

# COVID-19 OUTREACH AND EDUCATION IN CLEAR CREEK COUNTY

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## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has spread across the world, creating public health emergencies in every corner of the globe. Rural communities face unique challenges, as residents are spread far apart and may not have easy access to medical facilities. This externship project was a multi-faceted approach to meeting the education and resource needs of the community through engaging with the following organizations:

### Clear Creek County Public Health Clinic

Despite the relatively small population size of Clear Creek County, this community has mounted an impressive effort against COVID-19. Through coordinated drive-through sites and accessible clinic hours, testing and vaccinations were made readily available. Additionally, frequent newsletters and updates are sent to the community to ensure each member is well informed. As a result of these efforts, Clear Creek County has maintained one of the lowest case rates (per 100,000 people) in Colorado. With over 65% of their population vaccinated, these low case numbers will hopefully continue.



## INTERNSHIP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the unique challenges and barriers to healthcare that exist within a rural community through engaging with individuals from varied social and generational backgrounds.
2. To assist in public health outreach through screening community members at the Clear Creek County vaccination clinic.
3. To provide COVID-19 educational resources that are engaging and accessible to all ages.

## INTERNSHIP ACTIVITIES

### COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics

- Assisted in collecting patient information prior to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Engaged in conversations with patients about the available COVID-19 vaccines and related to patients while sharing our own experiences with vaccination.
- Monitored patients for any adverse reactions following vaccination and provided necessary assistance when needed.
- Discussed the various challenges that healthcare workers encounter whilst serving a rural community.



### COVID-19 Education Videos for Youth

- Engaged in conversation with children about the COVID-19 pandemic to understand their questions about the virus and the public health measures in place.
- Created audience-targeted videos about the specifics of the COVID-19 pandemic, the measures that can be taken to prevent the spread of the virus, and the importance of getting vaccinated.



## NEXT STEPS

During this externship, we experienced the Delta variant and increase in COVID-19 infections both within Clear Creek County and in its neighboring communities. Given this continued spread, education and outreach remains an important measure in protecting community members against infection. The Clear Creek County public health office emphasized the importance of vaccination and testing. Towards this effort, they have expanded their testing capabilities to accommodate the varied geographical needs of their community.

In addition to the more virulent nature of novel SARS-CoV-2 strains, the case load among children is increasing, with the 0-18 age group making up about 25% of weekly COVID-19 cases. Thus, education about proper hand-washing, mask wearing, social distancing, and vaccination is imperative in keeping kids safe. The COVID-19 videos created during this externship project will serve as an important resource in this effort.

## KEY TAKE-AWAYS

**Sophia:** As an aspiring physician, this externship experience provided important insight into the healthcare issues rural communities face. Specifically, I became acutely aware of the issues involved with healthcare access and the measures that need to be taken by health professionals to ensure the needs of each member of the community are met.

**Nicole:** As I am only midway through my academic career at CSU, I found this opportunity incredibly enlightening. Public health is constantly adapting to the needs of the population it is meant to protect. Seeing this firsthand has been not only been educating but also very inspiring.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## REFERENCES

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