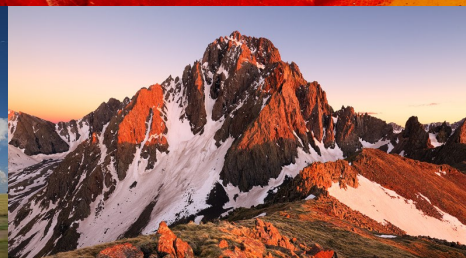




# CCHN NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2018



## NATIONAL HEALTH CENTER WEEK

### Health Care Heroes Celebrate National Health Center Week

During National Health Center Week in August, communities across Colorado gathered to celebrate Community Health Centers (CHCs). Caped and costumed heroes showed up at CHC events ranging from community barbecues and farmers markets to ground breakings, grand openings, and staff appreciation gatherings.

CHCs provide health care homes for more than one in seven people in Colorado and employ more than 5,600 people in communities across Colorado. Twenty CHCs operate 202 clinic sites in 42 counties, caring for patients living in just about every county in Colorado. National Health Center Week (NHCW) is an annual national celebration and opportunity for CHCs to showcase their work to their communities and celebrate their patients, staff, and health care successes. This year's theme, "Celebrating Health Centers: Home of America's Health Care Heroes," added extra fun to the event as CHC staff donned bright blue capes and embraced their superhero alter egos.

Even if the theme of this year's NHCW allowed for some silliness, the events CHCs put together for the

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*Top: Peak Vista gives out homeless outreach bags. Top middle: MCPN staff are joined at the ribbon by U.S. Rep. Mike Coffman, staff member for U.S. Sen. Cory Gardner Steve Emmen, Aurora Mayor Bob LeGare, and Aurora Chamber of Commerce. Bottom middle: Sen. Crowder (SD35) addresses High Plains Grand Opening audience while Board Chair Jim Farmer listens. Bottom: The Board of Mesa County Commissioners presents the National Health Center proclamation to MarillacHealth.*

week showed that they truly are superheroes. Their events focused on giving back to the community and bringing people together. Salud Family Health Centers hosted farmers markets at both of its locations in Fort Collins, so patients could both receive the care they needed and go home with free produce, recipes for healthy meals, and community resources. Sunrise Community Health collected items for a first-come, first-serve free garage sale in Evans, followed by a “community walk” where folks could walk through booths with information on resources the community has to offer. Peak Vista Community Health Centers distributed Homeless Outreach bags at West Side Cares, Marian House Soup Kitchen, Springs Rescue Mission, and RJ Montgomery in Colorado Springs. The bags contained lip balm, toothpaste, toothbrush, dental floss, hand sanitizer, and an information card that highlighted the location and address of Peak Vista Homeless Health Center.

Several of the events centered on what can always bring a community together: good food! Uncompahgre Medical Center hosted its annual Community Appreciation Barbecue, where the community could munch on delicious BBQ and visit booths where health care organizations shared information, see Radio Station 94 KIX onsite broadcasting live, and take rides on helicopter ambulances and firetrucks around Norwood. Northwest Colorado Health hosted a barbecue too, in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the opening of its CHC in Craig. Meanwhile, River Valley Family Health Center celebrated NHCW and Colorado’s harvest season in style by inviting patients and potential patients to visit their three clinics in Olathe, Delta, and Montrose, and giving out free peaches.

Superheroes need to stay in shape, so several of the CHC events offered opportunities for the community to get outside and move. Clínica Tepeyac hosted its annual ¡Adelante! 5K Run/Walk in Denver, with the main race kicking off at 9am and the kid-friendly Fun Run starting an hour later. High Plains Community Health Center participated in the annual Sand and Sage Fair Parade which celebrates the end of another successful Prowers County Fair. High Plains staff handed out fruit and water to kids on the parade route to encourage healthy eating habits. At MCPN, former Denver Broncos Defensive End Ebenezer Ekuban hosted MCPN’s annual golf tournament, bringing together MCPN staff and community supporters.

Though most of the NHCW events focused on giving back to the community, there were also several events across the state dedicated to celebrating the hard work of CHC staff. Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) held a staff appreciation event at the Pueblo Union Depot. PCHC Board President Chris Markuson told a touching story about how impactful PCHC has been in the life of his teenage daughter. Several years ago, she struggled with self-esteem issues and was given care and counseling at PCHC that has helped her grow into a happy and successful young woman. This event also celebrates staff anniversaries at PCHC and had a special recognition for Juanita Gomez, who has been at PCHC for 30 years.

Other staff appreciation events included gratitude breakfasts at the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless in Denver and for





Left: Juanita Gomez receives a plaque for 30 years of service at PCHC from CEO Donald Moore.  
 Right: High Plains staff participate in the Sand and Sage Fair Parade.  
 Bottom: The Prowers County Commissioners issue proclamation to High Plains staff.

Sunrise staff in Loveland. Clínica Tepeyac hosted a staff poster contest for NHCW, giving a pair of tickets to the Broncos/Raiders game to the winner. In addition, many communities honored their local CHCs by approving and reading out proclamations announcing NHCW.

NHCW is also a time for grand openings and remodeling of CHC facilities. High Plains hosted a celebration of the grand opening of its newly remodeled and renamed High Plains Family Health Center in Lamar. The event welcomed staff, patients, family members, board of director members, and State Rep. Kimmi Lewis (HD64) and Sen. Larry Crowder (SD35). Clinica Family Health hosted a grand opening for its new Lafayette Medical & Dental Clinic, expanding capacity in medical and dental care. MCPN celebrated the grand reopening of North Aurora Family Health Services with a ribbon cutting, food, fun, and tours.

All in all, there were a wide range of events during this year's National Health Center Week, but one thing remained true across the board: Community Health Center staff are real-life superheroes! Mark your calendar for next year's National Health Center Week, August 4-10, 2019, and watch CCHN's website for event listings so you can join the festivities in 2019.

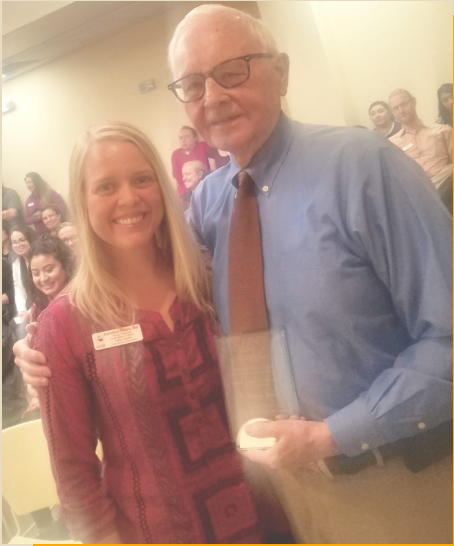


Top left: Northwest Community Health staff get creative with their capes!  
 Middle: Aliza Auces, NACHC, takes off in downtown Denver in her NHCW cape.  
 Top right: Clínica Tepeyac staff participate in staff poster contest.  
 Bottom left: CCHN and CHAMPS staff dress up for NHCW.  
 Bottom right: Salud staff members run the Ft. Collins' farmer's market.



# HEALTH CENTER NEWS

## 2018 Volunteer Clinician Award Recipients



*Dr. Walter Briney holds his award with SCCC's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Katherine Cowie.*

work as a professor of medicine in rheumatology. He has served as a volunteer physician at Summit Community Care Clinic (SCCC) since 2014. During that time, he has worked with various medical providers in giving specialty consults in rheumatology and seeing patients twice a month in co-visits for rheumatologic conditions. He has enjoyed passing along his knowledge to the SCCC staff, providing them with a solid foundation in the management of rheumatologic conditions.

To paint a picture of Dr. Briney, SCCC's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Kathleen Cowie wrote:

"It is plain to see that Dr. Walter Briney is an amazing physician and teacher in review of his curriculum vitae, but what is most extraordinary is the human behind all those awards. Dr. Briney consistently puts his patients and his peers above himself- literally, he insists on sitting lower than his patients in the room as a sign of respect. He has dedicated his life and career to the betterment of those around him- not only in the exam room, but beyond.

I hope this nomination paints a picture of Dr. Walter Briney as accurately as we see him—as a champion for the art and science of medicine and care of the underserved."

Equally inspirational is Dr. Daniel C. Weber, who has been volunteering for six years at Peak Vista Community Health Centers in Colorado Springs. Before coming to Peak Vista, Dr. Weber worked as an optometrist, starting in the United States Air Force before moving to private practice, and then entering the Air Force Reserves for eighteen years. He retired from active practice in 2011.

In April 2012, Dr. Weber started volunteering at Peak Vista on a weekly basis. He has seen an average of 170 patients per year, in total serving over 900 patients since 2013. In addition to working directly with patients, Dr. Weber provides telephone consults to Peak Vista providers, and is often able to facilitate referrals to an ophthalmologist for additional evaluation or treatment when needed.

Every year during National Health Center Week, CCHN honors individuals who serve as volunteer clinicians for their Community Health Centers (CHCs), enabling the CHCs to provide more services and often specialized services that would not otherwise be available to many in Colorado. To be eligible for CCHN's Volunteer Clinician Award, the nominee needs to provide direct patient services in or on behalf of a CHC; lead advocacy activities on behalf of the medically underserved; and have provided these volunteer services for a minimum of three years.

However, the award is about more than checking off a list of nomination requirements. The individuals nominated embody the spirit of public service, in that their actions reflect a deep well of empathy, generosity, and determination to improve their communities. They have worked tirelessly to care for people often left behind by the health care system, and they support their fellow providers by passing along a wealth of knowledge. CCHN has the honor of recognizing three of these exceptional providers this year.

Dr. Walter Briney began his career in private clinical practice in 1966, and has built a distinguished reputation in academic medicine for his



*Dr. Weber (right) poses with his award with Peak Vista colleague Dr. Welch.*



Dr. Weber has provided much-needed patient access to optometry consultative services for Peak Vista patients over the past six years. In the words of Peak Vista's Chief Medical and Dental Officer, Michael D. Welch, D.O., who nominated Dr. Weber, "[Dr. Weber] truly epitomizes those ideals of selfless service that are integral for those considered for this award, making him a most deserving candidate."

This year's Volunteer Clinician Awards list is rounded out with Dr. Robert N. Alsever, who has been providing care to the Pueblo community for over 40 years. After completing his fellowship at University of Colorado Health Science Center, Dr. Alsever began volunteering at St. Mary Corwin Hospital (SMC), a safety-net provider serving low-income populations, in 1974. There, he cared for all patients, regardless of their ability to pay, and was not reimbursed for his services to the program. He also taught and precepted many medical students and residents over his tenure.

One of Dr. Alsever's passions is advocating diabetes education for the underserved, and he has pursued this advocacy since the beginning of his career. In 1983, Dr. Alsever founded the first diabetes education program at St. Mary Corwin Hospital, and in 1990, The Colorado Diabetes Institute recognized Dr. Alsever for his contributions to diabetes care.

Dr. Alsever has been volunteering with Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) for the past 16 years. He is retired from private practice but continues to provide endocrinology clinics at PCHC and volunteers his clinical time on a regular basis. In PCHC's nomination letter for Dr. Alsever, PCHC's leadership team wrote, "We can think of no individual worthier of this award than Dr. Alsever. He serves every PCHC patient and co-worker with compassion, empathy, and extraordinary professionalism. He truly lives our core values daily."



*Dr. and Mrs. Alsever stand with Dr. Krause (right) after Dr. Alsever received his award.*

## Gigi Darricades Selected for Brasher Legacy Award

Gigi Darricades, president and CEO of Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc. (VWHS), was presented the 2018 Stanley J. Brasher Legacy Award on Oct. 21, 2018. The Stanley J. Brasher Legacy Award was created by the Executive Committee of the Community Health Association of Mountain/Plains States (CHAMPS) in 2013 to honor individuals who have dedicated their careers to solving the problems of health, poverty, and human rights and who have contributed toward the mission and recognition of community and migrant health centers in the Mountain/Plains States.

Ms. Darricades gained three decades of work in health care administration and law before she stepped into her role leading Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc., taking the helm of a CHC with health care delivery sites spanning the width



*Gigi Darricades smiles with Jerry Brasher and Executive Director of CHAMPS Julie Hulstein.*



*Gigi Darricades poses with her Brasher Legacy Award alongside the VWHS staff.*

of Colorado and covering nearly half of the state. She has led VWHS through the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, expansion of Medicaid in Colorado, and twists and turns of the economic and political environment.

"Gigi is an exceptional human being," said Annette Kowal, president and CEO of CCHN. "She is super smart, classy, and is always willing to share her wisdom. She maintains excellent relationships with all her elected officials and other decision makers. She spends the time needed to explain complex issues in a manner that everyone understands, and then can act on them. Her passion for and commitment to the communities and peoples VWHS serves is infectious."



Ms. Darricades very effectively stepped into the shoes of her predecessor at VWHS to take on leading and managing VWHS, pursuing the organization's mission, and implementing the Board of Directors' strategic and operations plans. In addition, she has served on CCHN's Board of Directors since 2011, where she has been a strong voice for rural and small-town communities that need CHCs. She has served as secretary for CCHN's Executive Committee since 2016 and has chaired CCHN's Public Affairs Committee and Strategic Workforce Committee.

In addition to her work leading VWHS and contributing to the advancement of the Community Health Center mission in Colorado, Ms. Darricades serves on the state's Medicaid Provider Rate Advisory Committee. She is a board member for the Colorado Foundation for Universal Health Care, the Colorado Community Managed Care Network, the San Luis Valley Federal Bank, and a trustee for Adams State College.

The Brasher Legacy award is named for Stanley J. "Jerry" Brasher, who led Salud Family Health Centers for more than 40 years and is one of the founders of CCHN. Mr. Brasher is recognized nationally as an innovative and committed leader in the Community Health Center movement. He was on hand for the presentation of the award to Ms. Darricades.



*Dr. Eva Poulson receives the 2015 NNOHA Outstanding Clinician Award.*

### **Salud's Dr. Eva Poulson Selected for CHAMPS Exceptional Clinical Leadership Award**

Dr. Eva Poulson, Salud Family Health Centers, was presented the 2018 CHAMPS Exceptional Clinical Leadership Award on Oct. 21, 2018. The award is presented by the Executive Committee of the Community Health Association of Mountain/Plains States (CHAMPS) to honor individuals in clinical roles at CHCs in the Mountain/Plains States.

"Dr. Poulson is extremely deserving of such an award due to her lifelong dedication for providing exceptional clinical dentistry to underserved populations," wrote Dr. Ethan Kerns, Salud's chief dental officer, in his nomination of Dr. Poulson for this award. "Dr. Poulson provided treatment in all areas of dentistry, while being compassionate and putting the patient's best interests first."

Dr. Poulson's passion for treating underserved populations grew after participating in UCLA's migrant program. At UCLA, she became the team leader for a mobile migrant program that provided care for migrant children on weekends throughout California's Central Valley. Dr. Poulson then completed a General Practice Residency and worked in private practice for four years. In 1986, she began her career with Salud Family Health Centers, where she cared for patients until retiring on Aug. 1, 2018.

Dr. Poulson was a part of the Early Childhood Partnership for Adams County from 2008 to 2010, and has been an active member of the National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA) since it was formed in 1991. In 2015 Dr. Poulson was awarded the NNOHA Outstanding Clinician Award. She also has been preceptor for four different dental schools, helping dental students develop excellent clinical skills and learn about the importance of treating underserved patients.

During her Salud career focusing on direct patient care, Dr. Poulson made numerous important contributions to help Salud achieve its mission. She demonstrated her commitment and leadership skills by serving in multiple roles, including dental director for multiple Salud clinics, leader of Salud's accreditation committee for dental services, and representing dental on Salud's safety committee. Dr. Poulson was also selected to orient and mentor many of Salud's new dentists and has been vital in training numerous dentists, dental hygienists, and dental assistants.





*River Valley Board Chair Leslie Gibson takes a turn at breaking ground for the new facility in Montrose, Oct. 5, 2018.*

## River Valley Breaks Ground for New Montrose Facility

On Oct. 4, 2018, River Valley Family Health Centers held a groundbreaking ceremony on the site of what will soon be their new Montrose facility. The event was attended by River Valley staff, community leaders, county officials, and state legislators.

The new building will expand River Valley's reach in Western Colorado and open up important preventative services to Montrose residents. A drive-through pharmacy, primary health care, behavioral health services, and substance use disorder services will be available at the new clinic. River Valley estimates that they will be able to reach an additional 3,300 patients with the new clinic; currently, they reach over 5,000.

The groundbreaking ceremony included speeches by State Rep. Marc Catlin (HD58), Sen. Don Coram (SD6), Caring for Colorado Foundation President and CEO Chris Wiant, RVFHC Board Chair Leslie Gibson, Colorado Health Foundation Program Officer Dustin Moyer, and Montrose Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Juliet Carr.

Ms. Carr lauded River Valley for expanding access to care in the Montrose community. "This will be one more tool for people to have," she said. "They'll have access to care. River Valley Family Health Center goes above and beyond to work with people who are uninsured, underinsured, but have lower economic status. ... It speaks volumes of the vision their board has had in their leadership and their collaboration between organizations like All Points Transit to help those patients get the health care that they need and deserve."

River Valley plans to move into the new clinic, located at 1010 Rio Grande Avenue, in August 2019. In the meantime, River Valley is accepting new patients and offers a sliding scale fee for income-eligible individuals. Learn more about River Valley Family Health Centers by visiting their website at <https://www.rivervalleyfhc.com/>.

## Colorado CHCs Recognized for Quality Improvement

All 20 Colorado Community Health Centers (CHCs) received quality improvement grant awards from the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in August 2018. The awards recognize the highest performing CHCs nationwide and CHCs that have made significant quality improvement gains from the previous year. The awards provide financial assistance to CHCs to continue to improve quality, efficiency, and value of health care services.

Not only did all 20 Colorado CHCs receive quality awards, but each received more than one award out of the nine possible categories. Award categories include Clinical Quality Improver, Enhancing Access to Care, Addressing Health Disparities, Achieving PCMH Recognition, Advancing Health Information Technology for Quality, and Electronic Health Records Reporters. A total of \$2,421,242 was awarded to Colorado CHCs.

In addition, eight CHCs received designation as Health Center Quality Leaders. The top 30 percent of CHCs nationwide that achieve the best overall clinical performance receive designation as Health Center Quality Leaders. The Colorado CHCs that received this designation are Clinica Family Health, Clinica Tepeyac,



*Clinica Family Health CEO Simon Smith addresses staff and visitors at Clinica's recently opened new Lafayette building on Aug. 16, 2018.*



Northwest Colorado Health, Pueblo Community Health Center, Inc., River Valley Family Health Center, Salud Family Health Centers, Sunrise Community Health, and Uncompahgre Medical Center.

To honor CHC staff in person and to make sure the public knows about their work, HRSA staff fanned out across the country to hold news conferences at CHCs during National Health Center Week. Nicholas Zucconi, HRSA Region 8 director, visited Clinica Family Health, Salud Family Health Centers, and Sunrise Community Health.

The awards are one-time grant supplements to recognize CHC quality achievements. CHCs will use these funds to expand current quality improvement systems and infrastructure, and to improve primary health care service delivery in the communities they serve. HRSA has been making awards since 2015 for quality improvement activities conducted by CHCs over the past five years. All Colorado CHCs have received awards each year.

There are many ways that CHCs can elevate quality with these awards. For example, Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc., will be enhancing its quality improvement activities with equipment purchases. They will be purchasing Panoramic X-Ray machines for two dental clinics to gain improved image quality, and new dental equipment and supplies for their mobile unit to augment dental services offered at remote locations. In addition, Valley-Wide will purchase tablets to increase patient privacy during the clinic check-in process, and new autoclaves (used for steam sterilization in laboratory work) with enhanced procedure log reporting and printing capabilities.

Sunrise Community Health has used its quality improvement grants for additional staff training, technology to assist in tracking operational key performance indicators, and display boards for Sunrise facilities so that quality improvement data can be prominently displayed in well-traveled areas of the clinics. These actions have helped to keep quality initiatives and quality measures at the forefront for staff.

CHCs provide a health care home for more than one in seven people in Colorado. For a list of Colorado CHCs, the counties each serves, contact information, and a map of locations, [click here](#).



*From left to right: Sunrise CEO Mitzi Moran, CCHN staff Jessica Higgins and Valerie Nielsen, HRSA Region 8 Administrator Nicholas Zucconi, Sunrise Director of Quality Cindy McDade, and Sunrise COO Libby Goode-Grasmick pose with HRSA Quality Award.*



*Pam McManus (second from right) stands with NACHC officers as she receives the Jessie Trice Excellence in Leadership Legacy Award at the NACHC CHI and Expo.*

### **Pam McManus Honored with 2018 Legacy Award**

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) honored Pam McManus, president and CEO of Peak Vista Community Health Centers, with the Jessie Trice Excellence in Leadership Award. The award was presented at this year's Community Health Institute (CHI) and Expo event, held in Orlando, Florida, August 26-28.

The award, named after Florida-based health care champion Jessie Trice, was presented to Ms. McManus during the conference general session. At the ceremony, Ms. McManus shared, "It's humbling, and at the same time I'm filled with gratitude to be recognized after a woman [who] made such a difference in innovation and excellence."

workforce training initiatives, and health care access for rural communities. She also works closely with numerous community partners, serving as treasurer for Community Health Partnership, a board member for



YMCA of the Pikes Peak Region and for Colorado Community Managed Care Network (CCMCN), and the Governing Board Chair of the Accountable Care Organization for Clinical Partners of Colorado Springs. Additionally, she serves as Immediate Past Chair on the CCHN board and serves on the NACHC Senior Health and Membership Committees.

## Colorado Covering Kids and Families Hosts Fifth Annual Building Better Health Conference

Colorado Covering Kids and Families (CKF), a project of CCHN, led the development of the fifth annual Building Better Health Conference. The two-day conference is the only in-person training opportunity for all assisters prior to the open enrollment period (Nov. 1, 2018 – Jan. 15, 2019). It was held Oct. 15-16, 2018, and was attended by 484 health coverage assisters, brokers, case managers, advocates, and county, state, and marketplace staff. Attendees included 71 CHC outreach and enrollment staff from 16 CHCs.

Attendees learned about upcoming system changes to CBMS, PEAK, and Connect for Health Colorado's eligibility system, along with the eligibility and enrollment processes, federal and state health coverage policy changes, and health insurance literacy. Some of the most well-attended sessions included trainings on the proposed rule change to public charge and how to best serve immigrant clients.

9News Medical Expert, Dr. Comilla Sasson, kicked off the conference on Monday morning by moderating a policy panel that focused on recent trends in Colorado health coverage, access, and future policy. The panel of experts included Michael Conway from the Colorado Division of Insurance; Joe Hanel from the Colorado Health Institute; Kate Harris from Connect for Health Colorado; and Marivel Klueckman from the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing. During Monday's lunch, the conference keynote, Paul Schmitz, inspired attendees with his message that everyone has leadership potential and that the greatest social change happens through collective, community leadership. And on Tuesday morning, Kathi Fanning from The Center for Trauma and Resilience gave attendees tools to build their self-care and resiliency toolkit.

You can learn more about the Building Better Health conference and see session presentations and resources [here](#).



Top: The BBH Policy Panelists pose onstage.

Middle: Allison Neswood from Colorado Center on Law and Policy presents on public charge.

Bottom: The CKF staff is all smiles at BBH.



Annette Kowal, president and CEO of CCHN.

## CCHN's Annette Kowal Nominated for Health Equity Champion Award

Every year, Center for Health Progress honors four Coloradans with their Health Equity Champion award as part of their annual luncheon. Long-time health care colleague Sharon Adams nominated CCHN's president and CEO, Annette Kowal, for this prestigious award for 2018.

Ms. Kowal began as the executive director of CCHN in August 1996 and has more than 25 years of health care experience. She is considered a policy expert in many areas impacting Community Health Centers and an expert on association management. Ms. Kowal actively advocates access to health care as a right. Although the Center ultimately selected another from among a competitive pool of nominees, Ms. Kowal is honored to have been nominated for this award.

## CHCs Key to Effort to Address Causes Underlying Substance Use Issues

CHCs are part of the community-and-health-system effort to address the opioid use crisis. While there has been some reduction in the amount of opioid medications prescribed and the number of people starting heroin use, additional work needs to be done to address the need for treatment of alcohol misuse and chronic pain, among other behavioral health conditions. In September 2018, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services distributed \$352 million to increase access to substance use disorder and mental health services at 1,232 CHCs, and \$18.5 to support behavioral health workforce education and training (BHWET) and enhance behavioral health workforce (EBHW) to 21 academic institutions and 54 CHCs across the nation.

All 20 Colorado CHCs are participating in the effort, receiving a total of \$5.7 million to expand access to quality substance use disorder and mental health services (SUD-MH). Three CHCs received EBHW grants of \$200,000 each.

There are many ways that CHCs can use these grants to achieve the desired goals. For example, MCPN recently added Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)—an effective treatment for adults with addiction to heroin or prescription painkillers—to their services. Certain medical providers at MCPN have completed specialized training to prescribe *Suboxone* (buprenorphine/naloxone), a daily medication that helps individuals recover from opioid addiction. MAT patients are also required to participate in counseling with behavioral health providers (BHPs) and must complete an in-person screening before starting MAT with MCPN. Several CHCs have added MAT treatment and expertise to their services.

Northwest Colorado Health plans to use its SUD/MH funding to add a nurse case manager (NCM) who will take over case management responsibilities from current BHPs. This change will increase Northwest BHPs' capacity to work with patients with mental health and substance use disorders. The NCM will work directly with the BHPs to assess patients and develop individualized treatment plans. She will make referrals to additional community resources, such as connecting the patient to assistance with specialty care; housing, employment, or food assistance resources; and specialized substance use disorder and mental health treatment and services. The NCM will regularly check in with patients on their progress, an essential process for patients with social/emotional issues, those that experience difficulty leaving their home, or those with transportation barriers. Perhaps most importantly, she will serve as a support system for patients by being a single point person to address questions and give support, which can make the difference between a positive and negative health outcome.

Northwest also received one-time funding to renovate existing space to make it more welcoming, safe, and appropriate for behavioral health treatment.

The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, MCPN, and Denver Health's Community Health Services received EBHW grants, given to CHCs partnering with academic institutions supported by BHWET grants. CHCs will use these funds to improve access to needed mental health and SUD services by enhancing their education infrastructures, delivering quality experiential training to BHWET partners' students, and improving their own integrated, interprofessional behavioral health and primary care teams. In Colorado, the Metropolitan State University of Denver received a BHWET award.

## Pueblo Community Health Center Declares Oct. 7-13 Dr. Michael Barris Week

It isn't often that an individual has a week proclaimed in their honor. That's just what happened for Dr. Michael Barris, who retired earlier this month after 25 years at Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC). Pueblo County Commissioners declared Oct. 7-13, 2018, Dr. Michael Barris Week.

Dr. Barris joined PCHC in 1993 after graduating from Southern Colorado Family Medicine Residency at St. Mary Corwin Medical Center. He served as co-chief medical officer at PCHC from 1995 until retirement, caring for patients the majority of the time while also handling medical staff administrative affairs. He oversaw the growth and quality of primary health care at PCHC, from several thousand patients and 60 employees to today's more than 28,000 patients and a staff of 370. On top of that, Dr. Barris and his wife Nancy co-founded the Soaring Eagles Center for Autism in Pueblo.

He and his wife are moving to Texas for retirement, and will be missed by PCHC staff and patients.





## Medical Assistant Training at CHCs Expands in Colorado

In September, the National Institute of Medical Assistant Advancement ([NIMAA](#)) began its third year of medical assistant training in Colorado. NIMAA is a post-secondary learning institute focused on a new and innovative approach to medical assistant training, created in partnership between primary health care employers and educators. NIMAA is a collaboration between two CHCs: [Community Health Center, Inc. \(CHCI\)](#) in Connecticut and [Salud Family Health Centers](#) in Colorado. Both organizations are recognized by the National Committee on Quality Assurance as Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Homes, using teams to provide comprehensive medical, dental and behavioral health services to the medically underserved in the communities they serve.

Each year NIMAA has increased the number of CHCs and students participating. The institute has been working on and achieving increased diversity of students, an important component to effective health care teams.

Besides learning the basics of medical assisting, such as rooming patients and checking vitals, students learn about the important role CHCs play in their community. They learn about cultural competency, social determinants of health, and start honing their skills by participating in “externships” in CHCs.

To learn more about NIMAA and enrollment, please contact Alexandra Murray at [ali.murray@nimaa.org](mailto:ali.murray@nimaa.org).

## CCHN STAFF UPDATE

### CCHN Hires Two New Staff Members

CCHN has hired two new staff members! The first is Kelly Perry, who is CCHN’s accountant and joined the staff in August 2018. Her responsibilities include preparation of financial statements, reconciling general ledger accounts, and reviewing daily accounting transactions. Ms. Perry earned her Bachelor of Science degree in business with an emphasis in accounting from the University of Phoenix in 2015, and has over 20 years of accounting experience in various fields. She is a major fan of the Denver Broncos and all the Colorado sports teams. When not attending sporting events, she enjoys cooking and spending time with her family.

CCHN’s second new addition is Melissa Wright. Ms. Wright is CCHN’s administrative assistant and joined the staff in August 2018. Her responsibilities include providing administrative support to all the divisions of CCHN; providing high quality customer service to CHC members, partners, and the public; and ensuring efficient office operations. Ms. Wright graduated from California State University Fresno in May 2018 with a bachelor’s degree in English and literature, and has served her community through supportive roles in health care and education. In her time off, she enjoys baking and spending time with her family.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Open Enrollment Starts November 1

The sixth annual open enrollment period for private health insurance is from Nov. 1, 2018 – Jan. 15, 2019. During this window, Coloradans may enroll in 2019 coverage. Insurance may be purchased through Connect for Health Colorado—Colorado’s health insurance marketplace and the only place to receive tax credits—or directly through insurance companies. If you need help enrolling in health insurance, CHCs can help! Visit <https://cchn.org/map/> to find your local CHC, or <http://connectforhealthco.com/person-help/> to find other certified assisters and brokers. Health First Colorado (Colorado’s Medicaid Program) does not have an open enrollment period, so Coloradans can apply and enroll at any time if eligible.

## Save the Date: CCHN Policy and Issues Forum Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 6-7, 2019

CCHN's 2019 Policy and Issues Forum is coming up in February! This two-day event gives participants the tools to have meaningful interactions with their legislators, including the latest data on CHCs, upcoming health care legislation, and strategies for meeting with legislators. Wednesday's training events will be held at the Warwick Denver (1776 Grant St., Denver, Colo.) and on Thursday participants will head to the state capitol to meet with legislators. Registration will be available soon. Please contact Alice Steiner at [asteiner@cchn.org](mailto:asteiner@cchn.org) or (303) 867-9531 with questions.



## Save the Date: NACHC Policy and Issues Forum March 27-30, 2019 Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, D.C.

NACHC's 2019 Policy and Issues (P&I) Forum is taking place between March 27-30, 2019. The NACHC P&I is an opportunity for CHC executives, clinicians, board members, consumers, and other community health leaders to bring their unique perspectives to Members of Congress and offer constructive solutions to the regulatory and legislative issues in play. Participants will also have the opportunity to hear from government officials, some of the nation's leading health care experts, and their peers. Check <http://www.nachc.org/conferences/policy-and-issues/> for updates on the conference.

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## About CCHN

*The Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN) is the unified voice for Colorado's 20 Community Health Centers (CHCs) and their patients. CHCs provide a health care home to more than 790,000 of their community members - one in seven people in Colorado - from 61 of the state's 64 counties. Without CHCs, hundreds of thousands of Colorado's low-income families and individuals would have no regular source of health care. CCHN's mission is to increase access to high quality health care for people in need in Colorado. For more information about CCHN, please visit [www.cchn.org](http://www.cchn.org).*



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