

CCHN NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2022



Community Health Center News

Community Health Centers Continue Founding Mission of Equity in Health Care

There are fewer COVID-19 deaths and infections in areas of the country where there is a Community Health Center (CHC), according to [findings from the National Association of Community Health Centers \(NACHC\) and the Morehouse School of Medicine's National COVID-19 Resiliency Network \(NCRN\)](#). CHCs have been vaccinating people who are disproportionately affected by the pandemic: essential workers, agricultural and migrant workers, public housing residents, the elderly, and people experiencing homelessness, to name a few. To date, CHCs have provided more than 19 million COVID-19 vaccinations nationally, with over two-thirds of the shots at CHCs administered to people who self-identified in racial or ethnic minorities.

The joint analysis from NACHC and Morehouse School of Medicine's NCRN compared the rate of infection and mortality from COVID-19 in areas with a CHC and areas without, determining that there are 200 fewer cases of infection and nine fewer deaths per 100,000 people.

Another independent study illustrates the role of CHCs in working for equity in health care: this study found that, as of July 2021, CHCs administered 61.4 percent of their vaccines to people who self-identified in racial or ethnic minorities, compared to 40 percent of vaccines administered to racial and ethnic minorities at other health care providers. The [peer-reviewed study from the Boston University School of Medicine](#) was published in the journal *JAMA Network Open* in January 2022.

The federally qualified Community Health Center program was established in the 1960s to support access to high quality health care in medically underserved communities and populations. CHCs are intentionally located in low-income, medically underserved areas and are patient directed: at least 51 percent of their board members must be patients of the CHC on whose board they serve.

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CHCs are seen as trusted members of their local communities, making the CHCs critical access points for people who would not otherwise have access to primary and preventive health care. Since the nation's first CHCs opened in 1965, the CHC system has grown to more than 1,400 organizations. Twenty CHCs in Colorado operate 230 clinic sites, providing a health care home to more than 847,000 people and employing almost 5,900 individuals in high-need communities.

"We are both proud of the work of the Coloradans working at CHCs and humbled to be able to support them," said Annette Kowal, CEO of the Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN), the association of Colorado's CHCs. "It has been a challenging time for them, work-wise and in dealing with the pandemic personally. Yet they continue to meet the challenge and care for their communities with innovation, expertise, and open hearts. We are very grateful."

Brave Children Help Get Us Out of the Pandemic

When 5-11 year-olds were approved for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, Sunrise Community Health mobilized weekend clinics that focused specifically on vaccinating that age group. Operations directors set up work-flow and clinics tailored to children who may be uniquely squirmy, fear doctors or needles, or experience anxiety with getting their shot.

With this insight, Sunrise moved their child vaccination efforts to clinic exam rooms, providing each staff member with their own private room for vaccine administration. This helped ease heightened emotions in children and provided some privacy instead of a large group setting where reactions to receiving a vaccine might be spread and raise anxiety among other children.

Additionally, the Sunrise communications and marketing team set up huge animal balloons, an interactive selfie-station (complete with fun paddle signs the kids could hold) and a snack area that helped distract little ones from band-aids on their arms. All of these things were effective in helping vaccinate large groups of children in those all-day events. It was rewarding and affirming for health care providers to see parents who were committed to keeping their kids and their community safe. Even more affirming for Sunrise staff was interacting with these children who were (mostly) equally excited about doing their part to end the pandemic and to get a packet or two of fruit snacks as their reward.

After the initial wave of parents who wanted to have their children vaccinated, Sunrise has moved back to providing walk-in vaccines to all ages at their clinics and pharmacies. Through the end of the year, Sunrise provided over 1,800 vaccines to 5-11 year-olds amongst the 70,000+ vaccines they have given in the last year.

Mitzi Moran, CEO of Sunrise Community Health remarks, "Congratulations to all of the brave 5-11 year-olds who have received their vaccine—we know they truly do provide hope for our future!"



Children enjoying the photo booth after getting their COVID-19 vaccine from Sunrise.

John Albright Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

John Albright, Axis Health System Board President, was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council (CBHC).

“I have had the privilege of watching John’s leadership in action over the last 21 years,” said Shelly Burke, Axis Health System CEO. “His grace as a leader, his commitment to the mission and his business acumen applied to the role of Board President has contributed to the success of Axis and are all instrumental in developing the strategies to ensure that community health care continues to endure and evolve.”

Mr. Albright joined Axis 22 years ago when the organization was facing a number of challenges. Since then, his peers requested he serve as president because of his unique personal qualities. He served through the initial crisis, creating the first licensed Acute Treatment Unit in Colorado. He led the Board’s commitment and transformation to integrated care and supported Axis as it evolved to become both a Community Mental Health Center and a Community Health Center. Mr. Albright worked with the Board and CEOs to bring Axis from a \$3M operation serving 1,200 clients in five sites to a \$29M operation with nine sites, bringing mental health, substance use care, oral health and primary care to more than 12,000 residents of Southwest Colorado. He led the Board through challenges of changing membership with his leadership, tact and sensitivity. During a recent federal review, the Board was commended as a stellar, high-functioning, mature Board. This is due in no small part to Mr. Albright’s leadership as president.

While time and distance have made direct involvement with state and national legislation impractical, Albright assumed broader community and regional responsibility in addition to the role of organizational ambassador. He participates in Board member recruitment, with a particular emphasis outside of the La Plata population center, to ensure a broad Board perspective. He makes the time and commitment to attend Board member interviews held in the candidate’s home county/community, providing insight into the depth and breadth of Axis’ services, and offering context for the director role.

In 2020 Axis successfully merged with the Dove Creek CHC to better align care delivery and ensure long-term stability for care in that region. Mr. Albright was central to that process, leading discussions with the boards and integrating their cultures as part of the merger. He continues to be open to new opportunities that expand the traditional definition of community-based health care. With true vision, he has helped communities and partner organizations to appreciate the opportunities as he models the courage to bring those opportunities to reality, all in service to the mission of making a meaningful difference.

Salud Family Health Centers Gives Community Health Champion Award

Salud Family Health Centers presented Colorado Senator Rhonda Fields with CCHN’s 2021 Community Health Champion Award for her work to increase access to affordable health care in Colorado. Senator Fields championed [SB21-181](#) and [HB21-1097](#), both of which were passed in the 2021 legislative session. SB21-181 establishes the Health Disparities and Community Grant Program, addressing a variety of systemic public health inequities. HB21-1097 created the Behavioral Health Administration, increasing access to affordable behavioral health services in Colorado.



From left to right: Jennifer Miles, Frontline Public Affairs, John Santistevan, CEO of Salud Family Health Centers; State Senator Rhonda Fields; Gordon Duvall, Doctor of Nursing Practice at Salud Family Health Centers.

Valley-Wide Health Systems Connects Older Adults to Oral Health

Older adults in the San Luis Valley were all smiles when dental staff from Valley-Wide Health Systems presented oral hygiene tips at congregate meal sites this past summer. Through a partnership with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), Valley-Wide dental hygienist Alejandra Garcia and dental support staff used poster displays and presentations in English and Spanish to educate meal site clients on how to maintain their oral health and care for their dentures. The experts also discussed periodontal disease and its relationship to diabetes management. Attendees received oral hygiene and denture care kits, and Valley-Wide staff helped connect people who needed services to dental care. Overall, the Valley-Wide dental team educated 55 adults, distributed 40 hygiene kits and 17 denture care kits, and connected seven older adults to dental care.

In talking with AAA staff about home-bound meal site clients or those who could not attend in-person due to COVID-19, the Valley-Wide staff decided to record the presentations and post them to YouTube so the information is easily accessible. See below for links to each video:

[Video: Periodontal Disease \(English\)](#), [Video: Periodontal Disease \(Spanish\)](#)

[Video: Good Oral Hygiene \(English\)](#), [Video: Good Oral Hygiene \(Spanish\)](#)

The presentations, videos, and community connections were such a hit that the AAA has requested Valley-Wide dental staff return to present again. Dr. Stacey Robben, Chief Dental Officer at Valley-Wide, said, “It was a successful way to reach out to older adults in the community, and we look forward to more interactions.”



Valley-Wide's oral health care poster display.

Senator Michael Bennet Visits the Pueblo Community Health Center East Side Clinic

On Oct. 13, 2021 U.S. Senator Michael Bennet visited Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) to tour the East Side Clinic construction site. Now open, the East Side Clinic uses solar power and geothermal pumps to create more energy than it uses. The three-story, 64,000 square foot clinic includes a pharmacy, lab, and dental services, in addition to medical and behavioral health care. The \$24M, state-of-the art, net-zero energy facility is the largest investment in Pueblo's East side neighborhood in decades. The East Side Clinic will allow

PCHC to serve an additional 5,000 patients in the next 10 years.

Sen. Bennet, a proponent of renewable energy, was impressed by the solar panels and geothermal pumps. “As the only net-zero energy health care facility in Colorado, this project serves as a model for sustainable health care across the country,” Sen. Bennet said.

To support completion of the clinic, donate now: <https://www.pueblochc.org/give/>



Left to right: Pete Montoya, Project Manager, Bryan Construction; Linda Rikhoff, RN, PCHC Board President; Donald Moore, PCHC Chief Executive Officer; Senator Michael Bennet; Justin McCarthy, PCHC Chief Operations Officer; Laura Kelly, Chief Development/Foundation Officer, Arthur Yarbrough, PCHC Board Member; Jason Pitts, PCHC Director of Operations.

Winter 2022

Supporting Families in Need with Peak Vista’s First Visitor Program

First Visitor, a program run by Peak Vista Community Health Centers, is a free home visitation program that provides education and resources to new or expecting parents. The First Visitor program provides parents with the tools they need to help their child flourish and to prevent child abuse and neglect. Any family with children between the ages of zero to five is eligible, regardless of income level or affiliation with Peak Vista.

Families may be referred to the First Visitor program by a Peak Vista provider or community partner. During the home visits, First Visitor Family Support Care Managers (FSCMs) provide families with educational packets based on their child’s age group. The packets include material on safe sleep, the importance of dental care, information on shaken baby syndrome, how to practice self-care, and more. FSCMs also connect families with resources in the community, such as food stamps, housing, and food resources, if they need it. FSCMs bring age-appropriate gifts like diapers, gently used clothing or hand-knit blankets, all brought in through donations.

After their visit, families can request more time with their FSCM to dive into specifics about childcare and family management. Additionally, the First Visitor program hosts three classes a week on safe sleep and shaken-baby syndrome.

“We love the mission,” says FSCM Silvia Lara, “Something as simple as a winter coat— something that we may take for granted— can be lifechanging for these families in need. Being able to provide that... There’s nothing like it.”

Learn more about [Peak Vista’s First Visitor program](#).



Family Support Care Manager for the First Visitor program.

Mountain Family Health Center Welcomes 2022 ACE Scholars

Mountain Family Health Center (MFHC) welcomes its first class of staff Advocacy, Clinical, and Executive (ACE) scholars to serve on MFHC’s Executive Team throughout 2022. The ACE scholars will help define the strategic direction of the organization, with input from all staff and service delivery sites across MFHC. In addition, ACE scholars will advocate for Mountain Family’s patients, staff, organization, and communities with state and federal elected officials, including advocating at the State Capitol in March 2022.

The inaugural class of ACE scholars includes talented staff from diverse backgrounds and experiences, including leading medical assistants, dental assistants, registered nurses, quality improvement gurus, and payroll experts. ACE scholars were chosen for their extraordinary commitment to Mountain Family’s patients, their passion for supporting the well-being of all staff, their vision for deepening equity in the communities served by MFHC, and their energy for advocating with elected officials.

As Tania Avitia, one of the 2022 ACE scholars, writes: “I have known MFHC since I was a little girl as a patient, and now as an employee. I started with the company as a dental assistant in a program that was new, with trust from my supervisor I was able to succeed in my role. My supervisor then pushed me to become a Medical Assistant and I quickly became the lead. Throughout all this time I have learned how to voice my opinion and formulate decisions that best support my team. Leadership was not something that came easy to me, but MFHC has taught me to grow for those who depend on me.”

Congratulations to Jocelyn Vega, Kathy Yost, Jackie Marshall, Tania Avitia, and Karen Torres for being selected as MFHC’s 2022 ACE scholars.

PCHC Wins Health Resources and Services Administration Awards

Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) recently received multiple quality improvement awards from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), including:

Gold Level Health Center Quality Leader

Places PCHC in the top 10 percent among all Community Health Centers in the nation for quality performance measures.

COVID-19 Data Reporter

Recognizes Community Health Centers that supported data reporting for public health emergencies with response rates of 90 percent or more from April 10, 2020, to July 2, 2021.

Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH)

Recognizes Community Health Centers with PCMH recognition in one or more delivery sites.

As a Gold Level Health Center Quality Leader, PCHC achieved the best overall clinical performance among all Community Health Centers nationally, placing in the top 10 percent for clinical quality measures. Three CHCs in Colorado achieved this award. Compared with peer Community Health Centers nationally, PCHC was ranked based on quality of care and health outcomes and disparities. Quality of care measures long-term health outcomes, and timely and routine preventive care such as childhood immunizations and diabetic management. Health outcomes and disparities measures impact of clinical intervention to project long-term health.

“PCHC’s quality improvement programs are embedded and integrated within the organization’s workflows that assist staff to monitor, assess, and improve the quality of health we deliver,” stated Chad Hess, Certified Physician Assistant and Associate Medical Director and Quality Manager at PCHC.

Sunrise Thompson School Based Health Center (Finally) Celebrates with Open House

It was a grand and beautiful day for the official Sunrise Thompson Health Center (STHC) open house in October 2021. This School-Based Health Center (SBHC), located between Conrad-Ball and Mary-Blair Schools in Loveland, opened in 2020 in partnership with Thompson School District and Summit Stone Health Partners.

Because this SBHC launched during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sunrise was not able to have a public open house in 2020. Sunrise staff worked with the team at Thompson School District this Fall to facilitate an open-house and ribbon-cutting ceremony and officially celebrate this collaboration.



Ribbon cutting at the Sunrise Thompson Health Center.

The Loveland Chamber of Commerce provided Sunrise with an official ribbon cutting and welcome, and many community members showed up to help celebrate, including Loveland’s Mayor Marsh and several school board members. Sunrise Community Health’s CEO Mitzi Moran, and Superintendent Marc Shaffer, spoke about how the partnership was initiated and completed, as well as the benefits of SBHCs for families and communities. For fun, Sunrise also served a variety of farmer’s markets fruits and water at the grand opening to emphasize nutritious eating and choices.

Sunrise Thompson Health Center is open year-round and serves all students of Thompson School District with services such as sports physicals, wellness visits, immunizations, basic vision and hearing screenings, and behavioral health.

CHC Dental Directors Selected as President and President-elect of NNOHA

Staff from CCHN and Colorado CHCs attended the 2021 National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA) conference in mid-November. During the conference, Ethan Kerns, DDS, Chief Dental Officer of Salud Family Health, was announced as the new president of the NNOHA Board of Directors; and An Nguyen, DDS, MPH, Chief Dental Officer of Clinica Family Health, was announced as the new president-elect. NNOHA is the national organization of community, migrant, and homeless health center dental providers.

Attendees enjoyed three days of in-person sessions in San Antonio, Texas, and a wide selection of online-only sessions for virtual attendees. A strong Colorado contingent was present at the in-person conference, and others participated in the virtual event.

Colorado CHC dentists have a long history of working for access for all to oral health care. NNOHA was founded by John McFarland, DDS, who served as Director of Dental Services for Salud Family Health Centers from 1972 until his retirement in 2016.



Ethan Kerns, DDS (left), and An Nguyen, DDS, MPH (right).

BSET Leadership Training Showed Good Outcomes, But is Coming to a Close

Since 2016, CCHN, in collaboration with the Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence conducted a series of trainings called the Building Skills for Effective Teams (BSET), and then later the related Leadership Development Program (LDP). The BSET and LDP training were designed specifically for staff at Community Health Centers (CHCs). The program showed measurable outcomes, including a decrease in overall turnover, increase in employee participation in recognition programs, increase in employee satisfaction and engagement, and an increase in use of daily huddles within the CHCs. BSET and LDP will come to a close this year.

CHC staff had the opportunity to participate in a training that focused on expanding participants' leadership expertise, interpersonal knowledge, and the emotional intelligence needed to confidently function within care teams and quality improvement efforts. The program included lectures, individual and group exercises to practice skills, group discussions, mentoring, and the use of various assessments. It targeted a number of Uniform Data System-related (UDS) clinical quality measures to see improvements and heightened outcomes. These measures varied from increasing the proportion of adults who receive preventive interventions in dental offices, to increasing depression screening by primary care providers.

Participating Colorado CHCs included Clinica Family Health, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, Denver Health's community Health Services, High Plains Community Health Center, MarillacHealth, Mountain Family Health Centers, Northwest Colorado Health, Peak Vista Community Health Centers, Pueblo Community Health Center, Sunrise Community Health, and Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc. The Center was able to offer the BSET training to one cohort of CHCs both in and outside Colorado through the Northwest Regional Primary Care Association. Some cohorts focused on staff in executive roles, while others included roles across CHCs such as billing staff; Medical Assistants; clinicians; entire medical, dental, or Behavioral Health teams; and executives.

In reflecting on the end of the BSET and LDP trainings, Suzanne Smith, Health Center Operations Division Director, remarked, "Collaborating with the Center on this project has been an invaluable opportunity to offer access to all levels of CHC staff to a training that developed both their hard and soft skills. CCHN staff witnessed firsthand how participants took the knowledge, skills, and comradery gained at the training to better support their efforts as a team to provide access to high quality health care."

Policy Update

2022 State Legislative Session Begins

The legislative session of Colorado's 74th General Assembly began on Jan. 12, 2022. Throughout the legislative session, CCHN and CHCs will be closely watching the state's health care budget and legislative items that could impact CHCs and the patients they serve. Items include Medicaid and the Accountable Care Collaborative (ACC), Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+), access to primary care (including behavioral health services), health care affordability and coverage, and Colorado's health care workforce.

As the session progresses, CCHN staff will keep CHC advocates informed of important issues that arise at the Capitol through CCHN's online grassroots advocacy network. [Sign up](#) to participate in CCHN's advocacy network. The session is expected to run through early May.

CKF Celebrates 20 Years

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. CKF members make up a statewide network of outreach and enrollment professionals, community-based organizations, application assistance sites, brokers, health care providers, and advocates.

Established in 2002, CKF's celebrates their 20th anniversary this year. As they do so, they took a look back at past accomplishments and what they are most looking forward to over the next year.

Over the past 20 years, CKF has numerous accomplishments including:

- In 2007, 2015, and 2017, CKF successfully advocated for extending funding for CHP+ through the federal Children's Health Insurance Program.
- In 2011, CKF influenced the creation of PEAK, the online application Coloradans use to apply for Health First Colorado, CHP+, SNAP (Food Assistance), and other programs. Since 2011, CKF has been instrumental in maintaining and modernizing PEAK.
- In 2010-2014, CKF influenced Colorado's implementation of the Affordable Care Act, including ensuring Colorado's health coverage assisters were trained on the new policies.
- In 2015-2016, CKF advocated for removal of the five-year waiting period for lawfully present children and pregnant immigrants who are otherwise eligible for Health First Colorado and CHP+.
- In 2016, CKF advocated for Health First Colorado and CHP+ to allow use of annualized income, rather than monthly, for people with seasonal or fluctuating income, to reduce the need to reapply for coverage multiple times a year as income changes.

Some items CKF is looking forward to in the next year, include:

- Working with the state to improve how Coloradans apply for and access emergency health services through Emergency Medicaid.
- Improving how Coloradans apply for benefits online by influencing the PEAK modernization process, including updating PEAK's Apply for Benefits section.
- Engaging with the state when planning for the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, ensuring that eligible Health First Colorado and CHP+ members remain enrolled, and that ineligible members get connected to free or low-cost plans through Connect for Health Colorado

Liz Tansey, CKF Senior Project Manager shares gratitude, "Thank you to CCHN, CHCs, and CKF's partners for helping us make these last 20 years so great. We look forward to improving how Coloradan's access and retain health coverage in the future."

CHAMPS Update

Four Coloradans Among CHAMPS 2021 Award Recipients

The 2021 Community Health Association of Mountain/Plains States (CHAMPS) Awards Ceremony was held virtually on Nov. 22, 2021. The ceremony honored seven individuals, including four from Colorado, for their exceptional contributions to the Community Health Center movement. The four Colorado honorees are:



Exceptional Administrative Leadership

Annette Franta, Chief Financial Officer, Mountain Family Health Centers, for her generous and decisive leadership, and commitment to the CHC mission.

Ms. Franta paves a path for innovation and critical thinking, using practical and fact-based considerations to drive complex decisions and agreements.

View [Ms. Franta's nomination statement](#).



Exceptional Board Leadership

Jesus Tijerina, Board Chair, Salud Family Health Centers, in recognition of his service to Salud Family Health Centers and migrant and seasonal farmworker populations.

Mr. Tijerina's leadership on the board has been central to the organization's phenomenal growth and success, and his guidance has been critical in the design and implementation of programs that meet the changing needs of farmworkers. View [Mr. Tijerina's nomination statement](#).



Exceptional Clinical Leadership - Dental

Karen Miller, DDS, Chief Dental Officer, Pueblo Community Health Center, in recognition of her compassionate commitment to dental excellence.

Dr. Miller is known as a champion for high standards, giving a strong voice to dental programming and guiding the strategic direction of Pueblo Community Health Center. View [Dr. Miller's nomination statement](#).



Stanley J. Brasher Legacy

Don Gutstadt, PA-C, Retired, Vice President of Medical Services, Salud Family Health Centers, for his dedication to patient empowerment and advocacy for Community Health Centers.

Mr. Gutstadt, a committed provider and clinical leader, has devoted over three and a half decades to ensuring the highest quality of care for Salud patients. View [Mr. Gutstadt's nomination statement](#).

CHPA Staff Update

Diana Couvertier

Diana Couvertier is a Clinical Navigation Specialist at Community Health Provider Alliance ([CHPA](#)), a partner organization of CCHN's also supporting CHCs. Ms. Couvertier attended Bend Community College while living abroad in Feltwell, Norfolk, England. Upon relocating to Colorado, she took a fondness in health care with coding and billing and pursued her passion with the American Academy of Professional Coders (AAPC). There, Ms. Couvertier earned various licenses to work with health care providers. She has worked in hospital burn centers, private practice, coding production centers, and in the corporate setting. She is a professional coder with over 25 years of experience in the health care industry. Ms. Couvertier has over seven years of experience in the Hierarchical condition category (HCC) risk adjustment specialty. She has served as an officer for many AAPC local chapters. In her free time, Ms. Couvertier enjoys hiking, cooking, yoga, puzzles, and Tae Bo.

Christine Smidt

Christine Smidt is a Clinical Navigation Specialist for CHPA. She graduated from College America in 2002 with a Medical Assistant diploma, and in 2012 with her Bachelor's degree. Mrs. Smidt went on to work mostly within family practice. She started working for Ponderosa Family Physicians doing billing and coding and was the team leader for the past nine years. Mrs. Smidt used her expertise from front- and back-office experience and helped institute the care coordination program, making a huge impact on the practice and patients. In 2016 she received her Certified Professional Coders certification. She was President and VP of her local Aurora AAPC chapter from 2019-2021. Mrs. Smidt and her husband have two sons, and enjoys camping, crocheting, cross stitching and sewing in her free time.

CCHN Staff Update

Mike Marosits

Mike Marosits joined CCHN in November as a Quality Initiatives Specialist. His primary responsibility is to facilitate the quality improvement capacity of Colorado Community Health Centers (CHCs), especially related to cancer screening integration. Mr. Marosits provides coaching and technical assistance through the Cancer Screening and Early Detection grant. Mr. Marosits earned a Bachelor of Science in communications from Colorado State University. He was a patient navigator, community health work trainer, and patient engagement consultant in Rhode Island before moving back to his home state of Colorado. In his free time, Mr. Marosits enjoys snowboarding, painting, and volunteering.

Patricia Helbin

Patricia Helbin joined CCHN in October as the Quality Initiatives Workforce Specialist. Her primary responsibilities include strengthening the medical assistant workforce at Colorado CHCs and improving diabetes care programs. Ms. Helbin earned a Bachelor of Arts in integrative physiology from the University of Colorado in Boulder. Ms. Helbin has clinical research experience with ACCESS Community Health Network in Chicago, where she first worked with CHCs.

Susan Swiderski

Susan Swiderski is the Administrative Assistant of Internal Operations for CCHN, and CCHN's sister organizations Community Health Association of Mountain/ Plains States (CHAMPS) and Community Health Provider Alliance (CHPA). Ms. Swiderski joined the three organizations in November 2021. Her primary responsibility is to assist internal operations for CCHN, CHAMPS, and CHPA. Ms. Swiderski also leads the internal Events Team for the companies. She is originally from New Jersey and has more than 25 years of experience as an Administrative Assistant with a variety of corporations and companies. Ms. Swiderski enjoys cooking, making art, and spending time outside.

Upcoming Events

NACHC Policy and Issues Forum

The 2022 National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) Policy and Issues Forum will be held virtually Feb. 14-16. Committee meetings will also take place virtually between mid-February and early March. The event will provide an opportunity to hear from national leaders and peers about areas of concern to the Community Health Center movement.

[Register for the NACHC Policy and Issues Forum.](#)

CCHN Policy and Issues Forum

The 2022 CCHN Policy and Issues Forum will be held virtually on March 9. The event will include an overview of the state legislative and budget process, a dive into CCHN's policy priorities and the 2022 legislative session, a policy panel focused on the current health care policy environment, and CCHN's annual advocacy awards ceremony. Registration information will be shared soon.



The Colorado Capitol building.

2022 Conference for Agricultural Worker Health

NACHC is sponsoring its annual conference focused on migratory and seasonal agricultural workers and their families in May. The conference brings together leaders in migrant health to learn from each other and work toward the common goal of improving the health and well-being of this population. The conference will be held May 2-4 at the Grand Hyatt of Denver.

More details, including registration and housing, will be posted on the [NACHC website](#) when available.

Winter 2022 Newsletter Contributors

Chief Editor: [Maureen Maxwell](#); Managing Editor: [Grace Trautman](#)

Contributors: Alice Steiner, Cassidy Christopher, Kate Kennedy, Polly Anderson, Shannon Connell, and Suzanne Smith, [CCHN](#); Shoshi Preuss and Liz Tansey, [Covering Kids and Families](#); Andrea Martin, [CHAMPS](#); Joseph Berry, [CHPA](#); Karla Sluis, [Axis Health System](#); Katie Pachan Jacobson, [Frontline Public Affairs](#); Ross Brooks, Jan Jennings, and Carolyn Hardin, [Mountain Family Health Centers](#); Zoe Morton, [Peak Vista Community Health Centers](#); Jennifer de Groot and Sommer Street, [Pueblo Community Health Center](#); Chalice Springfield, [Sunrise Community Health](#)

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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