



CCHN NEWSLETTER WINTER 2024

Community Health Center News

Dr. Carol Niforatos recognized with NNOHA Outstanding Clinician Award

On Nov. 7, 2023, Dr. Carol Niforatos was presented with the National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA) Outstanding Clinician Award.

Dr. Niforatos is the director of dental services at Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, a role she has held since 2013. Dr. Niforatos is a long-standing, dedicated Community Health Center (CHC) leader. Prior to her current leadership role with the Coalition, she served as a volunteer at Inner City Health Center, a dentist at STRIDE Community Health Center (formerly Metro Community Provider Network), and dental director at Plains Medical Center, now merged with Peak Vista Community Health Centers. She has also served as the chair of the Colorado Dental Health Network, Colorado's peer group of CHC dental directors, on two occasions.

Dr. Niforatos has demonstrated leadership as a clinician and as an innovator. She is well-known for her exceptional prosthodontic skills. Her clinical gifts have not only enhanced the lives of countless patients over the course of her career, but she has used them to teach young dentists and other CHC staff. In this way, her gift of caring for the most marginalized in our communities has exponential reach. Dr. Niforatos has also embraced integrated care, piloting and expanding efforts to integrate dental hygienists into medical pods, allowing them to support diabetes and hypertension prevention and management. Under her leadership, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless has served as a model for other Community Health Centers seeking to advance integration.

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Dr. Carol Niforatos holding her NNOHA Outstanding Clinician Award, flanked by John McFarland, former chief dental officer of Salud Family Health, and founder and past president of NNOHA, and Ethan Kerns, current chief dental officer at Salud.

Dr. Niforatos has also strengthened the dental program at Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, tripling the size of the dental staff, facilitating the conversion from paper charts to digital technology, and creating new partnerships for outreach opportunities.

Reflections from Dr. Niforatos' colleagues highlight her many contributions to the CHC oral health field. Carol Rykiel, registered dental hygienist manager of integrated services at Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, remarked, "She is the embodiment of Servant Leadership. She continually enriches the life of her staff, thereby building a better organization and team. She is selfless in the pursuit of clinical excellence and all of us working to the top of the scope of our practice. Her only flaw is she really loves 'Dad Jokes'."

Dr. An Nguyen, chief dental officer at Clinica Family Health shared, "Her sunny, positive demeanor never allows her to say a single negative thing, and it forges quick connections with and to others. I can imagine how comforting it must feel to her patients to experience her smiling welcome as she enters the dental operator or for her team members to know they have the advocacy and support of someone who leads with deep confidence in the skills of those who surround her."

Axis Health System Approved as Enterprise Zone Contribution Project

Axis Health System is now a Colorado Enterprise Zone Project. This designation allows donors of \$250 or more to claim a 25% state tax credit and a 12.5% state tax credit on in-kind donations. This credit is in addition to the federal tax deduction for contributing to any 501(c)(3) organization. Donors can nearly double the size of their gift – and the impact of their generosity – without increasing the net cost donated.

Axis was approved in October as an Enterprise Zone Contribution Project by the Colorado Economic Development Commission. Investments in this project will increase Axis' capacity to meet the health care needs of the southwest region by expanding services, providing living wage jobs, and creating career pathways in the health care industry through its new Durango Integrated Healthcare campus, formerly the Mercury building in La Plata County.

The Colorado Enterprise Zone Program encourages contributions to non-profit organizations that serve an Enterprise Zone and its residents. Enterprise Zone Tax Credit projects can help reduce donors' tax burden.

"We believe the expansion of health care resources and access through this project will have a significant and long-standing positive impact on the health and quality of life in the community. We appreciate the regional support and benefit this tax credit designation provides for donors interested in making a capital contribution to this innovative health care resource in La Plata County," said Shelly Burke, CEO of Axis.



Axis' new Durango Integrated Health Care Campus.

View the list of [Enterprise Zone projects](#) designated in Southwest Colorado. For more information about Axis Health System's Capital Campaign Enterprise Zone Projects or to donate, email Sarada Leavenworth at emailus@axishealthsystem.org or visit [Axis' website](#).

Quality Badges Awarded to Community Health Centers

Congratulations to the CHCs that earned Community Health Quality Recognition (CHQR) badges this year! In Colorado, 90% of CHCs received at least one badge, with Pueblo Community Health Center, River Valley Family Health Centers, Sunrise Community Health, and Uncompahgre Medical Center each receiving a gold badge.

CHQR badges recognize CHCs that have made notable achievements in access, quality, health equity, health information technology, and COVID-19 Public Health Emergency response.

[A 2022 survey](#) of 4,000 CHC patients nationwide found 97% would recommend their CHC to family and friends.

The U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) bases the CHQR badges on the prior year's Uniform Data System (UDS) data. Each calendar year, HRSA Health Center Program grant recipients are required to report a core set of information, including data on patient characteristics, services provided, clinical processes and health outcomes, patients' use of services, staffing, costs, and revenues as part of a standardized reporting system known as the UDS. Read the [HHS announcement](#).

Coalition Annual Vigil Honored the Lost Lives of 311 or More Unhoused Neighbors

For the 34th year, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless hosted the “We Will Remember: Homeless Persons’ Memorial Vigil” at the Denver City and County Building on the evening of Dec. 21. The candlelight vigil and name-reading ceremony was attended by an estimated 300 housed and unhoused community members and paid tribute to people who died while experiencing homelessness in 2023. Vigils like this one have been held on the longest night of the year in cities across the country since 1990.

The number of names read this year was 311, higher than any year prior. An additional 18 names were added at the event by attendees whose loved ones had not been read originally.

The event also featured a eulogy by local activist and poet Randle Loeb, a guitar performance by Coalition staff member Jose Gutierrez in honor of the lives lost, and a collection drive for new adult winter wear. An estimated 30 coats and dozens of socks, gloves, and hats were donated, many of which were taken by attendees in need as they exited the event.

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless President and CEO Britta Fisher, who introduced the event, added “We know what the lasting solutions to homelessness are—affordable and available housing, accessible and affordable health care, just systems of immigration, and deep policy changes that dismantle racist and unjust systems and respect the humanity of every single individual. But the Vigil is dedicated to remembering the 311 unique individuals who were part of our Denver community. They were loved by friends and family. They had hopes for their life that were cut short this year and future dreams that will never be fulfilled.”

At the event, each of the 311 names was read, followed by “We Will Remember” chanted by the hundreds of crowd members. [Read the names](#) listed on the program, or view the [livestream video](#) of the event.



Britta Fisher speaks at the Vigil accompanied by an American Sign Language translator.

Summit Foundation Honors Two Community Care Clinic Affiliates At Annual Philanthropy Awards

The Summit Foundation recognized two prominent Summit Community Care Clinic contributors during the 2023 Annual Philanthropy Awards ceremony in November. Since 1991, the Summit Foundation's Annual Philanthropy Awards honor community members and businesses who dedicate themselves towards fostering a better Summit County. Dr. Charles Lackey received the Outstanding Citizen award, and the late Dr. Don Parsons received the Spirit of the Summit award.

Dr. Lackey began his post-residency medical career in Summit County in the 1980s and has since deepened his commitment to the well-being of Summit County's underserved populations. "Dr. Lackey's devotion to serving the underserved epitomizes the essence of philanthropy, community service, and giving back to others. His passion for equitable health care access is rooted in his belief that health care should be a universal right, not a privilege," said Dr. Kathleen Cowie, chief medical officer at the Care Clinic in her nomination.

Dr. Lackey played a pivotal role in establishing Summit Community Care Clinic in 1993. Under his guidance, the Care Clinic evolved from a volunteer-run organization serving just under 300 patients per year into a federally qualified Community Health Center, serving thousands of people annually across multiple counties. In addition to his local private practice, Dr. Lackey provided free medical care to countless patients. He joined the Care Clinic as a full-time physician in 2017 prior to his retirement in spring of 2023.

"Philanthropy to me, is the glue that puts the community together," said Dr. Lackey in his acceptance speech. "I think it takes a village to make a community, and you all are that village and I want to thank you for allowing me to be a part of your village."

Dr. Parsons was awarded the Spirit of the Summit Award. Following a 30-year career as a general surgeon with Colorado Kaiser Permanente, Dr. Parsons was an active and prominent voice in Summit County. Dr. Parsons' service on Summit Community Care Clinic's board was just one of many extensive involvements with local and state organizations and boards, including Rotary Club of Summit County, the 9 Health Fair, Colorado Public Health Association, the Town of Dillon, Summit High School, Colorado Mountain College, Denver Medical Society, and many more.

"Few people have the breadth and length of devotion that Dr. Don Parsons has provided to this community and so many causes throughout his lifetime. His passion and vocal voice for those who have no voice is legendary in Summit County," stated Susan Robertson, former chief strategy officer at the Care Clinic. "Dr. Parsons used his expertise in public health, preventive medicine, and medical ethics to help and advocate for others and to create a healthier community for all."

Dr. Parsons passed away on August 6, 2023, at the age of 82. Dr. Parsons' daughter, Summit County Public Health Director, Amy Wineland accepted the award on his behalf.



Dr. Kathleen Cowie and Dr. Charles Lackey at the awards reception.

Denver Health Receives Grant to Support Youth Mental Health

Denver Health received a grant from Caring for Denver Foundation to establish the innovative Therapeutic Response and Urgent Stabilization Team (TRUST) as a part of their school-based health program.

TRUST will provide immediate, short-term therapy and psychiatric care to youth who need urgent access to behavioral health care but do not meet criteria for crisis services or are stepping down from such services. The program strategically positions behavioral health staff in four Denver Public Schools who will be able to respond to other schools in the area within 24 hours of referral. The intention is to fill a gap in care and create stability for youth and families at critical times.

Additionally, this program works closely with existing programs in Denver Health's school-based health program to increase connection to outside resources and on-going care. [Youth Healthcare Alliance](#) is supporting the Denver Health team on this project, and staff will share lessons learned with the rest of Colorado's school-based clinics.

Tepeyac Community Health Center's Mix-Use Space

Tepeyac Community Health Center has been providing high-quality, affordable health care to north Denver since 1995. In the last year, Tepeyac's space quadrupled in size, and their clinic and pharmacy are now part of a mixed-use structure that includes affordable housing through Viña Apartments, and a soon-to-be fresh produce grocery store.

Tepeyac stood as the trusted community partner throughout the development process. Tepeyac's CEO, Jim Garcia, said their goal was to create a safe and welcoming environment that is echoed within the new building. Mr. Garcia said it is best if patients want to see providers at Tepeyac simply because they offer quality, culturally competent care, and not just because it is the only option.



Tepeyac Community Health Center in the Elyria-Swansea neighborhood.

The integrated structure has made a meaningful impact on the community it serves in Denver's Elyria-Swansea neighborhood. In a [story published by Direct Relief](#), Janet Coupens, Community Manager at Viña Apartments, described the difference of having her housing and health care located in the same building: She had to leave work to fill a prescription by her doctor, and it only took five minutes. All she had to do was walk down a corridor to Tepeyac's new Community Health Center. In the past, it may have taken her an hour or more to travel and wait for care at a for-profit pharmacy.

Ms. Coupens said she's seen the difference for her neighbors at Viña, too. When a child is sick, and a single mother must leave work to take them to the doctor, the ease of having a provider next door is helpful. Given that most of Viña's residents don't have cars, the ease of walkability increases the likelihood that residents will visit a physician when sick.

Inner City Health Center Turned 40

Inner City Health Center saw their first patient in 1983, and just celebrated 40 years of delivering high quality health care in the Denver area. To celebrate, Inner City hosted a fundraiser complete with live music, dancing, comedy, and an auction. Congratulations, Inner City! We look forward to what's to come.

Axis Health System Recognized for Commitment to Blood Pressure Control

Axis Health System's Integrated Clinics have been recognized by the American Heart Association and American Medical Association for their commitment to improving blood pressure (BP) control rates, earning Silver-level recognition as part of [Target: BP™](#). The Silver Award recognizes practices that have demonstrated a commitment to improving blood pressure control for adult patients through measurement accuracy. High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a leading risk factor for heart attacks, strokes, and preventable death in the U.S.

Axis patients can use a blood pressure cuff at home that sends readings back to the clinic in real-time. If readings are above or below a particular point, staff reach out to check in and adjust a patient's care plan. Staff work with the patient to make changes to their care based on the data.



Staff at Axis Health System's Cortez location.

"Addressing blood pressure management is key for better cardiovascular health – and critical today when heart disease and stroke continue to be leading causes of death for adults in the U.S." said Dr. Jill Rimmey, medical director at Axis. "High blood pressure is a leading risk factor of heart disease and stroke that can often be prevented or managed if diagnosed and treated properly."

Target: BP is a national initiative formed by the American Heart Association and American Medical Association in response to the high rate of uncontrolled blood pressure. The initiative aims to help health care organizations and care teams improve blood pressure control rates at no cost. The program recognizes organizations like Axis that are committed to improving blood pressure control.

"By committing to helping more people in rural Colorado control their blood pressure and reduce their risks for future heart disease and stroke, Axis is taking a key step to helping more people live longer, healthier lives," said Yvonne Commodore-Mensah, PhD, MHS, RN, FAHA, Target: BP advisory group volunteer and associate professor at Johns Hopkins School of Nursing. "Axis' participation in the Target: BP initiative shows its dedication to turning clinical guidelines into lifelines for patients and their families."

Mountain Family Health Centers Welcomes Dustin Moyer as CEO



Dustin Moyer.

In early February, Dustin Moyer will join Mountain Family Health Centers as the new Chief Executive Officer.

Mr. Moyer's CEO announcement came about four months after former CEO Ross Brooks resigned after 11 years at the helm. Mountain Family's Board of Directors conducted an extensive, multi-phase search to find the right blend of experience, skills, values, education, and personality for its next leader. Annette Franta, Mountain Family's long-time Chief Financial Officer and well-respected member of the Colorado CHC family, stepped in as interim CEO during the search. CCHN staff are grateful for her leadership as she gracefully balanced CEO duties on top of her continued role as CFO.

Mr. Moyer brings over 15 years of health care experience across policy, advocacy, philanthropy, and data analysis. His deep connection to the organization is evident from his progression as a partner and patient to a Mountain Family Board Member. The board looks forward to leveraging his strategic insights, capacity for listening, and experience leading innovative health care approaches in the years to come.

“I am humbled and grateful to the Mountain Family Health Centers Board of Directors for the opportunity to lead the organization into its next chapter,” Moyer said. “Through my prior engagement with Mountain Family Health Centers, I have developed a deep respect for the mission of the organization, the people it serves, and the staff who provide high-quality care to the Roaring Fork, Eagle, and Colorado River Valley communities.”

Mr. Moyer most recently served as the Director of Innovation at the Center for Improving Value in Health Care (CIVHC), where he led the organization’s efforts to build a multi-state data initiative, a first-of-its-kind project. Before his time at CIVHC, he spent seven years with the Colorado Health Foundation, working on both the policy and program teams. Moyer has also worked for both Kansas and Colorado Medicaid.

Mr. Moyer holds a master of public policy from the University of Denver and a bachelor of arts in political science from Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. He lives in Glenwood Springs with his wife, Amy, and their two sons, Miles and Isaac.

Summit Community Care Clinic Welcomes Daniel Becker as CEO

Daniel Becker, MBA, is Summit Community Care Clinic’s new chief executive officer. The Care Clinic’s Board of Directors appointed him in November 2023 after a several-month search to fill the position. Mr. Becker joined the Care Clinic in June 2023 as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and was then appointed Interim CEO in September 2023. Susan Robertson, long-time Care Clinic chief strategy officer and critical member of the CHC movement, filled in as interim during the search.

“Having experienced first-hand the passion of our dedicated staff and the strong community connections that improve the lives of our friends, family, and neighbors, I am eager to lead the Care Clinic in its mission to provide high-quality, integrated, accessible health care to all,” stated Mr. Becker.



Daniel Becker.

Mr. Becker’s career includes 15 years of experience in health care, with 13 of those years serving as CFO. Mr. Becker has managed operating budgets ranging from \$6 to \$30 million dollars for federally qualified Community Health Centers (FQHCs) and FQHC-Look-Alikes. This includes serving as CFO of Marillac Clinic, Inc., now MarillacHealth, in Grand Junction, Colo., from 2017 to 2023.

In 1987, Becker joined the US Air Force and was honorably discharged three and a half years later following an injury. After his military service, Mr. Becker earned his bachelor’s in accounting from the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire and a master of business administration from the University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh.

“Dan’s experience and leadership in health care nonprofits and his demonstrated dedication to the Care Clinic solidified our decision to appoint him to the CEO role. His steady style and fresh perspective support the direction we would like the Clinic to go to better serve the community,” said Dana Cottrell, president of the Care Clinic’s Board of Directors.

Just prior to Mr. Becker’s transition into CEO, the Care Clinic’s Board of Directors appointed three new members during their October 2023 Board meeting. Ismael Calle, vice president of FirstBank; Dr. David Biggs, oncologist at Summit Oncology; and Dr. Ziad Haydar, health care executive; have joined 11 existing Board members to serve two-year terms.

Policy Update

Advocacy at the State Capitol: Invest in Community Health Centers

Community Health Centers and CCHN will again advocate the state legislature to maintain previous years' funding for the Primary Care Fund, and to help fix a Medicaid payment issue.

CCHN's first ask is that the state budget include the same level of funding for the Primary Care Fund as last year. The Primary Care Fund, which is composed of state tobacco tax revenue, general fund investment, and federal matching funds, is distributed to participating clinics based on the number of uninsured patients they serve each year. Unfortunately, more and more Community Health Center patients are becoming uninsured this year, as the Medicaid protections put in place during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency were lifted. This process is referred to as the Medicaid "unwind." As of January 2024, CHCs have seen a drop of more than 130,000 Medicaid members attributed to CHCs since May 2023.

CHCs have enrollment teams who help patients navigate the confusing unwind process. During the Medicaid unwind, some people are losing Medicaid because they are no longer income-eligible, but many are being dropped from coverage just because they didn't return some paperwork. CHC enrollment teams are working to assist patients with their paperwork and CHCs continue to care for their patients, regardless of insurance status. This year, CHCs are asking for a continued \$7 million general fund investment into the Primary Care Fund to help them care for this increased number of uninsured patients. All state investment in the Primary Care Fund receives a 1-to-1 federal match, meaning that this is also a smart way for the state to bring federal funds to care for uninsured Coloradans.

CCHN and CHCs will also be asking for about \$2 million in the final state budget to help modernize the methodology used each year to set Medicaid reimbursement for CHCs. Medicaid pays CHCs a set amount per patient visit, but the current system allows for sudden decreases after one year of serving more patients or lowering costs. At the same time, it can take years for the costs of new services – like the high cost of COVID-19 and shingles vaccines – to be incorporated into the amount that Medicaid pays CHCs. This results in CHCs receiving reimbursement that is less than the actual cost of care. The fix, referred to as removing the "lesser than" provision in cost reporting, needs a small amount of funding for the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to implement.

Questions about how to be involved? Please contact CCHN's Policy Director, Stephanie Brooks at sbrooks@cchn.org.

CCHN Update

Returning to the Roots of the Community Health Center Movement

Access to health care for all and opposition to a two-tiered health care system that underserves or excludes people based on income, race, ethnicity, or location, are founding drivers of the Community Health Center movement. In continued practice of those values, CCHN has been working with its member CHCs and Integrated Works (IW) since 2022 to develop goals around racial equity and a "roadmap" to achieve those goals. With help from IW, a local consulting group that supports mission-driven organizations, and advised by a Racial Equity Committee of the Board, CCHN's Board of Directors has adopted the following goals to guide this work:

- Improving equitable access to care
- Improving cultural responsiveness in care delivery
- Recruiting diverse talent
- Retaining diverse talent
- Improving community engagement and support for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts
- Equitable vendor/partner relationships
- Supporting state-wide collaboration on DEI issues across CHCs

In 2023, CCHN and IW hosted a Racial Equity Learning Community with five CHCs and CCHN, and has provided additional technical assistance to eight CHCs. These CHCs chose priority areas from the list above and created a plan to begin or deepen work in that area. With input from the Racial Equity Committee and support from IW, CCHN has developed a Roadmap which will include tactics, measures, and outcomes for each priority goal area. CCHN will officially launch the roadmap in February or March 2024.

This recommitment to racial equity speaks directly to the roots of the Community Health Center movement. CHCs have their origin in the civil rights movement, through the work of Dr. H. Jack Geiger, Dr. Count Gibson, and so many others. Pulling from experiences in the civil rights and social justice movements, Dr. Geiger and Dr. Gibson embedded those principles into the movement that they helped start. Since 1965, CHCs have provided access to quality, affordable health care to all, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. The goal to empower local communities and provide care for all, so that all people could participate in society, is a direct representation of civil rights. A core principle of CHCs, to be governed by community boards with at least 51% patients, is a continuation of that promise to empower and learn from communities.

In Colorado, countless leaders have continued the legacy of CHCs as safe, accessible, and equitable locations to receive care. CCHN staff are grateful for all the CHC staff, board members, and others who contribute to the mission of CHCs and commitment to racial equity within Colorado CHCs.



Racial equity technical assistance session with Integrated Work and some members of Mountain Family Health Center's Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging, Equity and Engagement (DIBEE) Committee on Dec. 8, 2023.

CHAMPS Update

New Staff — Katie Chamberlin

Katie Chamberlin joined the CHAMPS team in November 2023. In her role, she is responsible for the coordination and implementation of CHAMP's Health Equity and Outreach and Enrollment programs. She also provides support for website, clinical quality improvement, advocacy, and other CHAMPS activities. Ms. Chamberlin received a bachelor of science in kinesiology and a minor in health promotion from Michigan State University. She has previous experience working in non-profits and various health settings, including digital health, corporate wellness, and health care safety and emergency management. In her free time, Ms. Chamberlin enjoys running, rock climbing, and learning guitar.

CHPA Update

CHPA Saves Medicare Money for Fourth Consecutive Year

Community Health Provider Alliance (CHPA) improved care for 13,844 Medicare beneficiaries in Colorado and saved Medicare \$15,270,028 by meeting quality and cost goals in 2022, according to performance data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Medicare data shows CHPA earned a quality score of 70.63% on performance measures ranging from preventive health checks to use of computerized health records to preventing avoidable hospitalizations. The \$15,270,028 of gross savings to Medicare resulted in a shared savings payment of \$7,482,314 to CHPA, 48% of which were directly distributed to the participating Colorado CHCs. An additional 20% will be distributed to CHCs at the discretion of the Board in 2024 to support per member per month payments to members, and other initiatives. CHPA will use 21% to support improvement efforts for individual CHCs, 6% will be awarded to CHCs through a Member Development fund, and the remaining 5% will be used to support CHPA's operating costs.

Member CHCs who participated in the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) work to increase the number of Medicare beneficiaries using annual wellness visits, including recommended screenings and preventive care. CHPA also focuses on ensuring smooth patient transitions from the hospital to home and provides various supports to manage patients with chronic conditions and complex social risk factors. All member CHCs receive detailed information about their performance on quality measures from CHPA. Additionally, clinicians and providers share best practices to coordinate the care beneficiaries receive from different primary care and specialty providers to prevent health issues and repeat hospitalizations.

CHPA joined the CMS MSSP in 2017 and shared savings were first earned in the third performance year of 2019. CHPA has continued achieving savings since then, providing \$52 million in total savings for CMS over the last four years. CHPA continues to implement various programs to reduce the total cost of care while improving quality and patient satisfaction.

To further support the 832,000+ patients served by the CHPA network in Colorado every year, CHPA donated \$19,000 to food banks across the state working to help alleviate food insecurity this holiday season. The donations were made on behalf of each member CHC, to a local food bank of their choice.



CHPA Board of Directors with MSSP PY22 Network Savings Check.

New Staff — Brionna Bendetti, CPC, CRC

Brionna Benedetti, CPC, CRC, joined CHPA in August as the supervisor of quality and risk adjustment. She is a graduate of the University of Florida's Public Health program, holding high honors as a member of the Delta Omega National Public Health Honors Society. Early in her career, she started as a patient care and risk adjustment coordinator for a physician-led [ACO](#) in Gainesville, Fla., While at this ACO, she also served as a case manager, piloting a program to reduce emergency department utilization and promote better health outcomes for patients with complex care needs. She later worked as a Practice Performance Manager and Medicare Consultant for United Healthcare, where she led both large health systems and small health groups in quality-of-care strategies and diagnoses recapture rates. She holds several certifications from the American Academy of Professional Coders and is passionate about the diagnostic coding world.

New Staff — Leah Fitzgerald, PharmD, BCACP

Leah Fitzgerald, PharmD, BCACP, joined CHPA in June as consulting clinical pharmacist for value-based care. Dr. Fitzgerald is a graduate of Auburn University and completed an [ASHP](#)-accredited PGY1 residency in Atlanta, Ga., before moving to Colorado to begin her pharmacy career. Dr. Fitzgerald worked in the acute care setting as an intensive care specialist for the first half of her career. In 2016 she began working in community health as a senior clinical instructor with the University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Services. She is the director of pharmacy services at Denver Indian Health and Family Services (DIHFS), an Urban Indian Organization located in Denver, Colo. and supports pharmacy services at Sheridan Health Services. During her time at DIHFS, she implemented new pharmacy services including a 340B pharmacy, and helped grow clinical services through utilization of collaborative drug therapy management protocols. Outside of work, she loves spending time with her family which includes her husband, two teenage boys, and their dog, Rufus.

New Staff — Robert Smith, CPHQ

Robert Smith, CPHQ, joined CHPA in October as a practice transformation coach. Mr. Smith graduated from the University of Michigan and began his career as a human resources professional. Over 10 years ago, he transitioned to health care to focus on clinical quality and operational performance improvement activities for a multi-state accountable care organization as part of Colorado's largest health care delivery system. Mr. Smith is a certified professional in health care quality (CPHQ) from the National Association for Healthcare Quality and has extensive experience leading the development and deployment of high-impact quality and systems transformation initiatives within a variety of health care settings. Mr. Smith is well-trained and experienced in using lean methodology within various health care settings and holds a certificate in quality and safety from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. When not working, Mr. Smith enjoys spending time with his family and enjoying the great outdoors of Colorado

New Staff — Susie Stebbins

Susie Stebbins joined CHPA in June as the director of human resources and business operations. With over 10 years of experience in human resources working alongside the executive team, Mrs. Stebbins specializes in human resources management, organizational leadership, and change implementation. One of her favorite things about working in human resources is supporting staff in their roles to drive innovation, improve processes, and cultivate a workplace culture in which employees can thrive and grow. Mrs. Stebbins is inspired by her husband and two young kids, and in her free time, she likes to golf, play board games, cook, and attend performing arts events.



Winter 2024 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 832,000 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

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