencing policy and bettering lives.
# Table of Contents

**WELCOME TO 2018!** 3

**WHAT’S NEW IN 2018?** 4

**DISEASE TRENDS AND RISK FACTORS** 6

- **Coconino County** 6
- **Vaccine-Preventable Disease** 7
- **Rabies** 8
- **Influenza** 10
- **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)** 12

**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS** 12

- **Communicable Disease** 14
  - **Measles** 14
  - **Tuberculosis** 14
  - **Varicella** 15
- **Traveler’s Health** 16
- **Epidemiology** 17
  - **Data Analysis** 17
  - **Influenza LiveStories** 18
  - **Syndromic Surveillance** 18
  - **Substance Use** 19
- **HIV Prevention and Case Management** 20
- **Teen Pregnancy Prevention** 22

**CLINICAL SERVICES** 23

- **Provider Visits** 23
- **Immunization and Tuberculosis Testing Visits** 24
- **Community Outreach** 25
- **Community Partnerships** 26
- **Financial Profile** 27

**SUMMARY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** 28

**REFERENCES** 29
Dear Community Members,

The Clinical Services Division of Coconino County Health and Human Services (CCHHS) provides a broad range of preventative services, including immunization, infectious disease testing and treatment, individual counseling, and community education, to the residents of Coconino County. The Division supports several key initiatives centering around teenage pregnancy prevention, HIV prevention and case management support, communicable disease and epidemiology, and direct clinical service provision of primary care, sexual health, and vaccine-preventable diseases.

In 2018, the Division experienced numerous notable events, including several investigations of vaccine-preventable disease, an increase in the incidence of sexually transmitted infections, the expansion of services to better serve the public, and the analysis of new datasets, resulting in the publication of new epidemiological reports. Throughout the challenges and opportunities, staff engaged in outreach activities, onsite and offsite clinics, contact tracing, emergency response, and provider education to curb the spread of disease and prevent future outbreaks. The Division is committed to furthering the health of the population and preventing disease before it begins.

Please read further to learn more about the Division’s programs and activities, and the disease trends and events experienced during 2018.

Michael Oxtoby, LMSW
Interim Chief Health Officer
What's New in 2018?

The CCHHS clinic provides immunization, sexual health, and general practice services to the community. While core services have remained intact over several years, the clinic greatly expanded its service types, availability, and communication with the public in 2018.

The clinic launched an electronic patient portal in the fall of 2018.

This portal allows patients to view medical records online, request prescription refills, request appointments, and receive test results any time of any day. Registration is easy and can be completed via the portal link. To make health education a comprehensive experience, the clinic obtained no-cost educational programming in the clinic lobby and exam rooms. Cooking shows, exercise routines, and disease prevention tips are a part of the visit from check-in to check-out.

Increased contracting with various insurance payers generated revenue streams to shift costs away from patients and further sustainability for the clinic.

Insurance Contracts
What's New in 2018?

To better serve the population, the clinic initiated the following services:

- HIV Pre and Post Exposure Prophylaxis
- Hormonal Replacement Therapy
- Intra-uterine device and subdermal implant insertion and removal

The clinic’s goal is to provide low-cost, high-quality services to all residents and visitors of Coconino County. In 2018, the clinic:

- expanded clinical service hours to 40 hours per week and offered extended hours on Tuesdays
- offered 3 Super Service Saturday onsite back-to-school events
- conducted more than 20 offsite STI testing and immunization events
Disease Trends and Risk Factors

Coconino County

Increase in

- Vaccine (personal belief) exemptions
- Global travel
- Rabies exposures from wildlife
- Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis cases

2nd Highest
Vaccine Exemption Rate

*Coconino County's Rank out of 15 Arizona Counties

STOP STDs
Disease Trends and Risk Factors

Vaccine-Preventable Disease

Vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs) are infectious diseases that can be prevented, or at least lessened in severity, with timely and complete immunization series.

Immunization is the most effective way to prevent vaccine-preventable diseases. Immunization works by introducing an inactivated (killed), attenuated (modified to render incapable of producing disease), or genetically engineered protein structure of a virus or bacterium into the immune system. In a healthy individual, the immune system will respond by creating antibodies to fight the simulated infection. These antibodies then circulate in the bloodstream to provide protection against natural exposure to the pathogen.

Immunization prevents widespread outbreaks of disease, morbidity, disability, and death among individuals and populations. In fact, when a certain threshold of the population is immunized, the entire population is effectively protected against the disease. This concept is known as ‘herd immunity’ and it helps to protect certain groups who cannot be immunized, such as the very young, elderly, and those suffering from chronic conditions.¹
Rabies is a serious viral infection that results in death if left untreated. Humans can become exposed to rabies through the saliva of an infected animal, transmitted by a bite, scratch, or lick on broken skin. Worldwide, an estimated 59,000 people die from rabies annually.\(^2\)

2018 constituted the highest number of confirmed laboratory-confirmed animal rabies cases in Coconino County since 2009 (35). This case count was a stark 1,166 % increase over the last year (35 in 2018 vs. 3 in 2017).

In 2018, CCHHS administered rabies post-exposure prophylactic (PEP) treatment to 14 patients, as compared to 1 patient in 2017. CCHHS administered 185 doses of pre- and post-exposure rabies vaccine in 2018, as compared to 89 doses in 2017.

PEP treatment consists of a series of vaccines and human antibodies to rabies to prevent rabies infection, when indicated.
The vast majority of global human exposures to rabies (over 90 percent) occur by exposure to infected canines. Thanks to high canine immunization rates in the United States, rabies exposures from dogs are relatively rare. In Coconino County, the risk of exposure is primarily from wildlife. In Arizona, the principal wildlife rabies hosts are bats, skunks, and foxes.

When a human exposure to a rabid or potentially rabid animal occurs, CCHHS examines the information to determine if rabies post exposure prophylaxis is recommended. If available, CCHHS collects the animal and submits a specimen for rabies testing to the Arizona State Public Health Laboratory. If the exposure is from a domestic animal, it is placed in a ten-day quarantine to determine if testing is necessary. If the animal is not available for testing, then a treatment recommendation is determined based on the risk of disease transmission from the encounter.

Rabies Confirmed Animal Cases
Coconino County, Arizona (2018) (n = 35)
Disease Trends and Risk Factors

Influenza

While often confused with the common cold, influenza is a serious viral infection that can lead to severe illness and even death. Each year, influenza infection results in hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of fatalities. Because influenza is a rapidly mutating virus with many different strains, cases of influenza and severity of infection vary from season to season. Influenza infection can also affect people differently, depending upon age, immune system health, and co-infections or chronic conditions. However, even healthy people can get very sick from the flu and spread it to others. This is because influenza can ignite a very strong immune response that can lead to systemic inflammation and organ dysfunction in healthy adults.

During each flu season, a new vaccine is manufactured to combat circulating influenza viruses. Immunization reduces the chance of influenza-related complications, such as hospitalization, chronic disease, and/or death.

Every flu season is different from the last

The flu shot cannot give you the flu

The influenza vaccine protects against four sub-types of the virus that commonly circulate and cause illness among humans. Because influenza rapidly mutates, it is important to receive the vaccine every year to ensure protection.

Common Myths About the Flu
1. It’s just a bad cold.
2. The flu shot gives you the flu.
3. Healthy people do not need the flu shot.
4. There’s no need for a flu shot every year.
Disease Trends and Risk Factors

Influenza

A total of 1,111 influenza cases were reported in Coconino County during the 2017-2018 season, which ran from October 1, 2017 until September 30, 2018. This was a 48 percent increase in cases over the previous year (2016-2017). Nationwide, the 2017-2018 influenza season resulted in more illness and deaths than any other season since the 2009 H1N1 pandemic.\(^5\)

Influenza disproportionately affects the elderly and the young. During the last flu season, 51 percent of cases in Coconino County were among those aged 0 - 9 and over 65. However, this combined age demographic accounted for only 23 percent of the total population in Coconino County.\(^6\)

*Cases increased by 48 percent from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018*

Reported Influenza Cases by Season, Coconino County (2015-2018)

Influenza Cases by Age Group, Coconino County (2017-2018)
Disease Trends and Risk Factors

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

The most commonly reported STIs in the State of Arizona are gonorrhea, chlamydia and syphilis. STI infections increased nationwide from 2013 - 2017 (chlamydia by 22 percent, gonorrhea by 67 percent and syphilis by 76 percent).\(^7\)

**Chlamydia** is a bacterial infection caused by *Chlamydia trachomatis*. It is most prevalent among youth aged 15-24.\(^8\) While easily treatable with antibiotics, untreated chlamydia can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility in women. Chlamydia most often occurs asymptotically, which underscores the importance of regular testing for those who are sexually active.

![1 in 20 sexually active women aged 14-24 has chlamydia](image)

**Gonorrhea** is a sexually transmitted bacterial infection caused by *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*.\(^9\) Although rarely, gonorrhea has developed resistance to an antibiotic therapy in the past. Treatment for gonorrhea consists of **dual** antibiotic therapy to help prevent the development of resistant strains and to ensure successful treatment.

Untreated gonorrhea can lead to infertility and life-threatening **blood infections** in men and women.

**In response to the stark increase in STI cases, Communicable Disease program staff tested 254 residents at 5 specialized testing events in Coconino County.**
Disease Trends and Risk Factors

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

In early 2018, the Arizona Department of Health Services declared a statewide outbreak of syphilis in Arizona. In 2018, Coconino County had 54 syphilis cases, which was a 36 percent increase over the previous year (39). By contrast, chlamydia and gonorrhea cases declined slightly over 2017 (by 1 and 3 percent, respectively).

**Syphilis** is a sexually transmitted bacterial disease that can cause serious health problems if not treated appropriately. Syphilis is spread through direct contact with a syphilis sore during oral, anal, or vaginal sex. Syphilis is divided into stages (primary, secondary, latent, and tertiary).\(^{10}\)

Untreated cases can eventually progress to organ damage and death in the tertiary stage. However, it can take from 10 to 30 years before infection reaches the tertiary stage.

**Treatment** for syphilis consists of antibiotics. Syphilis treatment is particularly important for pregnant women, as unborn babies can develop serious health complications from infection.

Anyone who is exposed to syphilis can develop infection. Those at higher risk of being exposed to syphilis are men who have sex with men, those living with HIV, and those with an infected partner.
Program Highlights

Communicable Disease

The Coconino County Health and Human Services Communicable Disease and Epidemiology Programs are responsible for monitoring more than 85 infectious diseases of public health concern within Coconino County. Both programs work with Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to control and prevent the spread of reportable diseases. CCHHS provides information and education to healthcare providers and the public, maintains database reporting, and leads collaborative efforts with health care entities to prevent communicable diseases within the community. The programs also promulgate rules for communicable disease reporting and provide technical assistance.

**Measles** is a highly contagious virus that lives in the mucus of the nose and throat an infected person. The virus can spread to others through coughing and sneezing and can live for up to two hours in an airspace when a person coughs or sneezes. Measles is so contagious that if one person has it, up to 90% of the people close to that person who are not immune, will also become infected. The best protection against measles is measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine.

In August 2018, ADHS notified CCHHS regarding an out-of-state visitor that traveled through Northern Arizona while contagious with measles infection. The visitor exposed the public at several locations within Coconino County. CCHHS immediately started an investigation and notified the exposed locations and the public regarding the exposure. Those who were exposed were provided information regarding disease process and were monitored for symptoms for 42 days. Fortunately, there were no other cases identified during this time.

**Active tuberculosis disease (TB)** is caused by a bacterium that usually attacks the lungs, but can attack any part of the body. TB is spread through the air when a person with TB of the lungs coughs, speaks, or sings. If not treated properly, TB can be fatal.
Program Highlights

Communicable Disease

Between May and June of 2018, a cluster of three confirmed cases of active tuberculosis (TB) disease were linked to one facility in Coconino County. After a thorough investigation, more than 230 linked contacts were identified. Between the facility staff and CCHHS TB Program staff, more than 230 facility residents and staff were notified of the potential exposure, provided education on TB, tested, and re-tested according to guidelines. Active and latent cases are followed and observed until completion of daily antibiotic therapy (usually 9 months).

**Chickenpox (varicella)** is a disease caused by the Varicella Zoster virus (VZV). During initial infection, the virus causes an itchy rash of blisters and a fever that can spread over the whole body. Chickenpox can be life-threatening, especially in babies, adolescents, adults, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems.

The best way to prevent chickenpox is to get the varicella vaccine. Later in life or in times of acute stress or other immunosuppression, the VZV virus can become reactivated in the form of **shingles**. Shingles can cause neuralgia, nerve damage, and pain that can last up to several years. The best way to protect against shingles is to receive the vaccine. A new vaccine became available in 2018, which is recommended for those 50 and older.

In September of 2018, Northern Arizona University (NAU) notified CCHHS regarding a confirmed varicella case. CCHHS began a case investigation and the source case was isolated at home and interviewed for contacts. It was discovered that the source case attended classes while symptomatic. All contacts were notified and educated regarding exposure. Instructions were given in case they became symptomatic. Between September and November 2018, seven confirmed cases were identified as a part of this cluster. All seven cases were symptomatic and were subsequently interviewed and isolated. CCHHS worked closely with NAU to educate all students and staff on campus regarding the exposures, when to seek medical care, and the need for vaccination.
Program Highlights

Traveler's Health

Traveler's health is a component of disease prevention. When immunization coverage rates are not sufficient for herd immunity or a new pathogen is introduced for which there is no vaccine, infection can spread very quickly.

In an era of increasing global travel, pathogens have the potential to develop into epidemics more easily than in previous decades. By conducting surveillance and disease investigations, public health can detect and respond to infectious disease threats.

Coconino County is a popular destination for domestic and international travelers. An estimated 6.3 million people visited Grand Canyon National Park alone in 2018, which is only one of several national parks in Coconino County.16

CCHHS offered travel and routine adult and childhood immunizations throughout 2018 to prevent disease from occurring while abroad and after returning home. Travel consultations provide travelers with in-depth consultation that includes education on country/region specific risks, food/beverage safety, vector-borne disease prevention, recommended travel vaccinations, and other health and safety concerns.
As part of collective impact efforts, epidemiology staff analyzed large data sets to help guide discussions for local stakeholder groups such as the 'Stronger as One' coalition focusing on suicide prevention and the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC).

For the Stronger as One coalition, Health and Human Services Vital Record and Medical Examiner data was utilized to gather information for death by suicides within Coconino County. This information included analysis of death by suicide rates from 2014-2018 for Coconino County residents, along with a breakdown by age, race, and city of residence. The data demonstrated a 79 percent increase for the rate of death by suicide from 2014 to 2018, with a 2017 rate that is 2.1 times higher than the national rate.\textsuperscript{17,18}

**Criminal Justice Coordinating Council**

Criminal history data from 1932-2014 was utilized to assess age groups of arrest, total convictions during specific time frames, gender analysis, and confinement. Further analysis was performed on the arrests from 2010-2014 for charge types, repeat jail visits, and the charges for repeat jail visits. The number of charges for each arrest from 2010-2014 averaged 11.23 charges, with males representing 80 percent of total arrests.\textsuperscript{19}
Program Highlights

Epidemiology

Influenza LiveStories

Epidemiology utilized the LiveStories platform to create a webpage for displaying influenza data for the 2018-19 season in Coconino County. This interactive webpage includes graphs and tables to show the total number of reported cases, with analysis of age groups, flu type, and city of residence. There is additional information about the influenza virus, including prevention strategies, symptoms, and vaccination. The webpage is available to the public and has been advertised by email and through the Health and Human Services website.

To view the dashboard, please click on the following link:

Syndromic Surveillance

In 2018, CCHHS integrated syndromic surveillance into communicable disease investigations.

Syndromic surveillance, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is an early detection system used to identify illness clusters early, before diagnoses are confirmed and reported to public health agencies, to mobilize a rapid response, and thereby reducing morbidity and mortality.

Using surveillance software, ESSENCE, CCHHS has begun to incorporate syndromic surveillance protocols into opioid overdose and varicella investigations. While this tool is only currently available to patients seen at Banner Hospitals, the Arizona Department of Health Services is ongoingly onboarding additional hospitals onto the ESSENCE platform and CCHHS will continue to incorporate new facilities/morbidities into their syndromic surveillance investigation protocols.
In October 2018 the Epi team released a report titled, *Injuries and Deaths Related to Substance Use in Coconino County 2012-2016*. The report overviewed a five-year trend of alcohol and drug related deaths and hospitalizations among Coconino County residents. Additionally, a webpage was created to host the report along with supplemental data surrounding substance abuse in Coconino County and resources available through the Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention Program.

From 2012-2016, alcohol and drugs were linked to:

**11 percent of deaths among residents**

and

**13 percent of all hospital visits over a 5-year period**

To view webpage and download the full report, visit:


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**Epidemiology**

**Substance Use**

In all, substance use has cost Coconino County residents 8,256 years of life lost and $98.4 million in hospital charges.

With rates continuing to rise, substance use is a present threat to the community's health and further resources are needed to support those currently struggling and to prevent future injury and death.
The HIV prevention program provides education, HIV counseling/testing to the community and links newly diagnosed individuals to care and services. In 2018, 425 individuals received a free HIV test, and 10 individuals were linked to care and services. Half of those were previously diagnosed and had moved to Coconino County in 2018, needing to be re-established to care. All ten were verified to be under the care of a physician and were prescribed Anti-Retro Viral (ARV) medications to suppress viral replication, reduce the risk of transmission, and prevent the development of AIDS.

HIV Tests by Age (2018)

- 15-19 (26.65%)
- 20-24 (40.57%)
- 25-29 (13.92%)
- 30-34 (7.31%)
- 35-39 (3.77%)
- 40-44 (2.12%)
- 45-49 (1.42%)
- 50 and older (4.25%)

**67 percent**

of tests were administered to 15-24 year olds

HIV Tests by Race/Ethnicity (2018)

- American Indian (9.18%)
- Asian (1.88%)
- Black/African American (8.71%)
- Hispanic (25.88%)
- Multi-Race (2.82%)
- Native Hawaiian/Pac. Islander (1.65%)
- White (48.94%)
- Declined to Report (0.94%)

**50 percent**

of tests were administered to minority racial groups
Program Highlights

HIV Prevention and Case Management

HIV Prevention staff provided HIV/STI education to Exodus Programs at the Coconino County Jail, Hope Cottage, Sharon Manor, Northland Family Help Center and Northern Arizona University (NAU) student organizations and classrooms.

Many HIV testing and vendor participation opportunities were conducted in 2018; **five** events at NAU, three at the Grand Canyon, and two in Flagstaff.

### February
- Education presentation to NAU HS205 class
- HIV testing event at NAU’s Office of Inclusion: Multicultural and LGBTQIA Student Services
- Participated as a vendor at the Grand Canyon’s Founders Day Health Fair

### April
- HIV testing event (Fast Track) with CD team at NAU

### June
- HIV testing event at Pride in the Pines festival in Flagstaff

### July
- HIV testing event (Fast Track) with CD team at Grand Canyon

### October
- HIV testing event at NAU’s Sexual Health Fair
- Participated as vendor at NAU’s Inclusion Health Day
- Education presentation to NAU’s LGBTQ student organization PRISM (People Respecting Individuals and Sexual Minorities)
- HIV Testing event (Fast Track) with CD Team at Grand Canyon

### November
- HIV Testing event (Fast Track) with CD Team at NAU

### December
- HIV Testing event (Fast Track) with CD Team at CCPhSD
The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPP) uses ADHS-approved curricula ('Abstinence Plus') to provide comprehensive sexual health education to youth aged 12-18 in Coconino County, with the ultimate goals of reducing the rates of STIs and teenage pregnancy among youth and fostering confidence and autonomy among teens in healthy decision making.

Students are referred by Public Health Educators to Teen Clinic at CCHHS to provide education, counseling, testing, and contraceptive options at no cost to teens aged 13-17.
The hiring of a full-time Nurse Practitioner enabled a 71 percent increase in total visits from calendar year 2017 to 2018. Adult sexual health visits increased by 104 percent. Full-time appointment availability decreased barriers to care for residents. Additionally, new services such as general wellness visits, hormonal replacement therapy, and HIV pre and post exposure prophylaxis met a wider and more complex array of needs for patients. Different services in one location with the same trusted provider also facilitated continuity of care while implementing the public health principle of primary prevention of disease.

Long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) provide the highest level of protection against pregnancy (99.99%) with the least risk of user error for the longest amount of time. In 2018, CCHHS successfully administered 18 LARCs.
Clinical Services

Immunization and Tuberculosis Testing Visits

The increase in provider and nursing staffing led to an increase in appointment availability and services provided. Immunization and tuberculosis (TB) testing visits increased by 19 percent from calendar year 2017 to calendar year 2018. This increase in visits was accompanied by a 24 percent increase in vaccines administered over the same time period (2,951 in 2017 vs. 3,658 in 2018). This change is a success for public health and the prevention of infectious disease in Coconino County.

The clinic conducted a total of 4,307 visits in 2018; 2,997 of these were immunization or TB testing visits.

3,658 vaccines were administered at CCHHS in 2018; this was a 24 percent increase over the previous year

CCHHS partners with the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) via the Vaccines for Children (VFC) and Vaccines for Adults (VFA) programs, which provide free federally-funded vaccines to under-served populations.
Clinical Services

Community Outreach

Immunization coverage rates have decreased in Coconino County and throughout the state of Arizona. From the 2016-17 school year to the 2017-18 school year, sixth grade personal exemptions in Coconino County increased from 6.4 to 7.2 percent. Kindergarten personal exemptions rose from 7.4 to 10.3 percent during the same time period.22 The trend towards lower coverage rates is concerning because it presents opportunities for cases and outbreaks of otherwise preventable disease.

Coconino County Health and Human Services works to prevent infectious disease and promote a healthy lifestyle by providing counseling to individuals and families, offering community education to stakeholder groups, and collaborating with partners such as school districts, senior centers, shelters, community centers, and employers to ensure childhood, adult, and seasonal influenza immunization and STI testing and treatment.

In 2018, CCHHS conducted 14 offsite immunization events and 5 STI testing events, serving 551 residents in total.

3.9 percent of the 254 patients tested were positive for an STI

All were successfully treated and counseled

Partner Outreach Sites:

- Blue Ridge Church
- Grand Canyon Community Center
- Page Community Center
- Flagstaff Family Food Center
- Fredonia Senior Center
- FUSD Schools
- Joe Montoya Senior Center
- Northern Arizona University
- Northland Family Help Center
The CCHHS Communicable Disease Program reached out to 81 health care facilities, schools, and other communicable disease reporters throughout Coconino County to inform them of the changes to disease reporting guidelines and to encourage timely and accurate reporting of communicable disease cases and potential outbreaks. Staff conducted in-person meetings to discuss reporting and to share materials and resources. Other topics discussed included rabies and STD treatment guidelines.

CCHHS partnered with Coconino Community College to train first-year nursing students on vaccine-preventable disease and immunizations. In 2018, 30 nursing students were trained by CCHHS immunization staff. Students from other institutions also shadowed in the sexual health clinic.

Additionally, CCHHS hosted a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Public Health Associate in the CD program as well as public health interns in the Epidemiology, HIV, and TPP programs.

CCHHS partnered with local researchers to increase understanding of pathogenic organisms and identify the risk for transmission of infectious disease within Coconino County residents and visitors. Two key partner organizations are Northern Arizona University and The Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGEN). Projects include valley fever, cancer, neurological disorders, and other infectious disease.

In 2018, CCHHS applied for, and was selected to participate in, the CityMatCH Well Women, Well Communities 2020 learning collaborative. CCHHS teamed up with local non-profit and government agencies to create a Community Advisory Board aimed at identifying strategies to increase utilization of well-woman preventative screenings.
Clinical Services

Financial Profile

The Clinical Services Division is funded through a variety of mechanisms, including property tax revenues, local donor awards, state intergovernmental agreements, and federal funding administered by contracts with the state. Additionally, the Division collects payments for clinical services administered from public and private insurance payers, patient self-payments on a sliding scale, and direct billing contracts with local employers.

The Division is contracted with:
- 3 public insurance payers,
- 4 commercial payers, and
- over a dozen local employers
to provide sexual health and immunization services to residents and visitors.

The Division is responsible for conducting several services mandated to Coconino County, including disease surveillance, communicable disease investigations, arranging treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and providing immunizations required for entry to school.
Summary and Acknowledgements

2018 was an exciting, busy year filled with disease investigations, immunizations, STI tests, community collaborations, and offsite events throughout Coconino County. Clinical Services staff engaged with partners at healthcare facilities, Northern Arizona University, Coconino Community College, Flagstaff Unified School District, and various other community partners.

The services provided helped to prevent the initiation and transmission of a broad array of infectious diseases. The education and direct clinical services also improved the quality of life for Coconino County residents and visitors by creating a healthier environment and fostering healthy decision making. Without the above activities, Coconino County would not be as safe and healthy of a place to live and to visit.

This report was published by the following contributors:

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References


References


