



CCHN NEWSLETTER

FALL 2022



Community Health Center News

CHCs Celebrate National Health Center Week

Each year, Community Health Centers (CHCs) across the country celebrate National Health Center Week (NHCW) in early August. NHCW is a special opportunity for CHCs to showcase their work to their communities and celebrate their patients, staff, and health care successes.

A main theme? Good food. Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) thanked its staff by providing a BBQ lunch for all to enjoy. PCHC was also able to deliver delicious individually-boxed Crumbl Cookies to each of their employees thanks to the generous donation from Premier Members Credit Union. Peak Vista Customer Service Center leadership treated their department to a delicious lunch to thank them for their hard work. Mountain Family Health Centers staff got together for their Annual Staff Picnic and Kickball Tournament. Northwest Colorado Health provided lunch for staff on CHC Staff Appreciation Day. Summit Community Care Clinic hosted a staff appreciation lunch. Salud Fort Collins partnered with Sproutin' Up, a local nonprofit, to host a farmer's market. Over 1,100 pounds of produce were distributed for free to patients, community members, and Salud staff.

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Mountain Family Health Centers staff gather for Annual Staff Picnic and Kickball Tournament.



Peak Vista's customer service leadership team grilling outside of the Convenient Care Center.

*(Left) PCHC staff and an employee of Premier Members Credit Union distribute Crumbl cookies to staff
(Right) Community members and Salud practitioners pick produce to take home.*



MarillacHealth gave small gifts to patients on Patient Appreciation Day, and dawned new T-shirts with the words “MarillacHealth: Keeping it healthy.” Valley-Wide hosted a drive for food and hygiene supplies, celebrated Agricultural Worker Appreciation Day by distributing first aid kits, and honored Patient Appreciation Day with small patient gifts. Peak Vista gave out solar phone chargers to community members experiencing homelessness. High Plains Care Coordinators participated in Kids Day out at the fair on Aug. 10.

At CCHN we want to express our extreme gratitude for those involved in the Community Health Center movement, who provide a health care home for more than 855,000 Coloradans.



*(Left) Development staff at MarillacHealth wearing new T-shirts
(Right) High Plains Care Coordinators at Kids Day at the fair.*

Community Health Centers Partner with Colorado Health Care Coalitions

Within the last year, 10 Emergency Preparedness Leads at Colorado CHCs have participated in activities with their regional Health Care Coalition. [Health Care Coalitions \(HCCs\)](#) are networks of individual health care and responder organizations that have come together to coordinate and prepare for emergencies and disaster events. In the State of Colorado, there are nine different Health Care Coalitions and each individually manages their own membership and meeting activities.

Health Care Coalitions represent a variety of health care partners, including Community Health Centers. HCCs provide additional support and resources in advance of a disaster and during active response. HCCs also provide regular training and exercises for their members to simulate different types of disaster and emergencies. The majority of HCCs were able to provide access to essential supplies to help CHCs maintain operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Quality Initiatives Division at CCHN developed a new [Emergency Preparedness Toolkit](#) to help CHCs learn more about HCCs and the different services they provide. Emily Bauer, Quality Initiatives Specialist at CCHN, assists CHC Emergency Preparedness Leads with involvement and membership with their regional HCCs. Please contact to Emily (ebauer@cchn.org) if your CHC would like additional information regarding HCCs.

Gratitude for Congressman Perlmutter

U.S. Representative Ed Perlmutter has been a great advocate for Colorado's Community Health Centers over the course of his career. He will retire from Congress at the end of 2022. In August, Salud Family Health hosted Congressman Perlmutter at their Commerce City clinic to offer immense gratitude for his years of steadfast support. Staff from Salud, Clinica Family Health, and STRIDE Community Health Center celebrated his contributions over cake and a visit.



Congressman Perlmutter poses with Salud medical assistants and leadership, as well as representatives from Clinica Family Health and STRIDE Community Health Center.

STRIDE Community Health Center Named Best STD Testing Facility in Colorado by Testing.com

STRIDE Community Health Center was recognized as one of the best testing centers for sexually transmitted diseases (STD) in Colorado by [Testing.com](https://www.testing.com), a trusted informational guide for medical lab testing and at-home screening. Testing.com experts examined several facilities with testing, treatment, and prevention services. The top five testing providers were selected based on several criteria, including accessibility and affordability.

STRIDE Community Health Center and other providers on the list offer convenient and confidential services for patients who do not have access to private health care, or have concerns about visiting their primary doctor. The study also prioritized testing centers that accept private insurance and offer free or low-cost testing for uninsured patients.

Testing.com conducted the study to increase awareness about community-based STD testing centers in [Arvada](#), [Centennial](#), and [Highlands Ranch](#). The online guides are valuable resources and were designed to help people make informed decisions about testing options.

Celebrating John Santistevan

John Santistevan now has two days declared in his honor. This fall, Sept. 26 was declared John Santistevan Day in the State of Colorado. Salud's President and CEO, John Santistevan, received this accolade from Colorado's governor, Jared Polis, in recognition of his commitment, service, and leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the Board of Commissioners of Adams County declared Oct. 25 to be John Santistevan Day. Mr. Santistevan's efforts and ability to quickly pivot amid crisis resulted in expanded access to services for medically underserved populations.



John Santistevan, CEO and President of Salud Family Health, (left) and Governor Jared Polis (right) celebrating the proclamation.

CCH's Grand Opening of the Renaissance Legacy Lofts and Stout Street Recuperative Care Center

The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) hosted a grand opening event on Oct. 6 to celebrate the launch of a first-of-its-kind mixed-use development to serve the housing and health care needs of people experiencing homelessness.

The Renaissance Legacy Lofts and Stout Street Recuperative Care Center, located in downtown Denver, will meet the immediate health care needs for 500 people experiencing homelessness annually through medical respite and recuperative care. It will also provide 98 units of affordable and supportive housing.

The Stout Street Recuperative Care Center fills a significant gap in services for people who are healthy enough to leave the hospital but do not have homes to assist them in recovering safely. By late 2022, the Recuperative Care Center will provide 75 medical respite beds for people experiencing homelessness who, if housed, would be discharged to home but who cannot be safely discharged to the streets or shelters.

The Coalition's President and CEO, John Parvensky, who recently announced his pending retirement after 37 years at the helm of the Coalition, remarked, "The desperation of those experiencing homelessness as well as those serving them in shelters and hospitals that really had no place for them to go made a strong case for the development of this integrated housing and health building."

The grand opening featured Congresswoman Diana DeGette (District 1); Mayor Michael Hancock; Dominique Jackson, HUD Regional Administrator (Region 8); Alison George, Director of Division of Housing with the Colorado Department of Local Affairs; and Tom Riley, Senior Portfolio Manager of Northern Trust and CCH Board member.



External photo of the new Renaissance Legacy Lofts and Stout Street Recuperative Care Center, located at 2175 California Street in Denver, Colo.

Congresswoman Diana DeGette (District 1), who helped to facilitate \$2 million in congressionally-directed spending to the project from the U.S. Congress said "John Parvensky and his team present a model for how to address this complex problem of homelessness throughout our country. This new facility is going to be able to provide help to hundreds of more people right here in the heart of Denver and at the time when they're the most vulnerable and susceptible to debilitating issues."

The aptly named project is a true legacy for John Parvensky, who has overseen the organization for nearly four decades. Mayor Hancock presented a proclamation declaring Oct. 6 "John Parvensky Day" in Denver, and presented Parvensky with the city challenge coin, also known as the "key to the city," which the Mayor awards to individuals who make extraordinary differences in the Denver community. "No one has done more for our city, and for the people of our state that you have." Mayor Hancock added. The Stout Street Recuperative Care Center was named after Parvensky.



At the Grand Opening of the Renaissance Legacy Lofts and Stout Street Recuperative Care Center, Board Members Joel Neckers (right) and TR Reid (left) of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless announce that the Stout Street Recuperative Care Center will be named after President & CEO John Parvensky (center).

Lucy Loomis Retires from Denver Health

Lucy Loomis began working at La Casa de Salute Health Station, one of Denver Health's CHCs, in 1984, and stayed at Denver Health until her retirement this year. In her most recent role, Dr. Loomis was the Director of Family Medicine for Denver Health's Community Health Services (DHCHS). In that role, she oversaw six of their nine CHCs. At one of these CHCs, Dr. Loomis helped start a residency track for University of Colorado Family Medicine, which now graduates four family physicians a year.

Dr. Loomis has been involved in multiple projects to improve patient care and access in Denver. She started the refugee clinic at Lowry Family Health Center, and expanded access to family planning in the Denver Health Clinics, helping reduce teen and unplanned pregnancy rates in Denver.

Dr. Loomis was the chairperson of the Colorado Clinical Advisory Network (CCAN) for eight years, and actively participated for more than 30 years. CCAN is a peer group of chief medical officers from Colorado's 20 CHCs.

"The community of north Denver looked to Dr. Loomis as an advocate, health care provider, and trusted confidant. Dr. Loomis gracefully managed her patient panel in addition to providing clinical leadership to the providers and staff at La Casa," said Jessica Sanchez, Vice President of Quality and Operations at CCHN. "I have also worked with Dr. Loomis on several quality improvement initiatives, including several woman's reproductive health groups. Dr. Loomis has demonstrated her abilities to lead and advocate for health access to underserved populations on both the state and federal level. Dr. Loomis is seen as a leader in health care by her peers and has been a mentor to several new medical directors across Colorado."

Carol Lewis Retires as Board Chair

Carol Lewis is retiring as board chair for DHCHS, a role she has filled since 2014. She will stay on to mentor the new board chair. Ms. Lewis has spent many years giving to, and participating in, the Denver Health community. She was born at Denver General Hospital (later renamed Denver Health). She worked as a clinical social worker at Denver Health for 33 years, and served on the DHCHS Board for 17 years.

Ms. Lewis is a steadfast advocate for patients. She has spoken with state and federal officials about patients' need for access to high-quality, affordable, comprehensive primary health care and the value to the entire community of that access. Ms. Lewis is always available to talk with legislators, community members, and others about the value of DHCHS to the communities they serve, either in person or by phone.

This year, Ms. Lewis was recognized by the Community Health Association of Mountain/Plains States (CHAMPS) as an exceptional leader. The 2022 Exceptional Board Leadership Award is presented to individuals who exemplify dedication to, and excellence within, community-led governance.

"She strongly believes in the value of service to our community and that health care is a right and not a privilege," said Dr. Simon Hambidge, Chief Executive Officer of DHCHS. "Legislators listen when Carol speaks about community health service and our Denver community."

"As a clinician, Carol genuinely cared about the whole person. She would often go out of her way to advocate for individuals who felt overwhelmed, needed additional social services, and those who would otherwise be at risk for bigger problems. Carol is a great care team member. She always was available to consult about a patient, contribute her expertise, and go beyond to find resources to help," said Jessica Sanchez, Vice President of Quality and Operations, CCHN.



Ms. Lewis and Dr. Loomis were among the Colorado CHC staff and Board members presenting an award to U.S. Rep. Diana DeGette at her office on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., during the last in-person NACHC P&I in March 2019.

Debby Davis Retires from DHCHS Board

Debby Davis, vice chair of the board of directors of DHCHS, is retiring from the board at the end of the year. Mrs. Davis is a retired obstetrical (OB) nurse and an advocate for affordable and accessible health care, especially for women and newborns throughout the Community Health Center system.

Mrs. Davis has made many contributions to quality care as a nurse clinician, as an educator, and as a board member. For most of her 37 ½ -year nursing career, she worked at University of Colorado Hospital. She spent her time as a high-risk Labor and Delivery nurse, Charge RN and eventually became the Nurse Educator of Labor and Delivery, and then Nurse Educator for the Division of Women and Children's Services.



During her service on the DHCHS Board, which started in 2017, Mrs. Davis initiated or helped develop and expand many board initiatives. Activities include starting a youth advisory board for DHCHS's School-Based Health Centers, mentoring new board members, holding board meetings at different DHCHS facilities to meet staff and patients across the system, and developing a board self-evaluation process. Mrs. Davis is committed to helping people from diverse backgrounds and experiences feel welcome and comfortable with giving their input to how DHCHS meets the needs of its community.

Over the years, Mrs. Davis has enjoyed meeting board members and staff at Denver Health who come from many different backgrounds and with whom she has many things in common, including the desire to support accessible, affordable, quality health care. "It felt like coming home," said Mrs. Davis. "I did a rotation at Denver Health (then called Denver General) when I was in training."

"Many years ago, Debby was my mentor when I was a new nurse on Labor and Delivery," said Chief Nursing Officer Boyle. "Through her knowledge and ability to educate with competence, kindness and rigor, I learned so much from her."

"Debby has contributed so much to Denver's Community Health Services Board over the past five years, because of her leadership skills, her passion and commitment to the communities we serve, and her experience as a nurse, which gives her clinical insight into our care delivery. She will be greatly missed! Thank you, Debby!" said Dr. Hambidge.

PCHC Fiesta Fundraiser 2022

Tunes, Tacos, and Tequila took center stage at Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) Foundation's annual fundraising event on June 10, held at the Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center. Mexican-themed décor for the venue included handmade paper flowers, sarape table runners, and papel picado banners (flags). The dueling pianos show performed by the Killer Keyz act rocked out with a rowdy crowd of 225 supporters. Hand-painted margarita glasses were available for purchase and a silent auction featured a range of items that included a Yeti cooler, wine, liquor, book baskets, and salsa dance lessons. All proceeds raised through the sale of the glasses, silent auction, and song requests have been allocated to PCHC Foundation's capital campaign to support the new East Side Clinic.



The dueling pianos entertaining the crowd at the PCHC Fiesta Fundraiser.

Salud Family Health Opens New Care Spaces

Salud Family Health secured a new mobile unit, opened a new School-Based Health Center (SBHC) in Fort Morgan High School, and introduced a new endoscopy suite in their Longmont location over the past few months.

This summer, Salud purchased a new, state-of-the-art, reliable, mobile unit which will support providing health care services to farmworkers in their service area. Salud is celebrating the new Mobile Unit on Oct. 27 by hosting an open house and inviting the growers with whom they work closely on outreach.



Salud's new mobile unit.

Salud also opened a new SBHC, which became operational in September. The clinic serves all Fort Morgan students, and offers medical, dental, and behavioral health services. Since it opened, the clinic has seen around 100 students; they anticipate numbers will continue to rise as awareness spreads. A community-wide open house is planned for October 2022.

Lastly, Salud Longmont will be opening an in-clinic endoscopy suite this fall, which will provide access to patients, often uninsured or underinsured, who otherwise would not be able to afford this critical screening procedure. Salud received a generous donation from the Russo Family Foundation to purchase all the equipment for the suite and has received broad community support to fund the renovation costs. Salud anticipates providing 1,000 patient procedures per year and hopes to cover the cost through donations.

Axis Health System MOUD project

Axis Health System has been participating in the Incentives and Support for Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) project since January 2022, funded by the University of Colorado Practice Innovation Program. The goal of the MOUD project is to build capacity and confidence of primary care teams to successfully support patients who are eligible for Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in primary care. A team at Axis Health System has been working with CCHN staff monthly to discuss best practices, development of policies, guidelines, and workflows; and building registry reports to ensure that patients receiving MOUD are getting follow-up care at appropriate intervals.

The team at Axis has been dedicated to implementing new MOUD policies and workflows and managing roll-out of these new processes to staff at all four Axis integrated clinic sites. They have already impacted over 20 patients since they started providing expanded Medication Assisted Treatment services.

All 20 Colorado CHCs Earn Quality Recognition Badges

All 20 Colorado CHCs earned at least one Community Health Quality Recognition (CHQR) Badge for quality improvement achievements in 2021. The U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) uses these badges to recognize federally qualified CHCs that have made notable quality improvement achievements for the most recent Uniform Data System (UDS) reporting period.

CHCs continually work on quality enhancement on many levels, and HRSA presents badges representing different areas of quality improvement. This included improving access to services, addressing social risk factors impacting patient health, improving health information technology to increase access to care, and reducing health disparities. [See descriptions of each category](#), or [view the badges awarded to each CHC](#).

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless Exceeds Voter Registration Goals

The Education & Advocacy team for the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless far exceeded their goals for voter registration this fall. The organization had a grand total of 468 total contacts who registered to vote, updated their registration, pledged to vote, or had a meaningful conversation about voting this year.

Unfortunately, many people experiencing homelessness don't know that they are eligible to vote, because they don't currently have a permanent address, or believe they are barred because of past interactions with law enforcement. The Education & Advocacy team tabled every week for two months at the Stout Street Health Center and other Coalition locations to bring voter registration right to clients.



Andrew West, Aubrey Wilde, and Alexis Whitham of CCH show off voter registration eligibility signage.

STRIDE Community Health Center Appoints Santos Vera as New CEO

Santos Vera has been appointed the new CEO of STRIDE Community Health Center. A highly experienced business leader, Mr. Vera has over 25 years of experience working in health care and at Community Health Centers like STRIDE. He is a welcome addition to the team and assumed responsibilities on Oct. 17, 2022.

Mr. Vera has achieved success through collaboration, innovation, and operational excellence to assist CHCs in maximizing services for the marginalized and uninsured patients like those that STRIDE serves. He is known for creating an organizational culture that thrives on humility, transparency, and authenticity. Mr. Vera's inclusive style allows him to engage with internal and external stakeholders frequently.

Mr. Vera's career includes roles as chief executive officer, chief operating officer, senior vice president, and administrator/executive director at organizations dedicated to various health care causes, including social justice and public policy. Most recently, Mr. Vera was named one of the Top 10 Health Care Leaders of 2022.

His other achievements have included CHC merger and acquisitions, the development of various hospital and CHC programs, specialty care service lines, Ryan White and dental program expansions, and the planning and development of new CHCs.

Mr. Vera serves as a board member of a not-for-profit health care organization focused on caring for women with breast and cervical cancer. He is a member of the American College of Health care Executives and is an adjunct professor at the University of Southern California, teaching a graduate program. He serves on several leadership committees centered on mentoring and coaching young leaders. Mr. Vera graduated from the Charles R. Drew University School of Medicine. He went on to complete a

fellowship with Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Center-Los Angeles County. Additionally, Mr. Vera attended the University of Southern California, where he received a master's degree in health care administration with an emphasis on leadership and finance. He is currently completing his Ph.D. in health care strategy.



Dental Care Now Open at PCHC East Side Clinic

For the first time ever, Pueblo Community Health Center (PCHC) will offer dental services in Pueblo's east side neighborhood at the East Side Clinic. Dental care is available to established patients regardless of insurance status. A sliding fee scale is offered to those without coverage. No one is turned away because of inability to pay.

PCHC has offered high quality dental care services since 1987, beginning at PCHC's Avondale Clinic (and later out of a smaller, Colorado Avenue location). The program was expanded in 2001 when PCHC opened the O'Rourke Dental Clinic on Lake Avenue, and with an expansion of that site in 2011, its capacity doubled. The East Side Clinic will enable PCHC to expand services to even more Puebloans in need.

Thanks to the integrated setting, patients receiving care at the East Side Clinic will enjoy medical, dental, behavioral health, lab, and pharmacy all in one, convenient location.



Dental reception area at PCHC's East Side Clinic.

Two CHCs Receive Shirley Hass Schuett Quality Award

MarillacHealth and Sunrise Community Health are recipients of the Shirley Hass Schuett Quality Award for their performance on quality measures and program improvement in the Women's Wellness Connection.

The Shirley Hass Schuett Quality Award is presented annually by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Cancer Prevention and Early Detection (CPED) Program Health Navigation and Clinical Services, also known as Women's Wellness Connection or WWC. It is awarded to organizations that provide the highest quality care to women, demonstrated by meeting program performance indicators and improving performance. Shirley Hass was a nurse practitioner who served as the nurse consultant for the Women's Wellness Connection program and was instrumental in the program's success in achieving positive clinical outcomes for their patients, and helping the program to meet all core performance indicators.

MarillacHealth and Sunrise Community Health were each top performers on five program performance indicators and most improved on four program performance indicators. St. Thomas More Hospital, Cañon City, was also selected for the award. The 2022 award was given for care provided between June 30, 2021, and June 29, 2022.

Upcoming CHC Events

Peak Vista Community Health Centers 2022 Breakfast of Champions

Peak Vista's annual Breakfast of Champions fundraiser is in early November. This fundraiser supports Peak Vista's mission to provide exceptional health care to people facing access barriers, through clinical programs and education. Every year, the breakfast features a gold medal Olympian who shares their inspirational story and its connection to health care. This year, the Olympian Keynote Speaker is Greg Louganis, who is widely considered one of the greatest divers in history.

The Breakfast of Champions fundraiser is Nov. 9, 7:30-9:00 a.m. MT, at the Broadmoor Hall in Colorado Springs. [View more information and purchase tickets.](#)

CHPA Updates

CHPA and Colorado CHCs Improve Care Quality While Saving Costs to Medicare Program

Community Health Provider Alliance (CHPA) improved care for almost 14,000 Medicare beneficiaries in the state of Colorado and saved Medicare over \$14.6 million by meeting quality and cost goals in 2021, according to recently released performance data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency that administers Medicare. That's a saving to the system of \$1,043 per Medicare beneficiary, while at the same time maintaining high-quality patient care. The saving resulted in a shared savings payment of about \$5.7 million to CHPA, 60 percent of which will be distributed to the participating member Community Health Centers.

CHPA joined the CMS Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) in 2017 and shared savings were first earned in the third performance year of 2019. CHPA has continued achieving savings since then, obtaining \$37.6 million in total savings for CMS over the last three years. Even throughout the global COVID-19 pandemic, quality scores remained above 84 percent, and CHPA continues to implement various programs to reduce the total cost of care while improving quality and patient satisfaction.

[Learn more about CHPA shared savings.](#)

Ben Wiederholt Serving as Interim CEO of CHPA

Ben Wiederholt is the Interim Chief Executive Officer at CHPA. He has been a health care executive for 18 years and is currently the president of Icarus Advising which supports organizations in the journey to a patient-first delivery system that is more effective, efficient, and equitable. Most recently he was the CEO at STRIDE Community Health Center in the Denver Metro Area. During his five-year tenure at STRIDE, finances were stabilized, visits increased by 97 percent, quality outcomes improved, including an emphasis on reducing health disparities, and programs were expanded to address the social drivers of health. Mr. Wiederholt previously led ambulatory operations at Centura Health. He holds a master's degree in health administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives. He is honored to be part of the team at CHPA and to support them and the board during this transitional period.

CCHN Update

New Staff – Kim Freeman

Kim Freeman joined CCHN as a Quality Initiatives Specialist in July 2022, and will focus on team-based care and integration of oral health services into primary care. She will also provide training and technical assistance to support CHC dental programs. Ms. Freeman has a master's degree in public health from the University of Arizona and a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene from Northern Arizona University. Prior to joining CCHN, Ms. Freeman worked for eight years at a large Community Health Center in northern Arizona, as the Dental Operations Manager, a clinical hygienist, and supporting a wide variety of integrated projects. During her graduate studies, Ms. Freeman assisted with research projects focusing on diabetes and oral health integration. In her free time, Ms. Freeman enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband, Tim, their children and their two dogs. Coming from Arizona, she keeps busy exploring all that Colorado has to offer.

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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 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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