

HEALTH

User

Tri-County Health Department  
 Greenwood Village, Colorado

Challenge

The need for a central location for opioid epidemic and related data and the tools to visualize and communicate such data to the general public

Solution

Create an ArcGIS® Open Data site to provide a platform for sharing health-related data

Results

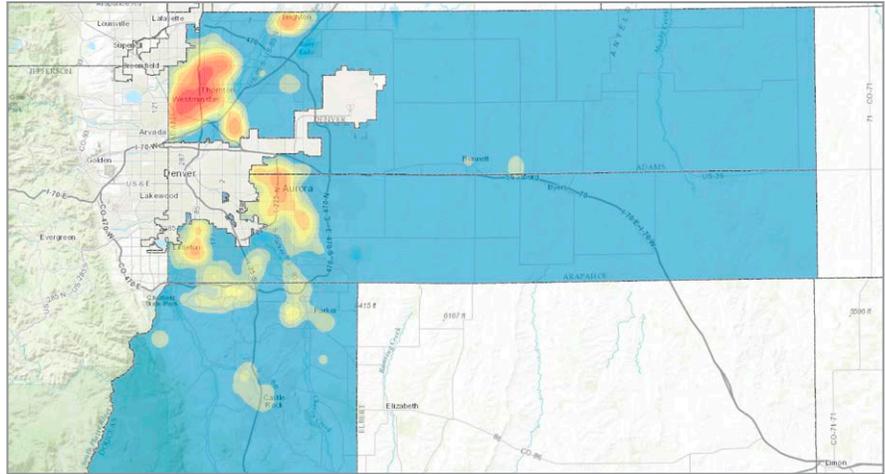
Increase in information being made available to the public, on a site with over 5,000 page visits, leading to an improved awareness of community health issues, such as the opioid epidemic

# Communicating the Severity of the Opioid Crisis

Tri-County Health Department (TCHD), one of the largest local public health agencies in the country, serves over 1.4 million residents in three of the Denver, Colorado, metropolitan area counties—Adams, Arapahoe, and Douglas. Similar to many other communities across the country, TCHD’s jurisdiction has seen a growing problem with the recent opioid crisis. The department needed a way to effectively engage and share data with the communities within their jurisdiction to communicate this issue and other public health problems that they may be facing. The solution? Esri® geographic information system (GIS) technology.

## The Challenge

Communicating public health issues is always a challenge because the factors that influence health are increasingly complex and outcomes are not always straightforward. In its role as a local public health agency, TCHD needed a tool to clearly communicate complex data about the opioid crisis to various audiences. But the opioid usage data was challenging because, in Colorado, it is protected health information that requires additional consideration for confidentiality. Another problem was that data related to drug abuse prevention and programs was being dispersed in different formats to partner organizations. TCHD needed an easy-to-use interface to quickly communicate relevant and accurate information that could be utilized by all the department’s community members.



“The success of using this platform as a tool to interact with the data, both internally and with our community, has helped to shape the future of how our health department communicates and shares data, moving forward.”

**Adam Anderson**  
 Tri-County Health Department  
 Greenwood Village, Colorado

## The Solution

With the goal of community engagement in mind, TCHD found that Esri’s ArcGIS Open Data solution would allow the department to achieve all its data-sharing, visualization, and communication goals, especially ones regarding information about the opioid crisis. By creating an Open Data site, TCHD was able to combine its data resources in one central location and compile and share the opioid epidemic data in an easy-to-understand visual format with those in the department’s jurisdiction. This solution fit TCHD’s needs perfectly for communicating health data so that it is meaningful and impactful and can address the different challenges being faced by diverse communities.

In addition to making the information readily available both internally and to its stakeholders, TCHD utilizes ArcGIS<sup>SM</sup> Online services to share and access information more efficiently and, ultimately, to make decisions for the community on how to tackle the opioid crisis and other public health issues.

## The Results

Since the creation of the Open Data site, there has been a dramatic increase in both the information available to the public and the community’s understanding of the opioid crisis. The TCHD Open Data site has had over 5,000 visitors so far, and that number is growing. TCHD’s partner agencies have been able to use the site to identify communities in greatest need related to the opioid crisis and to share maps, graphs, and opioid abuse data. This site has also helped generate discussion around naloxone use (for emergency treatment of opioid overdose) and syringe disposal locations. The success of this platform has inspired TCHD to create more topic-specific Open Data sites to provide ready-to-use data and maps to local governments and community partners, which will ultimately help the department provide the right resources to its citizens and keep them engaged with the latest health trends in their communities.



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