

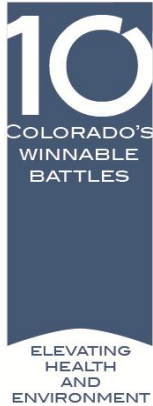


Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

NEWS RELEASE

Office of Communications
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

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State identifies “Winnable Battles” to improve public health and the environment

DENVER – The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment today identified 10 Winnable Battles that are key public health and environmental issues where progress can be made in the next three-five years.

Chris Urbina, executive director and chief medical officer for the department, said, “We selected these 10 Winnable Battles because they provide Colorado’s greatest opportunities for ensuring the health of our citizens and visitors and the improvement and protection of our environment. All partners and stakeholders are needed and welcomed in helping address these Winnable Battles. With collective efforts, we can make a difference.”

The identified 10 Winnable Battles for public health and the environment are:

- Clean Air
- Clean Water
- Infectious Disease Prevention
- Injury Prevention
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- Obesity
- Oral Health
- Safe Food
- Tobacco
- Unintended Pregnancy

Urbina said, “Many public health and environmental health agencies at the local level already have embraced certain of these battles where they will be focusing some of their efforts in the next few years. In addition, we are working with our counterparts at the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to coordinate our efforts in these areas.”

Many of Colorado's Winnable Battles align with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Winnable Battles or are consistent with the Seven Priorities for EPA's Future, while others reflect Colorado's own unique priorities.

Reggie Bicha, executive director of the Colorado Department of Human Services, said, "The Department of Human Services looks forward to continuing our close partnership with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment with all the winnable battles, particularly on providing excellent treatment services for mental health and substance abuse in Colorado."

"Health Care Policy and Financing programs intersect with many of the winnable battles," said Susan E. Birch, executive director of the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing. "The majority of Coloradans covered by our programs are children. If kids do not have access to the preventive dental care they need, it can lead to generally poor health outcomes, affect their attendance at school and have lasting impacts later in life. Oral health has been and will continue to be an important focus of the Department."

"Colorado's local public health officials are excited to work with our many state-agency partners to address the winnable public health battles. These state level battles will help guide prioritization in our local communities and keep us connected to our neighboring agencies across the state," said Jeff Kuhr, public health director, Mesa County Health Department.

Urbina said, "Alignment of national, state and local efforts will allow for maximum effectiveness and efficiency. To make a difference, we need our schools/universities; workplaces/businesses/industries; state health care, human services, natural resources and transportation agencies; conservation/environmental groups; foundations; faith-based organizations; elected officials; and nonprofit organizations to be active participants in the Winnable Battles.

Many of Colorado's Winnable Battles were identified through current health data measurements. The department will continue to track this data, as well as other important data, as it moves ahead with strategies for improvement. Winnable Battle progress will be tracked by measuring health outcomes and environmental improvements associated with the specific strategies.

For complete background and information on the 10 Winnable Battles, please visit the department's website at <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/hs/winnable.html>.