



National Health Center Week

Colorado CHCs celebrate National Health Center Week in early August with staff and patient activities. A few of the events, activities, and appreciations include:

Events and Fundraisers

- July 25 – 26: 10% of all sales at The Great Greek Restaurant in Aurora will be donated to STRIDE’s Refugee Screening Program
- At 8:00 p.m. every Thursday from July 7-Aug. 4, a local high school senior is hosting night hikes at Tabaguache Trailhead to raise money for MarillacHealth’s School-Based Health Centers. Suggested donations are \$5 per person.
- September 26, STRIDE is hosting the 18th annual [STRIDE Golf Classic](#), with several sponsorship opportunities.

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Patient Appreciation and Wellness

- MarillacHealth will have small gifts for patients on Patient Appreciation Day.
- Valley-Wide will celebrate Agricultural Worker Appreciation Day by distributing first aid kits with supplies for wound care. On Patient Appreciation Day, Valley-Wide will hand out color-changing tumblers to all patients with an appointment that day.
- Salud Family Health is again partnering with [Sproutin’ Up](#) in to host their annual free farmers market on Aug. 2 at Salud’s Fort Collins Blue Spruce Clinic.
- From July 27-Aug. 8, Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) is again offering affordable sports physicals for athletes in both middle and high school enrolled in either Pueblo School Districts 60 or 70, as well as Chavez/Huerta K-12 Preparatory Academy. (Many CHCs host back-to-school sports physicals in August. Contact your local CHC to make an appointment).

Community Outreach

- Valley-Wide staff held a drive for food and hygiene supplies, and will deliver the collected items to local food banks.
- After a great reception last year, Peak Vista will again provide solar phone chargers to community members experiencing homelessness.

Other Fun

- Valley-Wide held a staff contest to design a new T-shirt for staff. Keep an eye out – they will wear the winning design on “casual dress” Fridays.
- At MarillacHealth, staff will wear new T-shirts with the words: “MarillacHealth: keeping it healthy”
- Each year, a videographer works with staff at Peak Vista to share stories of impact, community, and why they work at the organization.



National Health Center Week events in 2021.

Community Health Center News

Funding to Combat the Opioid Crisis

River Valley Family Health Center and Valley-Wide Health System were among five organizations that received state funding to address the opioid crisis in Colorado’s hardest-hit counties. The funding comes as a result of [SB 21-137](#), which continues the Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) [expansion pilot program](#) for the 2020-21 fiscal year, and each year thereafter.

River Valley applied for this funding because they serve a large population suffering from Opioid Use Disorder in Montrose and Delta counties. With the funding, River Valley has expanded their existing MAT program, and have served over 200 patients. River Valley is working to reduce stigma and offer MAT as a standard of care for anyone in need.

Community Health Centers across the state embrace the low-barrier approach of offering MAT services in a primary care setting. In fact, 17 of Colorado’s 20 CHCs provide MAT in at least one of their locations. This is an increase from 12 CHCs that provided MAT as of January 2019.

There is a similar opportunity to [apply for RCORP- MAT Access federal funding](#) through the Health Resources and Services Administration, due July 29.

Summer 2022

Pueblo Community Health Center Held Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at New East Side Clinic

The newest Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) clinic celebrated its grand opening on Friday, May 20. The ribbon cutting ceremony was hosted by the Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce at the new clinic.

The three-story, 64,000 square foot clinic opened its doors to patients on January 10. The new clinic includes a pharmacy, lab, and dental services in addition to medical and behavioral health care. The clinic will allow PCHC to serve an additional 5,000 patients over the next 10 years.

The ceremony included Donald Moore, PCHC CEO; Don Ortega, President, PCHC Board of Directors; Pueblo Mayor Nick Gradisar; and Pueblo County Commissioner Garrison Ortiz.

[Learn more about the new clinic](#) and view progress from ground breaking to ribbon cutting.



Pueblo Mayor Nicholas Gradisar speaks in front of the main entrance to PCHC East Side Clinic shortly before taking part in cutting the ribbon, May 20, 2022.

High School Student Organizes Fundraiser for MarillacHealth SBHCs

Anna Respet, incoming senior at Palisade High School, is leading community Hike Nights to raise money for MarillacHealth's School-Based Health Centers (SBHC).

Ms. Respet shares her motivation: "As a student, many of my friends at Central have greatly benefitted from MarillacHealth's "Warrior Wellness" [SBHC], and it has even saved lives. I wanted to do something to help contribute to the program. I also wanted to engage our community members with the world-renowned outdoor recreation opportunities we have here in the Grand Valley. While the main purpose of the Hike Nights is to raise donations for MarillacHealth's School-Based Health Centers, I am also hoping that it will help bring together our community members in a fun, unique way!"

The SBHC in Central High School includes two medical exam rooms, two behavioral health therapy rooms and one dental exam room. The SBHC offers primary care to students and faculty. Services include managing acute needs, immunizations, sports physicals, and well-child checks. The on-campus access reduces significant barriers to access.

Ms. Respet credits MarillacHealth's behavioral health team at Central High with saving the lives of her peers who were severely struggling with their mental health. She notes that these students wouldn't have otherwise had access to the services they needed, if not for the SBHC.

Bring \$5 and join Ms. Respet's Hike Nights at 8:00 p.m. MT on Thursdays from July 7-Aug. 8 at the Tabaguache Trailhead. The hikes are two or three miles long, and considered easy.

Learn more in the [radio interview with KAFM](#).

John Parvensky to Retire from the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

After 36 years of building strategies, leading teams, and influencing policies to address homelessness in Colorado and across the country, John Parvensky will retire as CEO of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH). Mr. Parvensky started with a staff of six and a budget of \$100,000, and will retire with 750 employees and a budget of \$100 million.

During Mr. Parvensky's tenure, CCH developed and implemented best practices to address homelessness, while improving health outcomes by providing supportive housing and integrated health care. They provide meaningful outreach, employment services, recovery support, child care, and other services clients need to end their homelessness and remain housed. CCH will continue to advocate for social equity and adequate resources so that everyone in Colorado has a safe place to call home.

"For years we have been advocating for more federal, state, and local funding. Finally, our efforts are paying off as we see increased investment in housing, health and support services. There's momentum building, and the next leader of our organization will help us seize this moment — working with all of our supporters to continue to innovate and grow until all of our neighbors have access to adequate housing and health care," said Mr. Parvensky in his June 6, 2022, retirement announcement.

In an article published by [Westword](#), Mr. Parvensky shared that his biggest accomplishments include building 20 housing developments; administering 2,000 housing vouchers for local, state, and federal governments; housing more than 4,500 individuals each night; providing medical, dental, mental health, and substance use treatment to 15,000 patients every year; and partnering with the Mental Health Center of Denver.

"John is a tireless advocate for the homeless that live amongst those of us fortunate to have housing. What John and CCH have done over the past three decades to provide so many needed services to the homeless is simply amazing," said Annette Kowal, President and CEO of CCHN.

Mr. Parvensky will support the hiring and onboarding of CCH's succeeding CEO, and will continue his work to advocate for marginalized populations after retirement.

100% Patient-Centered Medical Home Recognition Achieved

Through committed focus, all Colorado CHCs have now achieved official Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) recognition. The PCMH recognition is awarded to organizations that have undergone transformative changes in care delivery, providing care in the most meaningful way possible.

On average, organizations spend 18 months on the practice transformation process to earn PCMH recognition. During this time, they are conducting quality improvement projects, defining workflows, and developing processes and procedures that support PCMH criteria.



Mr. Parvensky speaks before the groundbreaking for the Renaissance Uptown Lofts, a building at Colfax and Pearl Streets in Denver, Colo. Dec. 17, 2009. The building now provides 98 apartment homes for people experiencing homelessness and low-income persons.

Sites with PCMH recognition focus on system and team redesign, care coordination and communication, improving the patient experience, providing quality care, and reducing costs. In practice, this can look like communicating with patients in the language and manner that is best for the patients, developing unique care plans to support patients in meeting their health goals, and coordinating care to ensure that providers work well together to support patient needs and outcomes.

CCHN has supported Colorado Community Health Center PCMH transformation efforts through one-on-one training and technical assistance, hosting group trainings, providing opportunities for CHCs to share best practices with peers, and assisting with the development of benchmarking data for CHCs to use to measure their progress.

Gov. Polis Signs Bills at Summit Community Care Clinic

Earlier this summer, Governor Jared Polis visited Summit Community Care Clinic to sign three bills to support the rural health care workforce into law:

- [HB22-1005, Health-care Preceptors Tax Credit](#), which expands access and scope for the existing tax credit for rural and frontier health care preceptors.
- [SB22-172 Colorado Rural Health-care Workforce Initiative](#), which will help increase the number of health care professionals practicing in rural areas through focused educational programs.
- [SB22-200, Rural Provider Stimulus Grant Program](#), which will help rural hospitals improve IT systems and expand access to health care in rural communities through grants.



Polis was joined by State Representative Julie McCluskie (HD-61), Chair of the Joint Budget Committee, and State Representative Dylan Roberts (HD-26).

Pueblo Community Health Center Hosts Senator John Hickenlooper at the East Side Clinic for a Tour and Roundtable Discussion



On Tuesday, June 28, 2022, Pueblo Community Health Center hosted U.S. Senator John Hickenlooper at the East Side Clinic for a tour of the new facility and a roundtable discussion. Local health care leaders discussed expanding access to rural health care, lowering costs for patients, and growing the health care workforce.

Donald Moore (right), CEO of Pueblo Community Health Center, shows U.S. Sen. Hickenlooper the directory and describes services at PCHC East Side Clinic, June 28, 2022.

New Mountain Clinics to Provide Additional Access to Care

With the help of locals, elected officials, mandolins, cellos and gorgeous vistas, Clinica Family Health celebrated the grand opening of two new facilities in mountain communities on July 8. One clinic is located in Nederland; the second is just outside Black Hawk.

“For years, many residents of the mountain community have been driving long distances to access health care. Some have even gone without care because it is too difficult to access,” said Simon Smith, president and CEO of Clinica Family Health. “Mountain community members from across Boulder and Gilpin Counties strongly encouraged and supported us in bringing health care to their neighbors. Increasing access to high-quality, affordable health care is a core part of Clinica’s mission, so we were delighted to partner with these communities to improve the health of their residents.

One health care team will run both clinics on alternating days to make it easier for both communities to access care. The team consists of a physician, a nurse practitioner, two nurses and an operations manager – most of whom are from the community. They will provide a full spectrum of primary care in the mountain clinics with pharmacy and dental services available at other Clinica locations. The first patients will be seen on July 25.

Given her years of advocacy for health care, Clinica was honored to have Lt. Governor Dianne Primavera join the celebration. “The opening of this clinic is a major step to provide affordable health care for the region, and it will help more people lead healthier lives,” she said. “Your work is not easy but it’s very important.”

As currently staffed, the clinics will be able to provide care to approximately 1,400 individuals per year.



Clinica staff, state officials and community members line up to cut the ribbon at the new CHC in Black Hawk on July 8, 2022. Left to right: Jeanne Nicholson, RN, co-chair of the mountain clinics task force; State Rep. Judy Amabile; Kevin Armstrong, Gilpin County Sheriff; Sandy Hollingsworth, Gilpin County Commissioner; State Sen. Tammy Story; Lt. Gov. Dianne Primavera; Linda Isenhardt, Gilpin County Commissioner; Simon Smith, Clinica President & CEO; CherylN Marriott, Clinica Board Chair; Jeff Zayach, Clinica Board Member.

Clinica Family Health staff gather at the entrance of Clinica’s new CHC in Nederland during the grand opening on July 8, 2022. Left to right: Sar Brown, Clinica’s Behavioral Health Professional; Amber Ivanova, Clinica’s Substance Use Disorder Program Manager; Mari Gambotto, RN, Clinica’s Mountain Clinic Clinical Nurse; Julie Hirman, DNP, Clinica’s Mountain Clinic Nurse Practitioner; Shivaun Hoyl, DO, Clinica’s Mountain Clinics Family Physician; Janet Rasmussen, Clinica’s Chief of Integrated Services; Lisa Winkler, MD, Clinica’s Vice President, Clinical Services, Strategic Programs; Megan Goldkamp, RN, Clinica’s Mountain Clinic Clinical Nurse; Schivonne Keller, Clinica’s Enhanced Care Services Director; Simon Smith, Clinica’s President & CEO.



Salud Family Health to Co-Host Farmers Market in Fort Collins

Salud Family Health is again partnering with [Sproutin' Up](#) in Fort Collins to host their annual free farmers market. Sproutin' Up is an organization that uses farming to teach kids about nutrition, agricultural techniques, social-emotional tools, and job skills. The event, which typically distributes thousands of pounds of fresh produce to residents, will be held on Aug. 2 at Salud's Fort Collins Blue Spruce clinic. The produce is grown in Fort Collins and surrounding areas by local farms and Sproutin' Up. Salud patients and staff look forward to this event every year.



Vendors ready for customers at Salud's 2021 Farmers Market.

Axis Health Systems Merges with The Center for Mental Health

After a lengthy due diligence process, months of planning, and close collaboration with state agencies, Axis Health System (Axis) and The Center for Mental Health (The Center) have completed a merger of the two organizations. The Center for Mental Health will now operate as Axis Health System with no disruption to services. The merger helps support the service continuum across a larger region and responds more effectively to the State of Colorado's health care access and outcome goals.

"We believe we can leverage the larger staff and technology to have a greater impact on our patients' health and quality of life. The merger creates the opportunity to work within our communities with different resources while continuing to look for creative solutions and partnerships to close gaps," said Shelly J. Spalding, the former CEO of The Center now serving as Axis's President.

Shelly Burke, the CEO of Axis, will continue in the role of CEO for the merged organization. The Board now includes members from both organizations' respective boards, bringing an array of experience and a broad understanding of the combined service area. Current patients will not see any disruption in their care or changes to their preferred clinic location because of this merger.

2022 CASBHC Inspiration Award Winners

Individuals from three CHCs across the state won the 2022 annual Inspiration Awards from the Colorado Association for School-Based Health Care (CASBHC). Comments written in their award nominations, published in the CASBHC news release, showed the appreciation of their coworkers.

Art Fernandez, COO of Mountain Family Health Center in Glenwood Springs: "He brings such great humor and congeniality to the work.. Mountain Family saw some incredible growth with his leadership as he truly believes in the model and sees that it would make a difference in the lives of young people in the Roaring Fork area."

Rosa Gardner, Physician's Assistant, MarillacHealth SBHC, Grand Junction: "Rosa has been the steady and calm leader of the first SBHC established in Mesa County. The relationships she has built with not only the administration and leadership at the school, but with the students is noteworthy."

Val Garcia, Clerical Support Specialist, Denver Health School-Based Health Centers, Denver: "One of our main values at Denver Health is compassion. Val is thoughtful, kind, and organized. She always has a lot to juggle but she treats her co-workers and patients with respect and a positive attitude."

Lauren Murray, District Nurse, Cripple Creek-Victor School District, and Rebecca Doughty, former Program Manager, Four Corners Youth Clinics, also won awards this year. Congratulations and thank you to all winners.

Mountain Family Health Centers Joins Annual Strawberry Days, Wins Prize

On June 18, Mountain Family Health Center celebrated this year's Glenwood Springs Strawberry Days Parade by dressing up as characters from the movie, *Grease*. Their enthusiasm, dance moves, and decorated float earned them first place for a Non-Profit Float.

Mountain Family's Edwards Site Practice Director, Amanda Canete, led the staff in weekend float designs and build-outs while also procuring costumes. The morning of Strawberry Days, staff arrived at 7:00 a.m. to finish the float, get dressed up, and practice some dance moves for the parade. There was a great turn out from staff and wonderful showing from the community to celebrate the big day.



Mountain Family Health Center staff gathered around float and first place prize at the Strawberry Days parade.

Policy Updates

July 2022 Policy Changes Related to Health Coverage

Several new health coverage programs, as well as changes to existing programs, went into effect on July 1. These programs will help Colorado's Community Health Center patients gain more robust coverage and improve access to specialty care outside of the CHC. CCHN supported or led many of the following changes:

Extension of Emergency Medicaid to 12 months coverage

People enrolled in [Emergency Medicaid](#) now have emergency health coverage for 12 months. Previously, they were only enrolled for the specific instance of care.

Covering Kids and Families, a project of CCHN, led advocacy with the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) to revamp the state's administration of Emergency Medicaid, making it easier for individuals to apply for and access the program. Extending Emergency Medicaid to 12 months coverage removes the burden for individuals to reapply for benefits each month. While CHCs provide only the primary health care benefits covered under Emergency Medicaid, enrollment staff assist with Emergency Medicaid applications. This change will reduce staff time spent on applications and help individuals receive the emergency care when they need it.

Postpartum expansion to 12 months for Health First Colorado and CHP+ members

Pregnant people enrolled in Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid program) or Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+) will now have postpartum coverage for 12 months after the end of pregnancy, regardless of changes in income. Previously, coverage was for 60 days after the end of pregnancy. End of pregnancy includes events such as delivery, miscarriage, and termination.



Postpartum services are essential to the health of the baby and the parent. By maintaining postpartum benefits for 12 months, individuals will be ensured access to services that help both the birthing parent and baby thrive in the first year, including behavioral health services to address postpartum depression, breast pumps, and other Medicaid-covered services.

Two new limited benefits for family planning

The state launched two new limited benefits that will help more people access family planning services on July 1. The first, the result of SB21-025, which CCHN supported last year, will create a limited benefit for family planning services for people who would qualify for Health First Colorado except for their income being too high. This benefit is available for people with incomes between 134 and 260 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) who are not eligible for another full coverage benefit. The second is for people who would be eligible for Health First Colorado except for their immigration status. This benefit, the result of SB21-009, which CCHN also supported last year, will make contraception and family planning counseling available to people who qualify.

Removal of CHP+ enrollment fee

There is no longer an enrollment fee for kids to enroll in Child Health Plan *Plus*. CCHN participated in the coalition that led to the passage of [HB22-1289, Health Benefits For Colorado Children And Pregnant Persons](#). Among many other impacts, HB22-1289 removed the enrollment fee for all CHP+ members. The enrollment fee is an unnecessary barrier to coverage for children.

Extended eligibility for Working Adults with Disabilities benefit for individuals 65 and older

The [Working Adults with Disabilities \(WAwD\) Program](#), which had been available only to adults ages 19-64, is now available to individuals 65 and older. This program enables many Coloradans with disabilities to receive affordable, comprehensive coverage. By extending the eligibility age, these individuals will continue to have access to the program's coverage as they age and CHCs will see a financial benefit through billing for this newly eligible age group.

Removal of lawful presence requirement for state and local programs

Lawful presence is no longer a requirement for state and local programs, the result of SB21-199. These programs, including Low Income Senior Dental, Colorado Indigent Care Program, and Old Age Pension, help improve health equity and access to care. Some CHC patients are newly able to access additional benefits due to this change and will benefit from new access to these important programs.

CCHN Update

Staff Update – Emily Bauer

Emily Bauer joined CCHN as a Quality Initiatives Specialist in June 2022. Her primary role focuses on supporting CHCs with emergency preparedness training, technical assistance, and emergency response activities. She also serves as a liaison between CHCs, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and regional health care coalitions to ensure coordination and alignment of emergency preparedness and response efforts. Ms. Bauer earned a bachelor's degree in sociology with a minor in nonprofit administration from California State University Fresno and is pursuing a master's degree in emergency services administration. Ms. Bauer has a variety of nonprofit, social sector, and emergency preparedness experience from her previous role at United Way Fresno and Madera Counties. In her free time, Ms. Bauer enjoys being outdoors, exploring local art, and spending time with her two cats David and Pete.

CHPA Update

Staff Update - Daniel Harper

Daniel Harper is the Healthcare Data Analyst at CCHN's sister organization, Community Health Provider Alliance (CHPA). He graduated from the University of Colorado Denver in 2013 with a bachelor's degree in biology. Mr. Harper spent several years working in research and clinical labs before transitioning to data analytics. Most recently, he was a financial analyst for the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, where he calculated supplemental payments for providers serving Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid program) patients and Upper Payment Limit demonstrations for Colorado. In his free time, Mr. Harper enjoys watching movies, going to concerts, and spending time with family.

Upcoming Events

NACHC Community Health Institute 2022

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) 2022 Community Health Institute (CHI) and Expo will take place August 28-30. The event is hybrid, with the option to attend in-person in Chicago, Ill., or virtually.

[Learn more and register on the NACHC website.](#)

2022 NWRPCA/CHAMPS Annual (Fall) Primary Care Conference

The 2022 Northwest Regional Primary Care Association (NWRPCA)/ CHAMPS Annual (Fall) Primary Care Conference will take place Oct. 15-18 in Denver, Colo. This multi-day, multi-track conference will offer a variety of keynote plenaries, educational sessions, networking opportunities, exhibitors, and more, designed to meet the needs of Community Health Center staff.

[Learn more and register on the CHAMPS website.](#)

July 2022 Newsletter Contributors

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

Contributors: Caitlin Neal, Emily Bauer, Polly Anderson, Shoshi Preuss, Stephanie Brooks, Suzanne Smith, Taylor Miranda Thompson, Valerie Nielsen, [CCHN](#); Catherine Galley, [CHAMPS](#); Joseph Berry, Caitlyn Diroff, [CHPA](#); Haley Leonard, [Axis Health Systems, Inc.](#); Susan Wortman, [Clinica Family Health](#); Alexis Whitham, [Colorado Coalition for the Homeless](#); Kristy Schmidt, [MarillacHealth](#); Lizz Bailey, [Mountain Family Health Centers](#); Laura Kelly, Sommer Street, [Pueblo Community Health Center](#); Tessa Zimmerer, [Summit Community Care Clinic](#).

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 855,000 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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