



OCTOBER 2021

CCHN NEWSLETTER

Community Health Center News

Gratitude for Jerry Brasher

In the early 1980s, a small group of 1960s visionaries formed a lifelong friendship around a single cause: providing premium health care to all Coloradans regardless of ability to pay. Stanley J. “Jerry” Brasher was one of those visionaries.

We lost our friend Jerry last month and miss him every day. We also remember and try to live up to what he taught us. Jerry cared deeply about health care access for everyone, and about removing the barriers to access to that care. The people in the waiting room at Salud Family Health Centers, where Jerry worked, were his inspiration.

Jerry is the grandfather of the Colorado Community Health Center (CHC) movement, as well as a leader in the national Community Health Center movement and mentor to many working in community health care. He was the CEO for Salud Family Health Centers for over four decades and one of the founders of CCHN. Without Jerry and other visionary leaders in the CHC movement, and his dedication and passion for ensuring that access to affordable health care is a right and not a privilege, none of us would be doing what we do today.

The people who inspired Jerry, and the Community Health Center staff who care for them each day, are our inspiration, too. May Jerry’s legacy live on and on in all of us.

[Read more about Jerry’s wonderful work and life here.](#) You can also honor Jerry by making a donation to Salud Family Health Centers, attn: Jennifer Morse, 203 S. Rollie Ave. Fort Lupton, Colo. 80621. Go to www.mykeeper.com/St StanleyJerryBrasher to leave a condolence or memory.

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Jerry Brasher digs the first shovel-full at Salud Family Health’s Frederick clinic groundbreaking, 2003.

STRIDE Opens Conifer Location

In partnership with Mountain Resource Center (MRC), STRIDE Community Health Center co-hosted a Back-to-School Fest and Ribbon Cutting in early August. The event was in celebration of STRIDE's new Conifer location on the Mountain Resource Center campus. Elected officials and local representatives of partner organizations, as well as board and executive team members from MRC and STRIDE, attended this event.

"Being a local, I am all too familiar with the lack of health care options available in this area," said Dr. Tracy Hofeditz, the primary care physician at STRIDE Conifer and a longtime resident of the area. "I am very pleased that this new STRIDE location will be able to serve so many local families, and even more excited to be able to provide essential services to my own community."

As part of the Back-to-School fest, STRIDE offered sports and school physicals and COVID-19 vaccinations to students and their families. The event included backpack and school supply giveaways.



Mountain Resource Center and STRIDE Community Health Center board, executive team members, and community leaders cut the ribbon for STRIDE's newest location. From left to right: Kelli Ogunsanya, COO, STRIDE; Dr. Jim Walpole, Board Member, MRC; Dr. Tracy Hofeditz, STRIDE; Sarah Kinzer, CEO, MRC; Andy Kerr, Commissioner, Jefferson County; Ben Wiederholt, CEO, STRIDE; Peter Brettell, Board Member and Treasurer, MRC; and Susan Todd, Director of External Affairs, STRIDE.

Mountain Family's New School-Based Health Center

Mountain Family Health Centers (MFHC), in partnership with the Roaring Fork School District, opened a sixth school-based health center (SBHC). This SBHC, which is in Glenwood Springs High School, welcomes students to receive integrated medical, behavioral, and dental health care services.

According to Roaring Fork School District Superintendent and Mountain Family Board Member Rob Stein, "Offering health services in school where our students spend most of their time is a convenient and safe means of removing barriers to access and ensuring our students receive the care they need to be healthy and successful in school and life."

Paul Freeman, Principal of Glenwood Springs High School, added, "Students who are in good health learn better and faster. The school-based medical center will help to ensure that all our students are healthy and ready to learn."

With this new SBHC, MFHC now provides access to integrated care for 22,000 people across Garfield, Eagle, and Pitkin Counties.



Rob Pew, volunteer, Sydney Schalit, MFHC Board Member and Chair Elect, and Trish Kramer, MFHC Board Member and Treasurer, at the MFHC SBHC.

John Santistevan Re-Elected as NACHC Treasurer

John Santistevan, CEO of Salud Family Health, was re-elected as Treasurer for the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC).

Following his re-election, Mr. Santistevan responded, "I am honored to be elected to serve a second term as the Treasurer of the National Association of Community Health Centers. I look forward to assist in moving forward to improve, grow and strengthen Community Health Centers."

Mr. Santistevan joined Salud in 1996 and became CEO in 2013. He is responsible for establishing the strategic course and overseeing all operations of the organization. In his role, Mr. Santistevan has been on the front lines of providing access to all members of the community, with a focus on health equity, establishing a strategic direction for the organization that provides underserved children and families with quality health care, regardless of ability to pay. Under his leadership, Salud clinics have developed strong community partnerships with hospitals, specialty physician groups, mental health agencies and public health departments to provide a diverse referral network to Salud patients.



John Santistevan, CEO Salud Family Health.



PCHC employees Kari Tatinski, Allison Crull, and Katherine Dangleis enjoyed the staff NHCW picnic.

PCHC Celebrates National Health Center Week with a Staff Picnic

In recognition of National Health Center Week (NHCW), Aug. 8-14, Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) thanked its staff by providing a picnic lunch for all to enjoy.

The staff picnic was held at PCHC's Dental Clinic, Colorado Clinic, and Park Hill Clinic on two different days to accommodate everyone's work schedules. The weather was bright and sunny on both days, and temperatures were pleasant under large tents. PCHC staff members enjoyed getting together outdoors to enjoy delicious food and fellowship with each other.

Colorado CHCs Awarded Funds to Expand School-Based Health Services

Three Colorado Community Health Centers were awarded funds from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to expand existing school-based health services. Colorado awardees include Salud Family Health, Denver Health's Community Health Services, and Northwest Colorado Health. Colorado received the most awards of any state.

The awards, given to 27 Community Health Centers across the country, will expand the reach of school-based health center services. Services include general primary medical care, behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services, oral health, vision, and enabling services such as transportation, outreach, and translation services at school-based service sites, both in-person and through telehealth.

As Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said, "By funding health centers that offer critical services on school grounds, we are providing convenient access to high quality health care for underserved students, their families, and the larger community."

MarillacHealth Helps Coloradans Register to Vote

Advocates at MarillacHealth say it best, “Civic engagement is a sign of a healthy community.” On National Voter Registration Day in late September, volunteers at Marillac talked with over 50 people about how to register to vote in Colorado. These efforts resulted in five new voter registrations, five pledges to vote, and five voter registration statuses checked.



Community members get ready to vote during event at MarillacHealth.

Your vote matters!

As a CHC advocate, your voice matters every election. The 2021 ballot includes school board elections, local ballot measures, and three [statewide ballot measures](#).

Coloradans can [register to vote online](#) through Oct. 25 to receive your ballot in the mail, or register to vote in-person through Election Day, Nov. 2.

Not sure if you're registered? [Check your voter registration status](#).

Pueblo WIC and PCHC Perinatal Department Team Up

Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) have teamed up to better serve Pueblo County. Locally, the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment administers WIC, a federally-funded program. Starting Oct. 6, and every Wednesday thereafter, a WIC representative will be available for appointments at the PCHC Colorado Clinic from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

A customer satisfaction survey conducted by the Colorado WIC office in 2019 revealed travel obstacles as a common issue for Pueblo WIC participants. Teaming up with PCHC will help many overcome this obstacle due to the central location of the clinic. This clinic also assists in reducing the amount of travel for those who are PCHC patients and WIC participants. Both PCHC and WIC help serve those qualifying within the low-income guidelines in Pueblo.

“We are really excited to be able to offer WIC services on site for our new moms, babies and children. We are looking forward to collaborating with our colleagues at WIC,” said Wendy Raso, CNM, Director of Perinatal Services at PCHC.

“This partnership has the potential to make it easier for participants to make their appointments, and time spent traveling to each appointment by promoting one point of care. I am most looking forward to being able to make connections with PCHC staff, provide more information about the WIC program to their patients, and provide WIC services in a location that may better fit the participants' needs,” said Zoie Barcus, WIC Public Health Dietitian.



Pictured here: Tracy Kelly, Zoie Barcus, Vanessa Rodriguez, Allison Crull, Talyra Peterson, Shawna Cash, Sarah Sandoval, and Taylor Lopez-Cepero.

Drive-Thru Fall Festival Supports Loveland Community

One of the things COVID-19 has required us to do is “figure things out.” Community Health Centers have had to come to the table with an increased level of creativity, imagination, and initiative to connect with patients and support communities.

As a prime example of this ingenuity, Sunrise Community Health teamed up with community partners to host a drive-thru Fall Festival in the parking lot of Sunrise’s Loveland Community Health Center. With the rise in Delta variant cases, Sunrise staff wanted to continue to encourage people to get their COVID-19 vaccine and booster shots, but did not want a gathering of people mingling around together with the potential spread of the virus. The drive-thru model was a way to accomplish all of this while offering services and support to the community.



Sunrise staff and community member at Fall Festival.

The Sunrise team worked to organize and promote the event with two community partners, The Latino Dream and the Interfaith Solidarity and Accompaniment Coalition (ISAAC). The Fall Festival offered a variety of services, including COVID-19 vaccines, food boxes, winter gear, school supplies, Mexican pastries and coffee, DIY caramel apple kits for kids, and more. The event lasted about three hours and there was a steady stream of visitors. About 90 cars came through the event, sometimes with multiple households in the vehicle. About 25 people received a COVID-19 vaccination during the event.

Sunrise staff recognizes the impact of collaboration, and shares gratitude to community partners who assisted with the event: The Latino Dream, KidsPak-Feeding the Future, Neighbor-to-Neighbor, Thompson School District, ISSAC, North Colorado Health Alliance Homeward Alliance, and United Way of Larimer County.

Valley-Wide’s Center Dental Clinic Celebrates Grand Opening and New Bariatric Dental Chair

In 2019, Valley-Wide Health Systems partnered with the Town of Center to apply for a Community Development Block Grant from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs for a new location for their Center Dental Clinic. The 2,960 square-foot building needed extensive construction to prepare the interior for the addition of six dental operatories (treatment/examination areas), laboratories, staff spaces, a cashier/receptionist area, and a lobby. New windows were also added to bring natural light into the interior. Other renovations were made to bring the building into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The new Center Dental Clinic houses two dentists and a hygienist. The clinic also received a new bariatric bench for patients’ use. The bariatric bench, a multi-functional dental chair, makes dental exams more comfortable and accessible for people whose weight or mobility needs make it hard or impossible to use a standard dental chair. For patients who use a wheelchair, the bariatric bench can be used as a wheelchair lift, allowing patients to stay in their chair while receiving care. The broader seat on the bariatric bench can also accommodate bigger bodies than standard dental chairs.

Regular dental care is important for all patients, as it helps catch problems, including oral cancers, early on – before they can become painful or cause serious problems. Early interventions are usually easier, less expensive, and lead to better outcomes. Patients for whom a standard dental chair doesn’t work well are at risk of missing such routine dental appointments. The addition of a bariatric bench allows more patients access to reliable dental care. Valley-Wide Health Systems moved into the new space in October of 2020, and began seeing patients immediately, delaying the grand opening celebration until summer 2021.

MarillacHealth Hand-in-Paw Wellness Event



Roice-Hurst Humane Society mobile wellness unit.

MarillacHealth, in partnership with Roice-Hurst Humane Society, created a drive-through vaccine clinic for pets *and* their humans. Patients who decided to get vaccinated against COVID-19, or were able to show proof of vaccination, were offered a free wellness exam and core vaccines for their pets.

Inner City Participates in Yoruba Ni Colorado

Inner City Health Center attended Yoruba Ni Colorado, an Afrocentric celebration in Bicentennial Park in Aurora in early October. Inner City joined the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and Walgreens to offer biometric screenings, COVID-19 vaccines, and flu shots to about 60 attendees at the event.



Inner City staff at Yoruba Ni booth.

COVID-19 and Tuberculosis Clinic at the PCHC Grand Avenue Clinic



PCHC medical staff pose next to the COVID/TB Clinic bus.

On Wednesday, Aug. 25, Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) hosted a successful COVID-19 and Tuberculosis government mobile unit at the PCHC Grand Avenue Clinic. An estimated 115 COVID-19 vaccines were administered by staff appointed to the government mobile unit. About two-thirds of the individuals who were vaccinated were experiencing homelessness, and many others were living in lower income housing. Many individuals followed through for tuberculosis testing as well.

Dr. Cervantes Awarded the 2021 Licona Community Health Leadership Award

Dr. Lilia Cervantes, Denver Health, was awarded the 2021 Dr. Virgilio Licona Community Health Leadership Award for her outstanding community and systems-level leadership to advance health equity and social justice in Colorado. Notably, Dr. Cervantes is recognized for her advocacy for the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to include maintenance dialysis treatment under Emergency Medicaid. Since this significant health policy improvement, Dr. Cervantes has worked to remove other barriers and advance equity for the Latinx community, focusing on improving the quality and cultural-responsiveness of care for individuals with end-stage kidney disease. Dr. Licona, for whom the award is named, was a Board Member of the Colorado Health Foundation, which gives the award. He was a long-time physician and advocate in the CHC movement in Colorado, working at both Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc. and Salud Family Health Centers.

Lynne Evetts Nominated for 2021 Nightingale Award

Pueblo Community Health Center nominated Lynne Evetts, RN, FNP, for the 2021 Nightingale Award. Presented by the Colorado Nurses Foundation, this award is Colorado's highest nursing honor, and it recognizes nurses who advance their profession and positively impact their community in exceptional ways.

"Her personality is perfect for patients facing struggles with cancer or end-of-life issues. She is compassionate, empathetic, and provides amazing care," stated Dr. Claire Reed, Chief Medical Officer at PCHC.

In 1996, Ms. Evetts obtained her Master of Science in Nursing to become a family nurse practitioner, and was graduate student of the year. Shortly after, she joined PCHC, working part-time while full-time at Rocky Mountain Cancer Center pursuing her passion caring for patients facing serious illness. There, she developed a survivorship program to instill hope and support for her patients and families. In 2017, PCHC asked Ms. Evetts to open a new clinic at Pueblo Community College. She provides care and educates students so they can make informed decisions about their health. When PCHC's associate medical director announced his plan to retire, Ms. Evetts was selected to take over as quality director, managing peer view, QI projects, accreditation process, and the ongoing audits required to meet federal metrics.

"Lynne has been associated with PCHC for over 20 years meeting patients' primary health care needs. She ably handles acute and complex clinical management issues, and patients trust her. I trust her, too," stated Donald Moore, Chief Executive Officer at PCHC.



Lynne Evetts, RN, FNP, at PCHC.

New Peak Vista Construction Starts in Downtown Colorado Springs

Peak Vista Community Health Center staff hosted a groundbreaking for a new site in downtown Colorado Springs on Sept. 7. The facility is located at the corner of S. Tejon St. and E. Las Vegas St. and is scheduled to open in early 2022. The new site will provide medical, dental, behavioral health, and care coordination services to those experiencing homelessness, those at risk of experiencing homelessness, and other members of the community.

Peak Vista staff welcomed Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers, Peak Vista board members, community members, and representatives of partner organizations to the groundbreaking.

Construction of the \$4.5 million center will be funded through grants, donations, and a \$500,000 block grant from the City of Colorado Springs. GE Johnson is the contractor for the construction of the new Community Health Center, following the designs of the local firm, RTA Architects.



Dr. Lisa Ramey, interim president and CEO of Peak Vista CHCs, center, leads the tossing of the first shovels-full of dirt at the new site. Joining her were Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers, Peak Vista staff and board members, and representatives of GE Johnson.

Policy Update

Legislative and Regulatory Updates

Since the 2021 state legislative session ended in June, CCHN has been working on a variety of policy activities in support of Community Health Centers (CHCs).

At the state level, CCHN staff have been monitoring progress of state interim legislative committees including the Behavioral Health Transformational Task Force (created by SB21-137), which is forming recommendations about policies to create transformational change in the areas of behavioral health using funds Colorado received from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). CCHN is watching this process to ensure that the voice of CHCs and their patients are included in discussions about how this funding will be allocated.

CCHN staff have been tracking the progress and implementation of other legislation that passed in 2021, including the Colorado Standardized Health Benefit plan, the expansion of Medicaid benefits, and the addition of clinical pharmacy in CHC Medicaid Cost Reports.

In early October, CCHN's Public Affairs Committee approved policy priorities that will guide the work of CCHN policy staff throughout the next year. CCHN's top priority areas for 2021-2022 include protecting federal and state funding for CHCs, supporting the primary health care workforce, and influencing state health care system transformation. In the coming months, CCHN policy staff will be preparing for the 2022 legislative session, guided by these priorities.

In addition to legislative activities, CCHN staff have been closely watching actions and policies impacting the 340B Drug Pricing Program and engaging in advocacy efforts with state and federal partners to protect the program for CHCs and their patients. Over the summer, CCHN and CHCs worked to gain support from Colorado's Congressional delegation for the bipartisan PROTECT 340B Act, a bill introduced in July that could help ensure that 340B savings are used to expand access to care for underserved patients, the fundamental purpose of the program. CCHN has been working with partners on policy levers to protect the program at the state level as well. CCHN will continue to monitor the 340B Program, advocate for the PROTECT 340B Act, and work to protect this program that is critical for underserved patients.

On the national level, CCHN staff have been heavily focused on advocacy for funding to support CHC infrastructure and capital projects, and to support primary health care workforce programs. CCHN and CHCs have been in communication with Colorado's Congressional Delegation, urging them to support these priorities in Congress' legislative negotiations.

Through the fall and winter months, CCHN will continue ongoing advocacy efforts at both the state and federal level to ensure that Colorado's CHCs are able to continue providing comprehensive primary care to their growing patient population.



Examples of social media advocacy posts. Images are from NACHC's advocacy toolkit.

Covering Kids and Families Outreach and Enrollment Updates

Covering Kids and Families (CKF), a project of CCHN, works to improve how Coloradans enroll in affordable health coverage through Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program), Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+), and private insurance through Connect for Health Colorado.

Throughout 2021, CKF worked with the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) to implement changes to the Emergency Medicaid program. Emergency Medicaid pays for emergency services for non-citizens who would be eligible for Health First Colorado except for their immigration status. This includes some CHC patients, such as people without documentation and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients. Due to CKF's advocacy, HCPF removed the requirement for applicants to submit a physician letter explaining that the treatment was for a medical emergency. This hard-to-access and confusing requirement was an administrative burden for applicants as well as CHC outreach and enrollment (O&E) staff who assist patients with the application. In addition, CKF advised HCPF on creating an Emergency Medicaid webpage (available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)). CKF continues to work with HCPF to make this program more accessible and ease the application burden for applicants and assisters.

In addition, while most Health First Colorado and CHP+ members are locked-into coverage due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), CHC O&E staff will begin to see more applicants for Connect for Health Colorado during the upcoming open enrollment period, from Nov. 1, 2021, to Jan. 15, 2022. Many more Coloradans are eligible for higher financial subsidies due to funding from the American Rescue Plan. All Colorado CHCs can assist patients and non-patients with Connect for Health Colorado applications.

More information about these changes and other CKF resources are available at ckf.cchn.org.

CHAMPS Update

Staff Update – Catherine Galley

Catherine Galley is the new Programs Coordinator, Membership and Communications, at the Community Health Association of Mountain/Plains States (CHAMPS). Ms. Galley will work on the coordination and implementation of CHAMPS' member services, contacts management, and communications efforts, along with providing support for additional CHAMPS activities. She earned a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Purdue University, and a dual master's degree in social work and international development with a concentration in organizational leadership and policy practice from the University of Denver. Ms. Galley has worked in the nonprofit field for many years in a variety of roles, largely focusing on immigrant and refugee rights. Outside of work, Ms. Galley enjoys hiking with her dog Lilly, listening to podcasts, and hanging out with friends and family. Contact Ms. Galley via email at Catherine@CHAMPSonline.org.

Staff Update – Emily Krizmanich

Emily Krizmanich is the new Programs Coordinator, Health Center Workforce, at CHAMPS. She is focused on the coordination and implementation of CHAMPS' programs in support of CHC staff recruitment and retention and health professions education and training. Prior to starting at CHAMPS, Ms. Krizmanich earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Colorado Boulder in international affairs and anthropology, and a Master of Arts in international development and global health from the University of Denver. Outside of work, she enjoys cooking and baking, crafting, cheering on the LA Dodgers, and bingeing her favorite TV shows. As a Colorado local she loves the great outdoors and exploring all the state has to offer, which includes many adventures with her rescue puppy, Ralphie. Contact Ms. Krizmanich via email at Emily@CHAMPSonline.org.

Staff Update – Kristen Sergi

Kristen Sergi is the new Programs Coordinator, Pandemic Recovery and Preparedness, at CHAMPS. Her focus is on the coordination and implementation of CHAMPS' COVID-19 response programs, while providing support to Region VIII Community Health Centers on emergency preparedness and public health. Mrs. Sergi has been a NICU nurse for 20 years. Mrs. Sergi also brings several years' experience as a clinical nurse educator for the University of Colorado Health, where she created and delivered education to NICU and Lactation medical staff throughout the Northern Colorado Region. Mrs. Sergi graduated with a Master of Public Health with a health disparity concentration. In her free time, Mrs. Sergi enjoys spending time with her husband Matt and three children Lily, Nico, and Cecilia. She loves backpacking, pottery, reading, listening to podcasts, and playing with her two pups. Contact Mrs. Sergi via email at Kristen@CHAMPSonline.org.

CHPA Update

Staff Update - Loretta Lathon

Loretta Lathon is the new Clinical Navigation Specialist at Community Health Provider Alliance (CHPA). She is a graduate of Norfolk State University's Advance Billing and Coding program. Mrs. Lathon is a highly accomplished health care professional with over 25 years of experience in the health care industry. Mrs. Lathon was responsible for implementing client validation and remediation training programs, tracking quality scores, auditing providers, and giving feedback to ensure documentation was accurate, yielding maximum shared savings. Mrs. Lathon has been married for 34 years to a U.S. Navy veteran who served 26 years in the armed forces. She enjoys exercising and spending time with her family.

Upcoming Events

Peak Vista CHCs 2021 Breakfast of Champions

Peak Vista Community Health Centers is celebrating its 50 years of service this year and welcomes you to its annual Breakfast of Champions fundraiser. The event is Friday, Nov. 21, 7:30-9:30 a.m. MDT. This year, the Olympian Keynote Speaker is Erin Popovich, 14-time Paralympic Gold Medalist. [View more information and purchase tickets.](#)

NACHC 2022 Policy & Issues Forum

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) 2022 Policy & Issues Forum is Feb. 14-17, 2022. Committee meetings will be held Feb. 12-13, 2022. It is a hybrid event offering virtual sessions as well as in-person sessions at the Marriot Marquis, Washington, D.C. As usual, CCHN staff will be scheduling meetings with Colorado members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate for Colorado CHCs.

For people planning to attend in person, housing is now open - [make reservations here.](#)

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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 for more than 847,000 of their community members – more than one in seven people in Colorado - from 63 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 <https://cchn.org/>.



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