

# Colorado *Community Health* Network's **Access for All Colorado Plan**

Colorado's 15 Community Health Centers are the backbone of our state's primary care safety net, caring for more than 500,000 working individuals and families across the state. Every day, Health Centers meet the needs of:

**Individuals** by offering care on a sliding fee scale to make care affordable

**Communities** by providing high quality care in medically underserved areas

**Colorado** by caring for one-third each of our state's Medicaid enrollees, CHP+ enrollees and low-income uninsured

Unfortunately, there are hundreds of thousands of people in Colorado without access to a regular source of health care. A bold new plan developed by the Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN) and Colorado's Community Health Centers shows how increasing funding over the next 20 years will allow Health Centers to serve as the health care home to one million Coloradans, approximately half of them uninsured.

In the first five years alone, Health Centers will expand capacity to care for 200,000 low-income uninsured and another 199,000 Coloradans in need of a health care home. This plan will require:

- \$206 million in capital investments
- 322 new physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants
- \$236 million in new operational dollars to care for the low-income uninsured patients. This is less than \$500 per patient per year for medical care.

This bold expansion will require additional support from local communities and businesses, patients, foundations, and the state and federal governments. CCHN and Colorado's Health Centers are committed to reaching our shared vision of providing a health care home for all low-income medically underserved Coloradans. With ongoing, committed funding Health Centers can increase our capacity to serve this population.

**Why invest in Health Centers?** Health Centers have a proven track record of improving patient and community health through high quality care; decreasing health care costs by preventing unnecessary emergency room visits and preventable hospitalizations; and growing quickly to meet community need.

***A proven track record for quality.*** Both the Institute of Medicine and the Government Accountability Office have recognized Community Health Centers as effective models for reducing health disparities and for managing the care of people with chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and HIV.

***A proven track record for delivering cost effective and cost saving care.*** Nationally, medical expenses for CHC patients are 41 percent lower (\$1,810 less per person annually) compared to patients seen elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Communities with Health Centers have healthier newborns, fewer hospitalizations, and fewer visits to the emergency room than communities without Health Centers.

***A proven track record for growth.*** Colorado Health Centers have a history of growing to meet our state's needs. In fact, CHCs grew by 57%, adding nearly 150,000 new patients in the 10-year-period between 1998 and 2007.

**Why invest in primary health care?** An investment of this size is a critical step in transforming our state's health care delivery system. Research has shown a direct relationship between primary care supply and health outcomes and between primary health care and cost containment.

**We must work now to grow and strengthen Health Centers so that more Coloradans have a regular source of care.** Health Centers are an excellent public investment that generates substantial benefits for patients, communities, businesses, insurers and government. Investment today in the growth of Health Centers is a smart choice for a healthier Colorado tomorrow.

<sup>1</sup> Access Granted: The Primary Care Payoff, National Association of Community Health Centers, 2007.

## *Colorado Community Health Centers and CCHN*

**COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS (CHCs)** are non-profit or public comprehensive primary care providers with a mission to provide health care to low-income working families and individuals. CHCs are also called Federally Qualified Health Centers or FQHCs.

Community Health Centers provide comprehensive primary health care, which includes:

- Primary care, including family, internal, and pediatric medicine
- Maternity and prenatal care
- Preventive, developmental, and diagnostic services for children
- Adult preventive services
- Pharmacy, laboratory and radiology
- Emergency care for minor trauma
- Patient case management services
- Culturally competent staff, including translation services on site
- Outreach and transportation services
- Coordination and follow-up for hospital care
- Onsite or referral to dental, mental health, and behavioral health services, and eyeglasses

Health Centers serve rural and frontier areas of the state that have shortages of primary health care providers.

- Services are targeted to families earning less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Health Centers provide a long-term health care home for families as they move in and out of private health insurance, eligibility for public programs, and no insurance coverage at all.
- Services are offered on a sliding scale fee based on income to keep care affordable

Health Centers are especially able to meet the needs of their communities because more than half the members of their boards of directors are patients.

Health Centers are economic engines that generated \$374,000,000 in economic activity for the state of Colorado in 2007. They provide direct employment and income and generate jobs in related businesses through the purchase of goods and services in their communities.

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**THE COLORADO COMMUNITY HEALTH NETWORK (CCHN)** represents Colorado's 15 Community Health Centers. CCHN is committed to: 1) educating policy makers and stakeholders about the unique needs of CHCs, 2) providing resources to ensure that CHCs are strong organizations, and 3) supporting CHCs in maintaining the highest quality of care.

For more information about CCHN or the Access for All Colorado plan, please contact:  
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