



CCHN NEWSLETTER SPRING 2022

Community Health Center News

Honoring Agricultural Workers

In early May, Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN) was honored to welcome colleagues in the Community Health Center movement from across the country to Denver for the annual [Conference for Agricultural Worker Health](#), sponsored by the National Association of Community Health Centers.

Annette Kowal, President and CEO, CCHN, welcomed attendees to the event by sharing her story, and her own connection to agricultural workers: “I grew up in Deming, New Mexico, near the border of Mexico. I grew up not really knowing there was a border because many of my classmates were from Palomas, Mexico, and we could all easily walk across the border in either direction. When I was 11 years old, my Dad “made” my brother and me go to work in the chili fields, hoeing miles and miles of field every day in the summer. I did this for eight years and loved it.

“My experience growing up built a foundation of gratitude for the agricultural workers, without whom we would not have the amazing fresh vegetables and fruits on our tables, and so many other items we depend on and enjoy. I share my deep gratitude to all agricultural workers.”

The conference continued to provide inspiring and educational opportunities for all who attended. Jessica Sanchez, Vice President of Quality and Operations, CCHN, co-presented on the essential elements of the Community Health Center workforce healing and recovery process. She also moderated a discussion which highlighted the work of Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc, and Sunrise Community Health to identify and overcome challenges, and celebrate successes and innovations.

CCHN staff were also pleased to share a video highlighting Colorado CHCs’ care for rural and underserved populations, including agricultural workers, throughout the pandemic and beyond.

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[Watch our video](#)

Colleen Laeger Honored at National Conference for Agricultural Worker Health

Colleen Laeger, Board Chair at Salud Family Health, was selected for the 2022 Outstanding Migrant Health Center Board Member Award for her contributions in migrant health. Ms. Laeger was recognized by the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) at the [Conference for Agricultural Worker Health](#) on May 2 in Denver, Colo.

Ms. Laeger has served in various officer roles on the Salud Family Health Board of Directors for the past 36 years, and is a faithful, effective, and committed leader. She has lived in Weld County since 1979, and has firsthand experience seeing the needs of migrant farmworkers in her community. Her unique insight and perspective are invaluable to the Board. Ms. Laeger understands the value of grassroots advocacy, is passionate about Salud's commitment for providing access to care for migrant agricultural workers, and is always well-prepared when discussing Salud's needs with community members and other stakeholders.

Ms. Laeger was among a small group of migrant health leaders and organizations receiving awards at the national conference.

"We take pride in recognizing colleagues who have done so much on behalf of our migrant and seasonal agricultural workers," said Rachel Gonzales-Hanson, Interim President and CEO of the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC). "Each in their own way has shown what it takes to make health care meaningful and responsive for this vital part of the nation's workforce under extraordinary challenges. These honorees have lifted barriers to care and advanced equity during an unprecedented global pandemic. We celebrate their service, courage, and contributions to the Community Health Center Movement."

The Conference for Agricultural Worker Health, sponsored by NACHC, is the only annual conference dedicated solely to the health and well-being of America's migratory and seasonal agricultural workers and their families.

River Valley Excels in Migrant Health Care

In February, CCHN nominated River Valley Family Health Centers for the 2022 Migrant Health Center Award, honoring their excellence and dedication in migrant health care.

River Valley started when Montrose Memorial Hospital opened the Olathe Medical Clinic to fill an unmet need. It has been serving the health care needs of the uninsured, low-income, and migrant and seasonal agricultural workers in the area for over 25 years. In 2021 alone, River Valley received multiple quality recognition badges from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration for making notable improvements in the areas of access, quality, health equity, and health information technology.

River Valley has extensive experience providing accessible health care services for migrant and seasonal agricultural workers (MSAW). From 2012-2017, River Valley was a major participant and contributor to an annual Multi-Ethnic Health Fair hosted by the Western Colorado Migrant & Rural Coalition in the town of Olathe. Recognizing the need to further increase services for this vulnerable population, River Valley transitioned to offering a series of mobile, integrated health care clinics in 2018.



Colleen Laeger accepts her award from Rachel Gonzales-Hanson, NACHC Interim President and CEO (left), and Michael Holmes, NACHC Chair of the Board.

Since that time, River Valley has hosted over 25 clinic events, serving more than 650 MSAW. At each clinic event, a team of professionals work in concert to provide free health screenings for diabetes, cholesterol, dental, social determinants of health, depression/substance abuse, a full medical encounter, vaccines, and health education.

In 2021, River Valley hosted 11 free health care clinic events serving 350 MSAW. Going above and beyond in ensuring access, the bilingual MSAW Director travelled to the farms before the clinic events to enroll workers in River Valley's sliding-fee-scale program. At the health care clinics, MSAW received free health screenings, vaccinations, including for COVID-19, a full medical encounter, health education, and hygiene supplies. Many patients also received follow-up care at a River Valley facility, with free transportation.

"It's about trust, so it's about those workers trusting what we do," stated Kaye Hotsenpiller, CEO at River Valley. "They know that we're safe, and they know that River Valley is a trusted source of health care."

MarillacHealth Celebrates 34 Years

MarillacHealth celebrated 34 years with a free lunch in a park in Grand Junction for all staff. A local food truck, Colorado Q, served up delicious BBQ, sides and cupcakes. During the event, MarillacHealth announced the selection of their new Electronic Medical Record system, EPIC, with which they will go live in December 2022.

Ivan Coziahr, COO; and Mark Green, Director of Finance; Merceydes Mofatt, Quality Director MarillacHealth, hold up the ends of the banner announcement with medical nurses, and medical assistants.



Tepeyac Community Health Center Hosts Behavioral Health Discussion

Tepeyac Community Health Center hosted Governor Polis, state legislators, cabinet members, and community leaders, for a discussion about Colorado's integration of physical and behavioral health care on April 18.

"We are saving Coloradans money on behavioral health care and improving access to quality services to ensure every Coloradan can thrive," said Governor Polis. "I was proud to visit the innovative Tepeyac Community Health Center and see firsthand the transformative impact of our investment in providing high-quality, accessible, and affordable care that Coloradans deserve."

A bipartisan bill sponsored by Reps. Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez (D-4) and Naquetta Ricks (D-40) and Sens. Faith Winter (D-24) and Bob Rankin (R- 8), Community Behavioral Health Continuum of Care Gap Grants: HB22-1281, will expand access to behavioral health care for Coloradans. The legislation will invest \$90 million in grant funds for local governments and nonprofit organizations to implement innovative, community-based programs with the goal of filling regional gaps across the continuum of care to improve behavioral health outcomes for families, children, and youth living in Colorado.

"The Tepeyac Community Health Center in Denver shows firsthand how our transformational investments will allow more Coloradans to access the care they need to thrive. Our package of behavioral health legislation, crafted over the course of many months with experts across the state, will boost access to care, substance use disorder treatment, residential and outpatient services, and save Coloradans money on behavioral health care." said Rep. Gonzales-Gutierrez.

Representative Crow Visits STRIDE

Senior leadership from STRIDE Community Health Center met with Rep. Jason Crow (CO6) to discuss the vital work of providing equitable and affordable health care to all. He visited STRIDE staff and board members at STRIDE's Peoria, Aurora, location. Rep. Crow is an advocate for CHCs and STRIDE was able to further discuss the impact of lowering prescription costs, expanding telehealth, and supporting workforce development.



Rep. Crow and senior leadership and board members at STRIDE CHC.

Rep. DeGette and Senator Bennet Visit Tepeyac Community Health Center



Rep. DeGette, on left of Tepeyac sign, joined Tepeyac CEO Jim Garcia, to right of sign, and Tepeyac staff and Board Members.

Rep. DeGette and Senators Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper worked to secure funding for Tepeyac in the Fiscal Year 2022 omnibus funding bill approved earlier this year. U.S. Representative Diana DeGette (CD1) met with leaders and board members of Community Health Centers in her Congressional district at Tepeyac Community Health Center's newest facility on Feb. 14. They discussed legislation that would fund increased housing, health care, and mental health services across Denver. Senator Bennet toured the new facility in mid-April after the funding was secured. Tepeyac will use the funds to expand the facility to provide integrated physical, behavioral, and dental health care to residents in the Elyria-Swansea neighborhood, where such services are scarce.

Peak Vista Community Health Center Welcomes New CEO

Emily Ptaszek, PsyD, was appointed president and chief executive officer of Peak Vista Community Health Center on March 28. She oversees Peak Vista's 28 locations across Colorado's Pikes Peak and Eastern Plains regions, which have served Colorado for over 50 years. Dr. Ptaszek assumes leadership from Lisa Ramey, DO, who served as interim president and CEO starting March of 2021. Dr. Ramey continues in her role as chief medical and dental officer.

Dr. Ptaszek joins Peak Vista from the Healthcare Network, a federally qualified Community Health Center in Naples, Florida, serving over 50,000 patients annually. In her tenure at the Healthcare Network, she served as a clinical psychologist, chief of behavioral health services, chief operating officer, and most recently, president and CEO. In addition to her duties at the Healthcare Network, Dr. Ptaszek practiced as an adjunct professor at the Florida Atlantic University's College of Business. She brings more than 10 years of clinical experience to her executive leadership role, having practiced in multiple clinical environments, including the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs, where she specialized in trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Dr. Ptaszek earned her doctorate of psychology from Loyola University Maryland in Baltimore, Maryland, and Master of Business Administration with a focus in health care from Florida Atlantic University-College of Business. She is a board-certified clinical psychologist and a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives. She has served on several boards, including the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce, Senior Friendship Centers, and Best Care Assurance.

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Axis' CORE Program Receives Community Safety Award

The Durango Co-Responder (CORE) program was awarded a Community Service Award during the Durango Police Department Public Safety Awards on Feb. 18 at the La Plata County Fairgrounds. CORE pairs a Durango Police Department (DPD) Crisis Intervention Team officer with a behavioral health specialist from Axis who co-respond to situations based on 911 dispatch criteria.

"We are honored to be a part of the DPD family," said Molly Rodriguez, Axis Health System clinical manager and CORE team lead. "Our partnership, collaboration, and community service is making a difference in the lives of individuals while also positively influencing systemic change."

Creating the new CORE program was an essential step for non-criminal events reported through 911. The program effectively addresses situations when there is an intersection between safety, social, and health crises for individuals in the community. CORE builds on the long-standing success of the annual law enforcement Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) program started by Axis in 2001 to support officers in behavioral health response and de-escalation skills. Currently, over 50 percent of DPD are trained CIT officers, which has been very successful.



From left to right: Retired Sgt. Tim Dixon; Elizabeth Gleason, LPCC; Sgt. Will Sweetwood; Matt Teague, LSW; Ofc. Forrest Kinney; and Molly Rodriguez, LPC, Axis crisis services director; with the Community Service Award.

Peak Vista Celebrates Grand Opening of New Downtown Facility

On April 20, Peak Vista Community Health Centers hosted a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony for its new Health Center Downtown, located on E. Las Vegas St. in Colorado Springs. The Health Center Downtown replaced Peak Vista's Health Center at Rio Grande, which closed on April 21.



Ribbon cutting of the Health Center Downtown, featuring Dr. Emily Ptaszek, Peak Vista President and CEO (left) and Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers (right).

The new location provides medical, dental and

behavioral health services, as well as care coordination and social support services. It will serve neighbors and surrounding communities, including those experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

"I am amazed at the expedient work of this team to make the Health Center Downtown a reality," said Peak Vista President and CEO, Dr. Emily Ptaszek. "With supply chain issues, increasing material costs, skilled labor shortages, limited internet access, and more, in just eight months, we persisted, as we have for 50 years. We made it happen because it is what our community needs, and it is what Community Health Centers do. None of this would be possible without the unwavering determination and hard work of our Peak Vista team, construction partners and community partners."

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Colorado Coalition for the Homeless Launches Two Initiatives to Bring Health Care to People Experiencing Homelessness

The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH), a longtime provider and advocate of integrated health care and housing services, recently launched two new sites for delivering health care services to people experiencing homelessness. The new 48th Avenue East Health Center and updated Health Outreach Program (HOP) provide access to health care for individuals experiencing homelessness.

The 48th Avenue East Health Center began providing services in February at the Denver shelter at 4600 E. 48th Avenue operated by the Denver Rescue Mission. The space includes a lobby, two dedicated exam rooms, two behavioral health rooms, a point-of-care room, and a procedure room, with plans for continued expansion. The clinic serves about 15 clients per day, including individuals from the Denver Rescue Mission and soon the Samaritan House, a nearby facility that serves women experiencing homelessness.

In addition, CCH relaunched the Health Outreach Program with a fully customized RV that serves 10-to-15 clients per day and includes two exam rooms, a restroom, and a wheelchair lift. The new-and-improved HOP travels with a driver, medical assistant, and primary care provider, ensuring the same level of professional and compassionate medical care as the brick-and-mortar Stout Street Health Center. Services provided include vaccinations, wound care, labs, and more.

Sean Kiley, Director of Client Access at CCH noted “One of the most frequently cited barriers to care from our clients is transportation to get to our central Denver campus. Through the HOP we are able to work with partner organizations to meet established and new clients where they are and bring our services to them.”

CCH President and CEO John Parvensky stated: “Having the access to medical and behavioral health permanently onsite is just a game-changer. It’s unfortunate we have to keep expanding shelter and there are still so many people on the streets, but this is what’s needed to best serve our community and continue to work towards ending homelessness.”

[Watch a video about the HOP.](#)



In front of the HOP with Shawn Morgan, CCH, (left) HOP coordinator; Shawna Rodarte, CCH manager of client access; and Sean Kiley, CCH director of client access, (right).

Pueblo Community Health Center Hosts Senator Bennet at the East Side Clinic for a Roundtable Discussion

On April 18 Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) hosted Senator Michael Bennet at the East Side Clinic for a discussion about the sharp increase in pharmaceutical drug costs in the U.S. over the last month.

Jenna Pechek, director of the PCHC Pharmacy, participated along with patients of PCHC and other pharmacy staff at PCHC. Members from other community organizations joined as well. Donald Moore, CEO of PCHC, moderated the discussion.

STRIDE CHC Celebrates the Formal Launch of Two School-Based Community Health Centers

In March, STRIDE Community Health Center officially opened two new School-Based Community Health Centers (SBHCs) at Horizon Community Middle School and Overland High School, in partnership with Cherry Creek School District (CCSD).

Officials from STRIDE and CCSD joined local dignitaries, community members, and smiling students, as they kicked off a new approach to health care. The SBHCs are located on school campuses in underserved areas. These clinics, which feature

five exam rooms, state-of-the-art labs, and other resources, will provide health care to students and members of the community. Equity and engagement were at the heart of the drive to build these SBHCs, and they were only possible because of the strong relationships built between CCSD, STRIDE, and additional partners.

"Our core values are humanity, integrity, equity, and excellence. At STRIDE, we don't accept the current reality of too many students going without care," said Ben Wiederholt, then-president and CEO of STRIDE, "STRIDE and Cherry Creek Schools share one common vision. We share the vision of a community-based model of care that offers a full continuum of services and cuts through barriers."

The new facilities will offer their communities primary care for all age groups, and mental and behavioral health care, dental screenings, referrals, health education, acute care, and preventative care services. The two SBHCs will also serve as permanent health care settings to students and families alike, providing additional health care options in a culturally responsive and equitable way, ultimately offering more opportunities for patients to self-advocate for their health and wellness.

Colorado Emerging Leaders Honored with Geiger Gibson Awards

On February 16, Karen Espinoza, patient access supervisor at Denver Health, and Alice Steiner, senior manager of policy and advocacy at CCHN, were honored with the Geiger Gibson Emerging Leaders award for their significant impact on community health and medically underserved populations.

Ms. Espinoza joined Denver Health shortly after graduating high school, working at the Westwood site in her childhood neighborhood. Since then, she has worked in a variety of roles, earning promotions for her organized approach, adeptness with systems applications, and continued success and willingness to take on greater roles and responsibilities.

In her role as Denver Health School-Based Health Center's (DSBHC) first ever patient navigator, Ms. Espinoza created systems that increased access to care, resulting in improved health outcomes for the young patient population. She was instrumental in using her community contacts in the Westwood neighborhood to promote DSBHC as a resource for young people seeking access to medical and mental health care.



Staff from STRIDE and CCSD join local dignitaries, community members, and students at ribbon-cutting event in March.

Later in her career, as a project coordinator, Ms. Espinoza developed and executed new processes for DSBHC that increased access to care, including an application and certification process for DSBHCs as a Patient Centered Medical Home, a referral process allowing for efficient coordination of care between medical and behavioral health teams, and lead project coordination for five DSBHC remodels and new-build construction projects going on at the time.

Most recently, in her role as a patient access supervisor, Ms. Espinoza helped implement 30 COVID-19 vaccine clinics, reaching thousands of students.

Mrs. Steiner is a policy expert and champion advocate at CCHN. She leads CCHN's state legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts, and is lead staff for the Public Affairs committee. Monitoring and leading CCHN's state legislative work over the last few years, Ms. Steiner contributed to CCHN's recent state policy successes, including CHC Medicaid reimbursement for telehealth visits, CHC Medicaid reimbursement for the costs of clinical pharmacists, collaborating with CCHN staff and CHC dentists to agree on policy priorities around dental therapy, prohibiting discriminatory contracting practices by pharmacy benefit managers and insurance carriers for contracts with 340B covered entities, and extending health coverage to pregnant people and children without documentation.

Mrs. Steiner is a clear thinker, decisive, and committed to the success of CHCs. She helps the CCHN Policy Team focus on top priorities, amid a sea of issues. She also makes sure to connect with other CHC groups outside of Public Affairs contacts, regularly meeting with and presenting to chief medical officers, behavioral health directors, and dental directors.

The award is named in honor of Drs. H. Jack Geiger and Count Gibson, pioneers for community health and human rights. The award highlights key leadership qualities that together further the Community Health Center mission: commitment, motivation, and professional achievement. It is awarded jointly by the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) and the Geiger Gibson Program in Community Health Policy at the George Washington University's Milken Institute School of Public Health.

Tepeyac's Paulina Segovia wins the Kugel & Zuroweste Health Justice Award

Paulina Segovia, a physician assistant, and registered dietitian nutritionist at Tepeyac Community Health Center, was honored for impacting the health of vulnerable migrant communities. At Tepeyac, Ms. Segovia sees herself as an agent of change, working to empower the community from within through trust, transparency, and patient empowerment. The Migrant Clinicians Network presented the Kugel & Zuroweste Health Justice Award to Ms. Segovia on April 19.



Photo from Migrant Care Network website.

“As a first-generation American born to immigrant parents, it is so important to me to advocate for immigrants and for individuals that need access to health care. Even within my own family, my grandmother was one of the first women to graduate from medical school in Mexico.” Ms. Segovia told the Network.

During her clinical rotation, Ms. Segovia “never failed to take an extra moment with a patient or learn to the socioeconomic barriers a patient was facing,” said Pamela Valenza, MD, chief health officer at Tepeyac in her nomination of Ms. Segovia to the Network. “She is steadfast, committed, full of integrity, and dedicated to making lasting systems change.... I have no doubt that Paulina’s dedication to working in the underserved community will set her on a leadership path and spark a light for others.”

Pueblo Community Health Center Awarded Chamber's "Business of the Year"

On April 14, the Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce presented the "2022 Business of the Year" award to Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) at its annual Business Awards Luncheon. This award recognizes PCHC for its contribution to the community of Pueblo, specifically its dedication to providing primary health care services to Pueblo's underserved population since 1983.

Donald Moore, CEO, Pueblo Community Health Center, holds the award, joined by (left to right) Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce members Donielle Kitzman, Phyllis Samora, and Duane Nava.



Sunrise Selected for National Vitamin Angels Highlight Video



Sunrise staff and Vitamin Angel videographers gather outside at Sunrise's Monfort Family Clinic in Evans, Colo.

Sunrise Community Health was selected by Vitamin Angels, a global non-profit focused on reaching underserved populations, to participate in a video highlighting the grant Sunrise received for administering prenatal vitamins. Last year, Sunrise served 1,724 prenatal patients, and 535 received the Vitamin Angels prenatal vitamins at no cost.

The process started in September 2021 when Vitamin Angels asked to feature Sunrise in a video highlighting the grant program. Still knee-deep in their COVID-19 response (and uncertainty about having people on-site and in-person), Sunrise staff arranged for a team of three people to come from Vitamin Angels and carry out an all-day video shoot with Sunrise team members and community partners. The professionals arrived with lots of lighting, video equipment, cameras, and sound systems to gather eight hours' worth of live footage. They travelled from California and Canada to visit Sunrise Monfort Family Clinic in Evans, Colo.

Coordinating and organizing a day with a professional videographer looks like a full day of keeping people on

schedule, tracking down the next interviewee, moving lighting and equipment, and ensuring the story was woven into all the video segments. The day was not only inspiring and focused on Sunrise's mission, "affordable access, quality care for all," but was fun for staff. The Vitamin Angels team worked hard to capture what makes Sunrise special and a critical partner to their community.

Fast forward to May 2022, the Vitamin Angels team shared the final video with Sunrise staff and will soon launch it on their website, in retail locations (like Walgreens), and with other partners.

Other CHCs can [apply for a Vitamin Angels grant](#) to serve patients who are pregnant.

Denver Health Receives Health Equity Award

Denver Health's Lowry Family Health Center (LFHC) was awarded the Practice Award for Health Equity and Community Engagement from the Colorado Academy of Family Physicians Foundation. The award, presented at the Colorado Academy of Family Physicians conference early May, recognizes LFHC for their progress in reducing racial and other health disparities in family medicine.

In the past year, LFHC implemented a multi-faceted approach to improve health equity, including expanding hours to accommodate global refugees, as well as developing their Afghan parolee clinic.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, LFHC implemented roles for three Patient Navigators dedicating their efforts to refugees, immigrants, and migrants. Staff made over 3,000 points of outreach to educate patients, schedule primary care appointments, and schedule vaccine appointments. In a separate effort to expand access to preventive services, LFHC provided their Medical Assistants (MA) with access to health maintenance reports, allowing them to submit approval orders for patient screenings, and to send letters to patients. They did so with a focus on non-English and non-Spanish speaking patients, as the patient portal is limited to those two languages.

Pueblo Community Health Center Wins "80% in Every Community National Achievement Award" for Colorectal Cancer Screening

In March 2022, Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) won the Grand Prize for the 2022 "80% in Every Community National Achievement Award". The award recognizes distinguished, ongoing efforts to advance initiatives that support colorectal cancer screening rates of 80 percent and higher in communities across the U.S. The award is given by the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable, founded by the American Cancer Society and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"The improved colorectal screening rates PCHC achieved were due to teamwork and our dedication to making sure our patients are well-served. The fact that we overcame barriers unique to the pandemic is a testament to the staff's loyalty to our mission – to provide quality primary care to those in need," said Donald Moore, CEO of PCHC.

Policy Update

2022 Legislative Session Comes to an End with Wins for CHCs and Patients

The Colorado General Assembly adjourned the 2022 legislative session on May 11. Legislators passed a total of 537 bills during this year's legislative session, making 2022 one of the most busy and productive sessions in recent history. CCHN staff, the CCHN lobbyist, and CHC members worked throughout the session to ensure that legislators knew the valuable role that CHCs play in providing health care to Coloradans.

Guided by CCHN's policy priorities and Public Affairs Committee, CCHN actively supported three priority bills during the legislative session, two of which passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature:



Gov. Polis signed bills HB22-1302, Health-care Practice Transformation; HB22 1325, Primary Care Alternative Payment Models; and HB22-1281, Behavioral Health-care Continuum Gap Grant Program at Tepeyac Community Health Center in north Denver, May 18, 2022. Thank you to STRIDE CHC for this image.

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- [HB22-1122: Pharmacy Benefit Manager Prohibited Practices](#) will help CHCs continue to provide affordable prescriptions and other services to patients. The bill will prohibit discriminatory contracting practices by pharmacy benefit managers and insurance carriers for contracts with 340B covered entities and their contract pharmacies. This bill will ensure that CHCs and other 340B covered entities can retain the savings from the federal 340B Prescription Drug program intended to help make prescription drugs more affordable for uninsured patients. This bill passed at the very end of session, and the Governor is expected to sign it.
- [HB22-1289: Health Benefits for Colorado Children and Pregnant Persons](#), will help CHC patients with new affordable coverage options and benefits. The bill extends Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program) and Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+) coverage to pregnant people and kids without documentation beginning in 2025. The bill will also permanently remove the CHP+ enrollment fee, include breast pumps as a Medicaid benefit, and create a Special Enrollment Period for pregnancy for plans sold on Connect for Health Colorado. This bill passed at the very end of the session, and the Governor is expected to sign it.
- [HB22-1095: Physician Assistant \(PA\) Collaboration Requirements](#), would have created more flexibility for CHCs within their care teams to use every provider in the most efficient way possible. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass this session, but CCHN will continue to work with partners to move this forward in the future

CCHN supported and/or worked on many other bills throughout the legislative session, including bills related to the health care workforce, public health, and behavioral health. A few of those bills include:

- [HB22-1302: Health Care Practice Transformation](#), creates the primary care and behavioral health statewide integration grant program. This program will provide grants to primary care clinics to work on integrated behavioral and primary health care. CCHN supported this legislation to help CHCs build on their already successful primary care and behavioral health integration. The Governor signed the bill on May 18 at a ceremony at Tepeyac Community Health Center.
- [SB22-1064: Prohibit Flavored Tobacco Regulate Synthetic Nicotine](#) would have prohibited the distribution of flavored cigarettes, tobacco products, or nicotine products often marketed to minors. CCHN was in support of this bill because it would have improved adolescent health by reducing tobacco and nicotine use by minors. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass this session.
- [SB22-181: Behavioral Health Care Workforce](#), requires the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) to create and implement a behavioral health care provider workforce plan and appropriates additional funding to the Colorado Health Service Corps for behavioral health workforce loan repayment. Additionally, the bill requires the BHA to work with the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) to establish workforce standards that strengthen the behavioral health care provider workforce and increase opportunities for unlicensed behavioral health care providers. CCHN supported this legislation, which passed and is on its way to the Governor for signature.
- [SB22-226: Programs to Support Health Care Workforce](#), provides \$60 million in one-time funding for a variety of health care workforce programs for which CHCs may be eligible. Programs include providing practice-based training opportunities for health professions students, and tuition assistance for clinical support staff, including certified nursing assistants, medical assistants, and dental assistants. CCHN worked with a coalition of provider associations on this legislation. The Governor signed the bill on May 18.

For the state budget, the legislature agreed on \$36.4 billion for state fiscal year 2022-23, not including the additional \$2.33 billion in state American Recover Plan Act funds and additional state revenues that were allocated to various bills by the end of the session.

CHAMPS Update

New staff - Kathryn King

Kathryn King joined the Community Health Association of Mountain/Plains States (CHAMPS) in April 2022 as the new Programs Coordinator, Population Health. In her role, Ms. King focuses on promoting health equity, including supporting special and vulnerable populations and outreach and enrollment initiatives. She also supports CHAMPS' clinical and quality improvement programs. Ms. King earned a bachelor of science degree in biology from Penn State University. During her time at Penn State, Ms. King worked with local non-profit and philanthropic groups to connect her community with local resources and health care funding. In her free time, Ms. King enjoys listening to music, hiking, and spending time with friends.

CHPA Update

CHPA Hosts Coding Peer Group

The Community Health Provider Alliance (CHPA) is hosting a Coding Peer Group to support risk adjustment quality and clinical documentation improvement to advocate for coder issues. This collaborative workgroup, made up of Certified Professional Coders from Colorado Community Health Centers, meets to discuss improving risk adjustment quality and clinical documentation. Activities include educational sessions, networking sessions, and sharing and implementing best practices. CHPA hosted the first meeting on May 17. Contact Gary Romero gary@chpanetwork.com for more information.

New Staff - Caitlyn Diroff

Caitlyn Diroff is the Executive Assistant & Communications Specialist at Community Health Provider Alliance (CHPA). She first started supporting CHPA part-time in April 2019, while at sister company CCHN. Ms. Diroff transitioned to CHPA full-time in early 2022. Her primary responsibility is to assist the CEO and Board of Directors, as well as the rest of the CHPA team. She also leads the planning and execution of the organization's communications plan. Ms. Diroff earned her bachelor's degree in public and nonprofit administration with a minor in advertising and public relations from Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She is skilled in nonprofit administration, executive assistance, event and conference planning, communications, digital marketing, graphic design, fund development, community engagement, and more. In her free time Ms. Diroff enjoys volleyball, yoga, cooking, and spending time outside.

New Staff - BJ Dempsey

BJ Dempsey is the Practice Transformation Manager at Community Health Provider Alliance (CHPA). BJ Joined CHPA in January.

CCHN Update

Caitlin Neal

Caitlin Neal is the Senior Executive Assistant at Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN). She joined CCHN in February 2022 and is primarily responsible for assisting the CEO and Board of Directors. Ms. Neal leads planning for the Triannual member meetings and administrative support for the CCHN leadership team. She received her bachelor's degree in public health and is working towards her master's degree in health care administration. Her background is in administration, and she is skilled in event planning and executive support. In her free time, Ms. Neal enjoys hiking, reading, and trying new restaurants.

Kayla Sabruno

Kayla Sabruno joined CCHN as an Accounting Clerk in April, 2022. Her primary responsibilities include processing bills, invoices, and assisting the Accountant and CFO. Ms. Sabruno earned an associate of science degree in accounting and business management at Arapahoe Community College. She has been working in the accounting industry since 2013. In her free time, Ms. Sabruno enjoys camping, traveling, playing with her two dogs, and spending time with family and friends.

Mickayla Walters

Mickayla Walters joined CCHN as a Workforce Coordinator in April, 2022. In her role, Ms. Walters support the recruitment, retention, and development of staff at Colorado's Community Health Centers. She has a bachelor degree in public health from Eastern Kentucky University with a concentration in community health. In her spare time, Ms. Walters enjoys exploring Colorado with her partner and two dogs.

Spring 2022 Newsletter Contributors

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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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