



CCHN NEWSLETTER

MAY 2019



POLICY UPDATE

IN THIS ISSUE

Sí Se Puede—Yes, We Can, and Yes, We’re Doing It!

Every year, we at the Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN) recognize and celebrate Cesar Chavez Day on March 31. This holiday honors Cesar Chavez’ work for farm workers’ rights, including the founding of the United Farm Workers, a union that stood up for farm workers’ access to health care, fair wages, and safe working conditions. At the same time that the farm workers movement was gaining traction, another social movement was also underway: the Community Health Center (CHC) movement. From the very beginning, CHCs have worked to expand access to health care to farm workers and others whom the health care system failed, and as a result CHCs were deeply influenced by the farm workers movement.

The rallying cry of the farm workers movement was “Sí Se Puede”—meaning “Yes, we can” or “Yes, it can be done.” To honor the shared legacy of farm worker advocates and CHCs, this year CCHN [created a video called “Sí Se Puede.”](#) with a theme of “Yes, we can—and yes, we’re doing it!” We chose this as the theme of our video because we believe that CHCs are deeply rooted in the ideology of sí se puede. CHCs dream big for their communities, and work hard

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Staff and board members from STRIDE Community Health Center participate in CCHN’s video for Cesar Chavez Day.

to make those dreams a reality. Underlying all of the challenges CHCs face—from complex patient populations to workforce to Congressional funding battles—is the determination to keep going, to find a way, and to keep fighting for access to health care for everyone.

Part of working hard for those dreams involves advocacy at the state and federal level. CCHN's May edition of our newsletter always focuses on the outcomes of the most recent state legislative session, as well as federal advocacy. The following stories will highlight how CHCs have engaged in recent advocacy efforts, as well as how CHCs have contributed to recent advocacy and legislative successes.

At the heart of these stories is the belief that advocacy efforts create change—that yes, it can be done, and yes, CHCs are doing it. The CHC movement was founded on the idea that everyone deserves access to health care, and flourished from a few small sites scattered around the country to an integral part of America's health care system. That same optimistic spirit still thrives in the CHC movement today, and the stories below are proof of it.

Thank you to Colorado's Community Health Centers for the work that you do. *Sí se puede*—yes, we can, and as the stories below show, yes, we are doing it!

- *Annette Kowal, President and CEO of CCHN*

Coloradans Visit Capitol Hill to Support Community Health Centers

During the last week of March, staff and board members from Colorado Community Health Centers (CHCs) traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in the National Association of Community Health Center's (NACHC) annual Policy & Issues Forum (P&I). The NACHC P&I is an opportunity for CHCs from around the country to network, learn about policy and advocacy issues, and honor the work of CHC employees and advocates. However, the foremost purpose of the P&I is to meet with members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate to discuss policy issues and federal funding.



On Thursday, March 28, the Colorado CHC contingent packed into D.C. taxi cabs and buses and headed to Capitol Hill. The group included CHC staff members, executive directors, board members, patients, and CCHN staff. Throughout the day, they walked from office to office visiting each of Colorado's seven House representatives and both Colorado senators. The details of each conversation varied, but the main topics of discussion included federal funding for the Community Health Center program, as well as continued funding for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and Teaching Health Centers (THCs).



Above: U.S. Representative Joe Neguse poses for a selfie with Fátima Groom of Sunrise Community Health Center.

The representatives from Colorado's CHCs stressed repeatedly the importance of stable funding. Approximately 17 percent of the funding received by Colorado CHCs is federal funding, meaning that when the future of that funding is unclear, CHCs are unable to operate at their highest capacity. Integrating services, addressing emerging health issues, and implementing quality improvement processes take time and staff to succeed.

In addition, in a competitive employment market, reliability of funding has an enormous impact on recruitment and retention. Health care staff need to know their jobs will not be hostage to a funding cycle. Colorado CHCs employ more than 5,600 people in Colorado and rely on the loan repayment opportunities provided by the NHSC to help them recruit approximately 18 percent of their health care providers. Also critical to CHC staff are THCs, which offer training in community-based primary care settings. While no Colorado CHCs are currently THCs, several offer a variety of onsite health care provider trainings and are interested in becoming THCs



Top: Representatives from STRIDE Community Health Center, Salud Family Health Centers, Clinica Family Health, Denver Health, CCHN, and CHAMPS pose for a photo outside of Rep. Jason Crow's office.

Bottom: Representatives from Clinica Family Health, Clínica Tepeyac, Denver Health, High Plains Community Health Center, STRIDE Community Health Center, Mountain Family Health Centers, the National Center for Farmworker Health, Peak Vista Community Health Centers, Salud Family Health Centers, Sunrise Community Health, Valley-Wide Health Systems, and CCHN meet in Sen. Gardner's office.

if adequate and stable funding can be provided through the federal program.

By the end of the week, all seven representatives and both senators cosigned letters to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees in support of continued funding for the CHC program.

The congressional meetings also are an opportunity for the CHC staff and board members to express their appreciation for the many acts of support shown by Colorado's members of Congress. This year, Rep. Diana DeGette (CD1) received the highest NACHC congressional award, the Distinguished Community Health Champion Award given to members of Congress who led major efforts to support CHCs in 2018. In addition, Senators Michael Bennet and Cory Gardner, and Reps. Scott Tipton (CD3) and Doug Lamborn (CD5), received the Distinguished Community Health Advocate Award. All nine members of Congress were thanked for their individual efforts that add up to strong bipartisan support for the work of CHCs to serve Colorado communities. Furthermore, while at the office of Rep. Ken Buck (CD4), CHCs had the opportunity to present a new award, created by NACHC to express appreciation for the hard work of congressional staff, to Legislative Director James Hampson.

After a long week of educational sessions, networking, and meeting with legislators, the representatives from Colorado's CHCs returned home. The work they accomplished in just one week in D.C. will create ripples throughout the rest of the year. A notable outcome of these visits is that many Colorado members of Congress will make at least one visit to a CHC throughout the year, where they are able to see the work of CHCs and hear from constituents who receive their health care at CHCs. In this way, the NACHC P&I builds lasting relationships between Colorado CHCs and members of Congress, making this annual trip to D.C. a crucial element in the ongoing work of the CHC movement.

Sunrise Advocacy Leader Honored at National Gathering

The NACHC Policy & Issues Forum (P&I) is a time when awards are given to staff of CHCs to honor their hard work and commitment to the ideals of the Community Health Center movement and to their communities.

Because CHCs receive part of their funding from the federal government, it is important for members of Congress to hear from the people who receive care at CHCs and the people who provide the care. For her work in helping Sunrise Community Health staff and patients speak up, Fátima Groom, policy and public relations manager for Sunrise Community Health, received the 2019 Betsey K. Cooke Grassroots MVP Award. This award is given to CHC and primary care association (PCA) staff in recognition of outstanding effort and unflagging persistence as grassroots advocates for American Health Center and Health Center patients.

"Fátima is a tireless advocate for Sunrise and for our patients. Her enthusiasm and energy are boundless!" said Mitzi Moran, CEO of Sunrise. "When I come up with wild ideas like a #LipsynchCHC challenge, she never dismisses them – she just says, 'Yes! Let's do it!'"

Ms. Groom's work means that now Sunrise is a strong presence in the community at partner events such as school kick-offs and health fairs. In addition, she keeps in contact with the local offices of Colorado members of Congress and helps Sunrise staff speak out when their voices need to be heard during the legislative process.



Fátima Groom (right) holds the 2019 Betsey K. Cooke Grassroots MVP Award with James Luisi, (left) Chair-Elect of NACHC's Board and CEO of North End Waterfront Health, Boston, Mass.

Emerging Leaders in CHC Movement Honored

The CHC movement draws leaders of all ages and professions in health care. Emerging leaders in the movement are recognized in the spring each year for their contributions, and Colorado has two such honorees this year: Holly Kingsbury, oral health program manager for CCHN, and Yajaira Johnson-Esparza, PhD, director of MAT (Medically Assisted Treatment) for opioid abuse at Salud Family Health Centers.

During her tenure at CCHN, Ms. Kingsbury has worked devotedly to expand oral health programming, growing the program from a single grant to five funded programs. She visited each of the 20 Colorado CHCs in her first four months here, met each dental director, learning and cataloging their needs and identifying opportunities for intervention and innovation. She is tireless in her intent to ensure oral health is an integral component of the primary care bundle, seeking opportunities to merge medical, dental, and behavioral health to increase and enhance patients' access to care.

Over the past year, she made it a priority to create and implement a diabetes cardiovascular oral health integration model, which was implemented in a large inner city homeless dental clinic. The purpose of the project was to create a workflow for oral health and primary care providers to work collaboratively to increase bidirectional referrals, screening rates for diabetes, and referrals to self-management education and National Diabetes Prevention Programs. This project is one of the first of its kind in the nation for CHCs and Ms. Kingsbury has been invited by numerous PCAs and HRSA to speak about this work and its accomplishments.



Holly Kingsbury (right) is all smiles as she receives the Geiger-Gibson Emerging Leader Award from Anita Monoian, past chair of NACHC and current CEO of Yakima Neighborhood Health Services.



Dr. Yajaira Johnson-Esparza, PhD, (right), Salud Family Health Centers, receiving her 2019 Geiger Gibson Program Emerging Leader in Agricultural Health Award from Feygele Jacobs, President and CEO of the RCHN Community Health Foundation, which supports the Geiger Gibson Program.

Ms. Kingsbury leads work to remove barriers to providing and to accessing much needed oral health care with the various rulemaking bodies in Colorado. Most recently, she led work focused on ensuring that dental hygienists can work to the top of their scope and provide silver diamine fluoride treatment to patients in need. She helped recruit a dentist to testify on this important bill in the Colorado Legislature, and worked with the Colorado Dental Board and various stakeholders to ensure that the regulations for implementing this legislation were efficient and easy to understand in actual practice.

Ms. Kingsbury represents CCHN on the Oral Health Colorado Policy Committee and works with several partner organizations to advance oral health policies at the state legislature and to remove barriers to care for the state's Medicaid and CHIP populations.

Colorado's other 2019 awardee, Dr. Johnson-Esparza, was one of three selected for the Emerging Leaders in Agricultural Health, awarded a month after the P&I at NACHC's 2019 Agricultural Worker Health Conference in Albuquerque, N.M.

In her role as director of medication-assisted treatment (MAT), Dr. Johnson-Esparza collaborates with organizational leadership to expand MAT services across Salud's network, where MAT will soon be offered at nine of Salud's locations. She is instrumental in getting health care providers trained across the system. She works with community partners and brings in evidence-based training and research to staff. She is actively involved in multiple opioid

abuse prevention groups across the state of Colorado including IT MATTRS, a statewide practice innovation initiative seeking to train practices and providers on opioid use disorder and MAT. In part of her role with the initiative, Johnson-Esparza, a psychologist, co-authored a provider training curriculum for effective treatment and care for individuals with opioid abuse disorders that is incorporated by several CHCs and mental health centers across the state.

"This is a humbling experience. I am privileged, I'm honored," Johnson-Esparza said after the ceremony. "For me, it's extremely gratifying going into work and working with the communities we serve knowing that we are able to work toward their health and we can make a bit of a difference in their lives. It's a blessing working at a Community Health Center."

Established in 2004, the Geiger Gibson Program in Community Health Policy is named in honor of Drs. H. Jack Geiger and Count Gibson, pioneers in community health practice and tireless advocates for civil and human rights. Over 50 years ago, Geiger and Gibson founded the nation's first CHCs in Mound Bayou, Mississippi and Boston, Massachusetts; by 2018, more than 1,400 CHCs, operating in over 11,000 locations, served over 27 million residents of urban and rural medically underserved communities across the nation. Each year, the Program honors Emerging Leaders nominated by CHCs and PCAs nationally and selected by a committee drawn from the senior CHC leadership.

The Geiger-Gibson Emerging Leader Award is highly competitive and being nominated by a CHC or a Primary Care Association (PCA) is a great honor. The nominees are such a special group that they are listed in the award ceremony program in recognition of the appreciation their CHCs have expressed by nominating them. CCHN is proud to have three Coloradans among this group, including Annaliese Heckert, DO, medical director of the Basalt Site of Mountain Family Health Centers; Mannat Singh, MPA, director of graduate medical education for Peak Vista Community Health Centers; and Rafael Troche, director of finance, Denver Community Health Services and Ambulatory Care Services.

To learn more about the award program, which will be accepting nominations in the Fall of 2019 for the 2020 awards, please go [here](#).

CHCs Advocate at Colorado Capitol for CCHN's Policy and Issues Forum

Every year before NACHC's national Policy and Issues Forum (P&I) in Washington, D.C., CCHN hosts a two-day P&I of its own. CCHN's P&I is an opportunity for Colorado CHC staff and board members to learn about local policy issues impacting Colorado's health care landscape, as well as giving participants the tools to advocate on behalf of CHCs to their legislators.

This year's P&I took place on February 6 and 7. Despite a particularly bad snowstorm slamming most of Colorado on the first day of the forum, participants braved the slippery roads from across the state to meet at the Warwick Hotel in Denver. The first day of the forum focused on preparing participants for their meetings with Colorado legislators the next day. Session topics included a basic rundown of how a bill becomes a law, CCHN's top policy priorities for the 2019 session, and time for the group to plan and practice for their meetings with legislators. A new addition to this year's agenda was a presentation on how to incorporate storytelling into legislator visits, provided by Cyndee Lake of Blank Page.



Dianne Primavera, Lieutenant Governor of Colorado, speaks at CCHN's P&I.



Jim Farmer (right) of High Plains Community Health Center's Board receives the 2019 Community Health Advocate Award from Annette Kowal, CCHN President and CEO.

The first day of the forum also included a policy panel with three top health care influencers in the state: Kim Bimestefer, executive director of the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing; Michael Conway, interim Colorado Insurance Commissioner with the Division of Insurance; and Dianne Primavera, Colorado's Lieutenant Governor. The panel discussed the health care outlook in Colorado, how the health care landscape has changed in the past year, and how CHCs can continue to play an important role in ensuring Coloradans get the health care they need.

In addition to the day's sessions and planning time for legislator visits, several awards were presented to CHC and health care advocates in Colorado. After lunch, CCHN presented the 2019 Community Health Advocate Award to Jim Farmer from High Plains Community Health Center's Board of Directors. Mr. Farmer spoke movingly about the importance of CHCs, stating that "What CHCs are doing is the future of health care. We make health care accessible, no matter where people come from."

In the evening, CCHN hosted a Legislator Reception and Awards Ceremony to honor exemplary advocates of CHCs and health care in Colorado. The Legislator Community Health Champion Awards were given to Rep. Chris Kennedy (HD 23) and Sen. Kerry Donovan (SD 5). Dr. Robert N. Alsever of Pueblo Community Health Center was honored with the Volunteer Clinician Community Health Champion Award. For her reporting on health care access challenges faced by the medically underserved, Jennifer Brown of the *Colorado Sun* received the Media Community Health Champion Award. Dr. Michael Welch, who is retiring after almost 30 years as chief medical and dental officer of Peak Vista Community Health Centers, received the Stanley J. Brasher Community Health Gratitude Award.

Though the snowstorm quieted down overnight, day two of the forum had its own weather-related difficulties: a bitter, biting cold that turned the roads to ice. But once again, participants braved the elements to meet with their state legislators at the Capitol. Bundled in red scarves and adorned with CCHN pins, the group was easy to identify throughout the day as they scribbled last-minute notes in the Capitol basement, speed-walked from one meeting to another, and packed into the small Capitol elevators. Many of the P&I participants had never met with their legislators before, making the day a unique opportunity for both CHC advocacy and civic engagement. In the meetings with their legislators, participants discussed the value of CHCs and answered questions about services, patient populations, and funding.

Between new education sessions added to the forum's agenda, an excellent policy panel with key leaders in Colorado's health care arena, awards celebrating exceptional health care advocates in the state, and meetings that allowed Colorado legislators to learn about the importance of the CHCs in their districts, the 2019 P&I was an effective, successful event.



Representatives from Salud Family Health Centers wear their red scarves at the Colorado State Capitol in preparation for meeting with their legislators.



2019 State Legislative Session Comes to a Close

Community Health Center staff and board members, along with CCHN's staff and lobbyist, worked throughout the 2019 Colorado legislative session to ensure that legislators were knowledgeable of the valuable role CHCs play in providing health care to Coloradans. Guided by CCHN's policy priorities and CCHN's Policy Committee, CCHN supported several items throughout the legislative session, including bills aimed at addressing the high cost of health insurance, primary care funding, and increased access to health care, including oral and behavioral health.

The 2019 legislative session included several important "wins" for expanding access to much-needed care. CCHN actively supported House Bill (HB)19-1038: Dental Services for Pregnant Women on Children's Basic Health Plan Plus (CHP+), Senate Bill (SB)19-001: Expand Medication-Assisted Treatment Pilot Program, and HB19-1095: Physician Assistants Supervision and Liability. HB19-1038 adds a dental benefit for the nearly 900 pregnant women covered by CHP+. SB19-001 will allow several counties in the San Luis Valley and in other areas of the state to receive grant funding for training providers in Medication Assisted Treatment for Substance Use Disorder. HB19-1095 makes changes to supervision regulations of Physician Assistants (PAs), including increasing the number of PAs that a physician may supervise. In addition to these bills, the General Assembly increased the adult dental benefit cap under Medicaid to \$1,500 and added \$1 million to the Senior Low-Income Dental Program. Each of these important bills and budget items helps to increase access to care for those most in need.

In the area of addressing the rising cost of health insurance, CCHN supported HB19-1004: Proposal for Affordable Health Coverage Option, which requires the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) and the Division of Insurance (DOI) to develop a proposal that looks at the possible design, costs, benefits and implementation of a state option for health care coverage. In addition, CCHN supported HB19-1168: State Innovation Waiver Reinsurance Program, which requires the Commissioner of Insurance to seek federal approval to establish a reinsurance program as an enterprise to lower health insurance premiums. CCHN also supported HB19-1176: Health Care Cost Savings Act of 2019, which creates a task force to study and compare three different methods of financing health care in Colorado.

In addition to the above, CCHN actively supported HB19-1233: Investments in Primary Care to Reduce Health Care Costs. This bill will establish a primary care payment reform collaborative, and it requires the Commissioner of Insurance to set affordability standards for premiums, including adding targets for investments in primary care.

For the state budget, the Colorado legislature agreed to a \$30.5 billion balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2019-20. Health care remains a large portion of the state budget and CCHN will work to continue advances in health care during next year's legislative session.

Pregnant Women Will Now Receive Dental Benefits through CHP+

On April 16, Governor Polis signed HB19-1038, Dental Services For Pregnant Women On Children's Basic Health Plan Plus, into law. The new law will expand access to dental services to all pregnant women on CHP+ and will go into effect starting Oct. 1, 2019. The bill was sponsored by Colorado Representatives Monica Duran and Susan Lontine, as well as Senators Joann Ginal and Tammy Story.

Accessing dental care is crucial to both pregnant women and their children. During pregnancy, changes to a woman's diet and hormone levels increase her risk for a number of oral health conditions, including dental caries, gingivitis, and periodontal disease. Periodontal disease in pregnant women has been linked to adverse birth outcomes, such as pre-term birth and low newborn weights. Additionally, studies show that a mother's prenatal oral health has lifelong effects on her child's oral health. This is because the bacteria linked to poor oral health can pass from mother to child, causing dental caries in infancy and early childhood. Tooth decay remains the most common chronic condition in childhood and early adolescence and has been linked to poor performance in school.

In 2016, approximately 26 percent of all pregnant women in Colorado lacked dental insurance, and roughly 18 percent of expecting mothers reported not going to the dentist because they could not afford to go. HB19-1038 will address this gap in care by expanding access to dental services for pregnant women who otherwise would not be able to afford it, which will improve not only the oral health of Colorado's expecting mothers but also the next generation of Colorado's kids.

To learn more about HB19-1038, [click here](#).



Gov. Jared Polis signs HB19-1038 into law at the State Capitol on April 16, 2019.



HCA participants Julia Von Allmen (left), Northwest Colorado Health, and Siouxanne Mease, Mountain Family Health Centers, pose in front of the Capitol.

Is There a Doctor in the Legislative Chamber? Health Care Providers Learn to Be Advocates

Advocacy is critical to ensuring the continued funding and public support for CHCs. Providers hold a unique advocacy perspective and influence with elected officials. However, engaging in advocacy activities can feel daunting to providers who have not had much, if any, experience in advocacy efforts. CCHN's Health Care Advocacy (HCA) program aimed to provide safety-net providers with skills and knowledge to empower them to advocate on behalf of their organizations and communities.

Over the course of a year, 14 providers from a variety of disciplines participated in the HCA program. During the first session of the program, providers participated in CCHN's 2018 Policy and Issues Forum and had their first meetings with state representatives at the Capitol. At the end of those first days, participants with wide eyes shared feelings of awe, excitement, and nervousness about the start to their advocacy journey. In the ensuing months, participants met with local rural community groups, engaged with community

and state leaders, and learned skills from CCHN's partners at the Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence that are necessary to be successful in advocacy. In addition, each participant worked on individual capstone projects focused on an advocacy effort of their choice. Projects ranged from improving electronic health record implementation to embarking on the development of organizational programs to identify and address patient social determinants of health.

At the conclusion of the program in February 2019, participants gathered to present on their capstone projects and attend CCHN's 2019 Policy and Issues Forum. During the capstone celebration, participants shared successes and challenges of their capstone projects as well as their plans to continue their advocacy journeys. It was an evening full of laughter and empowerment.

As the participants wrapped up the program, it was evident that they all wanted to continue to work on advocacy efforts and be involved with CCHN. As a result, CCHN developed a four-part webinar series focused on developing advocacy skills of all staff at CHCs. This way, HCA participants can continue their skill development as well as include others on their teams in their advocacy efforts. To learn more about this series, go to <https://cchn.org/training-and-events/>.

HEALTH CENTER NEWS

MCPN Is Now STRIDE Community Health Center

Metro Community Provider Network (MCPN) became STRIDE Community Health Center on April 1, a name change to better reflect its mission. For 30 years, the CHC has provided comprehensive, quality, and affordable health care to underserved, uninsured, and working individuals and families in the Denver metropolitan area.



"We chose the name STRIDE because we believe in establishing a deep connection with our patients as equal partners, and to journey with them toward better health," said Ben Wiederholt, president and Chief Executive Officer of STRIDE Community Health Center. "We believe that the dignity of every human being means that everyone has an equal right to quality health care, and that our new name better reflects our organizational mission."

Over the past three decades, STRIDE Community Health Center/MCPN built strong relationships with patients, health care professionals, individuals, and partner organizations. Now, with more than 50,000 patients and 18 locations, it is one of the largest CHCs in Colorado. Patients span five counties, 115 ZIP codes, and speak more than 100 different languages. STRIDE serves families, children, pregnant women, immigrants and refugees, individuals who identify as LGBTQ+, those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, people with HIV/AIDS, and people with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and obesity. As a CHC, STRIDE addresses the need for affordable and accessible medical, behavioral health, and dental care outside the city and county of Denver. In 2018, three out of every four STRIDE patients had incomes at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

The National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement Celebrates 2019 Graduating Class

On April 24, the National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement (NIMAA) graduated their 2019 class of medical assistants (MAs). NIMAA is a post-secondary nonprofit educational institute that trains MAs both through in-clinic externships and an online education system with formal mentoring. CHCs in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, and Pennsylvania have participated in NIMAA, and the program continues to grow.

NIMAA was created by two CHCs, Community Health Center, Inc. (CHCI) in Connecticut and Salud Family Health Centers in Colorado, to provide affordable education as well as employment opportunities to address the need for a future health care workforce. In 2019, Colorado saw 30 graduates among the 48 students this year, with all graduations occurring simultaneously via videoconference. This included graduates from the five participating Colorado externship sites: Clinica Family Health, High Plains Community Health Center, Peak Vista Community Health Centers, Salud Family Health Centers, and Sunrise Community Health.

With a 94 percent graduation rate, 80 percent of students passing the National Healthcareers Association (NHA) exam on their first attempt, and offers of employment for many students, NIMAA had great success in 2019. Because of the NIMAA model of utilizing externship sites in conjunction with an online training system, graduates are active in their new positions from day one. The 2019/2020 class will begin in September 2019, with Clínica Tepeyac, Summit Community Care Clinic, and Valley-Wide Health Systems joining as externship sites. To learn more details about NIMAA, visit NIMMA.org or contact NIMMA program manager Ali Murray at ali.murray@nimaa.org.

Pueblo Community Health Center Purchases New Site

Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) will be purchasing a new building to expand the reach of their services in the community. The property, which has been vacated since November 2016, is a Safeway building located at 1322 East Eighth Street.

PCHC plans to make a significant investment in remodeling the building to create a new, state-of-the-art primary health care clinic for the community. PCHC's second largest site, the Park Hill Clinic, is at capacity. With the new clinic, PCHC plans to provide access to at least 5,000 additional patients over the next 10 years.

Donald Moore, CEO of PCHC, stated, "This property acquisition is exciting for many reasons important to the quality of life in Pueblo. First, it enables us to expand access to high-quality primary health care. Second, we are proud to be investing resources into Pueblo's east side and continuing our commitment to people most in need. Finally, PCHC will be contributing significantly to the local economy by virtue of the construction activity and hiring new clinic staff to serve more patients."

PCHC is the health care home for more than 29,000 patients at 12 locations across Pueblo and has been serving the community since 1983. To learn more about PCHC, [click here](#).



Pueblo Community Health Center Holds Annual Meeting

Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) held their Annual Meeting on April 30 at Pueblo Community College. Attendees enjoyed a delicious breakfast while being updated on the past year and exciting upcoming events at PCHC. The theme of the Annual Meeting was "growth"—in just the past 20 years, patients served annually have increased from 12,012 in 1998 to 25,878 in 2018, an overall growth of 115 percent. Staff has increased significantly as well over the years, from about 80 in 1998 to 331 today, an increase of 314 percent.

In addition to growth in patients and employees, PCHC's geographic footprint has steadily increased over this same time, from one clinical and administration location in 1983 to 14 locations today. PCHC's second largest

site, Park Hill Clinic, located in the heart of Pueblo's east side, is currently at capacity. While it has served the community well since opening in 2003, expansion is not possible at this site. With the organization's acquisition of the former Safeway property on Pueblo's east side in early 2019, plans are being developed to invest significant dollars into a new, state-of-the-art facility that will enable PCHC to serve at least 5,000 new patients in the coming decades.

Clinica Family Health's Lafayette Facility Wins Award

Clinica Family Health's new facility in Lafayette has won the Colorado Urban Land Institute's 2019 "Influence" award. The statewide competition honors a structure that inspires imitation by demonstrating positive community impact and financial success.

"What an incredible honor," said Simon Smith, Clinica's president and CEO. "We're extremely proud of our new facility, but to have a group like the Urban Land Institute recognize the thought and innovation inside our walls is very gratifying."

Clinica was nominated for its new building located at 1735 S. Public Road in Lafayette, Colo. The 65,000-square-foot building houses a medical clinic, walk-in clinic, dental clinic, Boulder County Public Health office, enrollment space, administrative offices, and a training facility. The medical clinic can serve up to 10,500 patients a year while the dental clinic can treat about 4,500 patients annually. More than 170 staff work in the building. The building also has a play area for children, indoor and outdoor meeting space for the community to use, a gallery system for area artists to show their work, and a measured walking path around it.

"The Impact Awards showcase the best work of Colorado's developers, architects, builders and their teams to create great places," said Tracy Huggins, executive director of the Denver Urban Renewal Authority and ULI Colorado chair. "These examples will inspire others to improve our communities by creating the best possible projects."

In selecting Clinica for the honor, Urban Land Institute Colorado (ULI) jurors noted that the building had "strong social impact and sophisticated management that is succeeding through the team approach to health care." They also said that Clinica's staff used the design and layout of the building to improve the delivery of health care to patients.

"Building a clinic from the ground up was an enormous undertaking for us," Smith said. "We know a great deal about health care, but it took the wisdom of many partners to make this building a reality. Our partners include Boulder Associates, Brinkmann Constructors, Community Bank of Colorado, the City of Lafayette, Boulder County, and Northstar Commercial Partners. I hope they are as proud of this facility as we are."

"This building is for our patients," Smith said. "We want them to feel welcome, valued, and comfortable here. We want the building to reflect the high-level of care that they are receiving. And we want them to know that they are always the heart of Clinica."



Representatives from Clinica Family Health pose with the Colorado Urban Land Institute's "Influence" award.



STRIDE Community Health Center co-founder Dr. Barbara Shannon-Banister spoke at the 30-year celebration about the organization's growth over the last three decades.

STRIDE Community Health Center Celebrates 30 Years Serving Coloradans

STRIDE Community Health Center (formerly MCPN) celebrated their 30-year legacy with community partners, patients, staff, donors, and elected officials on April 20, 2019. In attendance were U.S. Rep. Jason Crow (CO6), State Rep. Brianna Titone (HD27), State Rep. Megan Froelich (HD3), Lakewood City Council Member Jacob LaBure, and former U.S. Rep. Mike Coffman.

STRIDE raised a record amount of funds for their behavioral health services and shared a powerful [video](#) to highlight the story of how STRIDE has grown and transformed from their earliest days. See the video and more photos from the event on [STRIDE's Facebook page](#).



**DOUBLE UP
FOOD BUCKS™**

Double Up Food Bucks Expand Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

With the return of the season of farmers markets, farm stands, and community supported agriculture shares (CSA's) comes the return of the Double Up Food Bucks program. The program doubles the value of federal nutrition (SNAP or food stamps) benefits spent at participating markets and food retail stores, helping people bring home more healthy fruits and vegetables while supporting local farmers.

The program has opened Double Up sites in six new Colorado counties for this year's season. To use the program at all locations other than Lowes Mercado, customers bring their EBT (SNAP card, also called Colorado Quest Card) and shop and earn dollars for Double Up Food Bucks. For every \$1 spent on any EBT-eligible item, customers receive \$1 good for Colorado-grown fresh fruits and vegetables. Lowes offers 50 percent off Colorado-grown at the register when customers with Quest cards let cashiers know they want to Double Up today.

To find Double Up Food Bucks locations, search by zip code or county [here](#). Learn how to use Double Up Food Bucks in [video tutorials here](#). Recipes and Spanish-language information about the program can be viewed [here](#). For other questions about the program, contact doubleup@livewellcolorado.org or call 720-573-3617.

John Parvensky to Lead National Coalition for the Homeless

John Parvensky, CEO and President of Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, has been named acting executive director of the National Coalition for the Homeless. This is part of a new strategic alliance between the two organizations to leverage strengths of each organization toward a renewed focus on increased organizing and advocacy for immediate action at the federal level to end homelessness and reduce its trauma on the millions of individuals and families experiencing it and its threat to those at imminent risk of losing their homes.

According to the joint statement issued by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, the Colorado Coalition will bring its administrative, financial and policy capacity to the National Coalition, which will focus on bringing the stories of people who have lived on the streets to the attention of national leaders.

Mr. Parvensky, who has led the Colorado Coalition since 1985, replaces Interim Director Megan Hustings, who led the National Coalition since its longtime leader Michael Stoops passed away in 2017. Mr. Parvensky will continue as CEO and president of the Colorado Coalition. Ms. Hustings will be its managing director in Washington.

Under Mr. Parvensky's leadership, the Coalition has grown to serve over 20,000 people experiencing homelessness per year through comprehensive housing and health care in Colorado. Mr. Parvensky is a leader in developing integrated housing and health care for people experiencing homelessness and low-income families and individuals.

To learn more, go [here](#). Mr. Parvensky recently discussed the work of the Colorado Coalition and its partners with *The Denverite*. Read the full article [here](#).



Top: John Parvensky, CEO and president of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, speaks at news conference announcing HHS construction and renovation grants to Colorado CHCs, Stout Street Health Center, Denver, Colo., May 1, 2012.

Bottom: Mr. Parvensky speaks before the groundbreaking for the Renaissance Uptown Lofts, a building at Colfax and Pearl Streets in Denver, Colo., which will provide 98 apartment homes for homeless individuals and low-income persons, Dec. 17, 2009.

CCHN STAFF UPDATE

CCHN Honors Kay Roth on her Retirement

It's a bittersweet moment for CCHN as the organization says goodbye to Kay Roth, who is retiring after 18 years of service at CCHN. Ms. Roth joined CCHN in 2001 and is the senior executive assistant for CEO and President Annette Kowal. Ms. Roth has provided administrative support and coordination for various projects; coordinated meetings of CCHN's Board of Directors and several Board-appointed committees; has been involved in planning and organizing CCHN's Triannual (formerly quarterly) meetings and many office functions; and has assisted CCHN partners, CCMCN and CHAMPS, when needed. Ms. Roth has interacted with thousands of people on behalf of CCHN, displaying her exceptional customer service skills, patience, and humor.

CCHN honored Ms. Roth at the May Triannual luncheon and at an office retirement party. At Ms. Roth's beach-themed retirement party, many staff members told stories of what they learned from Ms. Roth as they worked with her, and a few boxes of tissue were passed around. She will be missed, and at the same time, staff sends her off with many well wishes for the fun things Ms. Roth has planned for retirement.

"Kay, your two decades of service to me, the CCHN Board of Directors, CCHN staff, and all of our partners has been one of the biggest blessings in my life," said Ms. Kowal. "Everything you have done here at CCHN has positively impacted my life and the lives of so many by creating beauty that otherwise would not exist."

New Staff Members at CCHN

Three new staff members have joined CCHN in the past few months.

Shannon Connell is CCHN's new Workforce Specialist. She joined CCHN in February 2019. Her primary responsibility is to support CHCs with their workforce and recruitment. Ms. Connell will earn a bachelor of arts and sciences degree from the University of Colorado in public service, with a minor in nonprofit management. Ms. Connell has worked in the nonprofit sector for 10 years and was recently an event coordinator with Colorado Rural Health Center. In her spare time, she likes listening to podcasts, reading true crime novels, and spending time with her husband and their animals.

Caitlyn Diroff is the new Executive Assistant at CCHN. She joined the team in April 2019. Ms. Diroff's primary responsibility is to assist the CCHN leadership team, specifically the Vice President of Strategy and Financing. She also provides administrative support for CCHN's sister organization, the Community Health Provider Alliance. In addition, Ms. Diroff spearheads planning for Triannual member meetings. She earned her bachelor of science degree in public and nonprofit administration with a minor in advertising and public relations from Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Mich. Prior to her current role, Ms. Diroff spent over two years leading strategic communications for an early education organization that uses music and movement to increase students' literacy and math skills in Kent County, Mich. In her free time Ms. Diroff enjoys cooking, pottery, yoga, and spending time outside.

To round out the new additions, Sara Wittner is the new Senior Executive Assistant to the CEO. Ms. Wittner joined CCHN in April 2019. Her primary responsibilities are to assist with projects that the CEO is working on at any given time, and to ensure that the CEO has what she needs in all situations. She also prepares for CCHN Board meetings and maintains relationships with the Board of Directors. Ms. Wittner earned an associate of arts degree at Front Range Community College in 2013. She previously spent four years



Top: Annette Kowal thanks Kay Roth for her year's of service to CCHN at Ms. Roth's retirement party.

Bottom: Ms. Roth at her 15th Anniversary party.

assisting CEOs in different types of nonprofit organizations. Ms. Wittner is a participant in the Lift the Label Campaign through the Office of Behavioral Health. In her spare time, she advocates through Young People in Recovery and the Harm Reduction Action Center to help break stigma associated with substance use disorder. Ms. Wittner has enjoyed performing arts since she was a toddler and she is a member of a local choral music group.

CHAMPS UPDATE

Upcoming CHAMPS Events

The Community Health Association of Mountain/Plains States (CHAMPS) is offering a variety of upcoming trainings. Participation in all of the trainings listed below is free of cost for [Region VIII Community Health Centers](#). Please contact that CHAMPS [Clinical Quality Improvement Director](#) with any questions.



CHAMPS Online Series: Care Coordination Essentials

This interactive series with speakers from the Patient Navigator Training Collaborative (PNTC) was developed for care coordinators practicing at Region VIII (Colo., Mont., ND, SD, Utah, Wyo.) CHCs. These webinars are appropriate for all levels, and participants can join for one session or the whole series.

The series will occur the following Tuesdays from 12:00-1:30 p.m. MT:

- **June 4:** Navigating Families in Conflict
- **June 18:** Caring for Yourself When You're a Care Coordinator

To register and learn more, visit the CHAMPS [Upcoming Live Distance Learning Events](#) webpage.

CHAMPS/RMPHTC Advanced Population Health Practices for Colorectal Cancer Screening Community of Practice (CoP)

CHAMPS and Rocky Mountain Public Health Training Center (RMPHTC) have collaborated to bring a new type of learning opportunity to Region VIII CHCs: Communities of Practice (CoP). Communities of Practice feature regular online connections, via the Zoom video platform, to create a space for ongoing conversations while building a professional network for continued learning and support. On the last CoP session, "Maintaining the Momentum," participants will discuss how to maintain the momentum of positive QI change. This session will take place on **Thursday, June 6, from 1:00-2:00 pm. MT.**

To learn more and to register, visit the CHAMPS [Project ECHO Learning Communities](#) webpage.

CHAMPS Webinar: 2019 Immunization Update

This annual presentation is intended to update CHC staff on the latest recommended immunization schedules and the most recent Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) immunization recommendations. The speaker of the online event will be JoEllen Wolicki, RN, BSN, Nurse Educator, Immunization Services Division, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This webinar will take place on **Thursday, June 13, from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. MT.**

To learn more and register, visit the CHAMPS [Upcoming Live Distance Learning Events](#) webpage.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Registration Now Open for BSET Cohort IV Held in Alamosa/La Junta

CCHN and the Center of Nursing Excellence are pleased to announce that the Building Skills for Effective Teams (BSET) training is coming to Southern Colorado. BSET is a highly-rated training program designed specifically for Community Health Centers (CHCs) that focuses on expanding participants' leadership expertise, interpersonal knowledge, and emotional intelligence needed to confidently function within their CHC's integrated care teams and quality improvement efforts. [Click here](#) to register for BSET or for more information. Registration will be open until **June 12**.



Past BSET participants pose for a photo after completing a team challenge.

Registration will be open for just a few weeks, so don't delay! Please contact [Katie Ventura](#) if you have any questions.

Networking and Learning Opportunity from the California Primary Care Association June 23-25, Newport Beach, Calif.

The California Primary Care Association (CPCA) and Western Clinicians Network (WCN) are partners in hosting the Clinical Excellence Conference from June 23-25 in Newport Beach, Calif. This three-day conference will bring together respected clinical and administrative members of the CHC community and beyond to present and discuss timely issues facing the nation's health care systems. Region IX members (Ariz., Calif., Nev., Hawai'i, and the Pacific Islands) will be in attendance, but the conference is open to all attendees from across the country. This year, the conference will include a Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC) listening session, an expanded peer learning schedule, and networking opportunities with top leaders and innovators in community health. For full conference details, please visit www.clinicalexcellenceconference.com.

National Health Center Week August 4-10

National Health Center Week (NHCW) is coming up soon! NHCW is an annual celebration of America's Community Health Centers, with the goal of raising awareness about the mission and accomplishments of CHCs over the past five decades. The theme of this year's NHCW is "Rooted in Communities."

To learn more about NHCW and how you can get involved, [click here](#). CHCs can post their NHCW events online by [clicking here](#).

May 2019 Newsletter Contributors

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About CCHN

The Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN) is the unified voice for Colorado's 21 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.



If you would like to be added to the newsletter e-mail distribution list, or if you have comments about this newsletter, please contact Maureen Maxwell, CCHN senior manager for federal policy and communications, at maureen@cchn.org or (303) 861-5165, ext. 259.

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