

# THE COMMUNITY

ColoradoHealthNetwork.org

NEWS FROM COLORADO HEALTH NETWORK, INC | DECEMBER 2020 | ISSUE 4

## CHNews - Darrell Vigil, Chief Executive Officer



Dear CHN clients, donors, volunteers and friends:

As we look toward the end of the year we can't help but reflect on the challenges we've all faced – from a global pandemic and racial injustice to an emotive and divisive Presidential election.

CHN clients, patients and staff have been resilient in adapting to the changes needed to be able to continue to provide services during the pandemic. We transitioned to providing many services remotely and established protocols for providing clinical, nutritional and prevention programs safely, in person. We're also pleased to be doing more work to promote diversity, equity and inclusion internally and externally to the organization. This work will continue into the new year and will be highlighted in a future edition of The Community.

In this newsletter you'll read about our end of year fundraising campaign and we highlight three vital CHN programs: Southern Colorado's Syringe Access Program, Health Access insurance enrollment services, and CHN's Behavioral Health services.

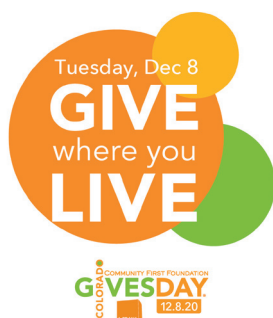
Thank you to all of our supporters throughout Colorado and beyond. Your contributions of time and financial support continue to help sustain programs and services for people living with and at risk for HIV throughout Colorado. Here's to peace, healing and happier days ahead on all fronts in 2021!

Sincerely,

Darrell J. Vigil, MBA  
Chief Executive Officer

## DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE TO MAKE AN IMPACT IN 2020

As we near the end of 2020, be sure you have a plan for how you will make a difference in your local community by supporting people living with and at risk of acquiring HIV!



Colorado Gives Day connects individuals to connect with local charitable organizations in the spirit of giving and philanthropy. Schedule your Colorado Gives Day gift to Colorado Health Network by December 8 to support thousands of people in the Denver metropolitan area, Northern Colorado, and Western Colorado. Visit <https://rebrand.ly/CHNcgd> to make your gift today.

In Southern Colorado, support people living with HIV by donating to SCHN through IndyGive! From now through December 31, double your impact as the first \$5,000 will be matched! Make your donation for SCHN at [www.indygive.com/schn](http://www.indygive.com/schn)



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## FINDING STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE ON THE WESTERN SLOPE

Watching the rapid and devastating spread of the novel coronavirus has been surreal, and the dramatic changes in our way of life has impacted many with overwhelming experiences of stress and frustration. Nonetheless, COVID has reminded us not only of our fragility but also our strength. Community partners have gone above and beyond to provide WCHN programs with guidance and support as we all navigate such an unknown landscape.



Communities, workplaces, and homes have begun to adapt to the ways goods and services can be delivered safely. While frequent changes in hours and the number of staff available for service delivery have at times been distressing for clients, they remain engaged and are moving forward with positive thinking. By operating with safe social distancing, mask enforcement and compassion, WCHN has been able to remain connected, and in some cases even improved connections, with those we serve.

What has been most impressive over the last year is the ability of both staff and clients to demonstrate resilience, collectively. Facing the unknown has required camaraderie, patience, understanding, and a willingness to help. There is no greater feeling of connectedness than when we see people come together for the best interest of all.

## SOUTHERN COLORADO'S SUCCESS WITH SYRINGE ACCESS

2020 has been a whirlwind of a year at Access Point Pueblo! As an essential service, we have continued to operate throughout the COVID pandemic. In the past year, Access Point Pueblo served over 2,400 different individuals and is continuing to grow. This year alone 5,774 doses of naloxone were distributed and participants reported using this intervention to save 179 lives. We are constantly exploring new ways to reach clients during the pandemic and have developed new educational materials to compensate for impacts to personal interactions with prevention staff during this time.

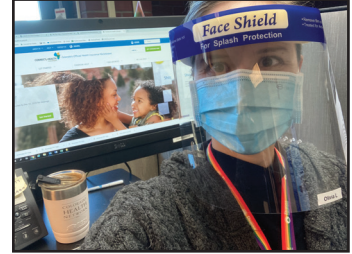
Access Point Pueblo has partnered with three local hotels for monthly pick-ups of syringes found on hotel property, and SCHN is also strengthening existing partnerships to increase awareness of our program in the community and decrease stigma.

Extended Wednesday evening hours were added in October, and clients are now able to order ahead of time for convenience and safety. Thanks to these efforts Access Point Pueblo is now reaching people who previously could not access services, ensuring more Southern Coloradans than ever before have access to life-saving harm reduction interventions.

## CLINICAL SERVICES OFFERS CARE VIRTUALLY

With the onset of COVID, clinical programs moved quickly to procure the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to continue offering in-person visits for our clients. The surge in nationwide demand caused most of our suppliers to experience backorders on many of the items we needed to continue operating safely. Masks, gloves, and disinfecting supplies become increasingly expensive and were not readily available as they were before COVID-19.

The clinical programs teams worked on calling all of their active patients of record to notify them of changes to operating hours and to educate them on the safety measures being implemented statewide to ensure their safety while visiting our offices. We moved to extend our once hourly visits to ninety minutes and reduced the number of clients allowed in our lobby by 80% to further enhance social distancing.



CHN behavioral health clinicians adapted to continue providing counseling services virtually, and were able to host the annual Women's Retreat by sending participants care packages to facilitate their involvement in the event. The medical team offered every new and existing client the option to maintain their scheduled appointments via telehealth or phone consults. CHN dental providers were able to triage dental emergencies, and CHN is one of the few providers across the state offering non-urgent care or treatment to people living with or affected by HIV.

We're excited to share the expansion of our clinical programs to include: STI/STD test and treat visits on Mondays, on a walk-in basis. Howard Dental Center has expanded access from being exclusively for people with HIV to now include people with other health conditions. The Behavioral Health team offered tele-counseling services for youth impacted by COVID-19, in the Denver metro area. Also, CHN is now a registered 340b site partnering with Avita (and Walgreens in 2021), to further expand its wrap-around services by offering mail-order medicaments for eligible clients.

## HEALTH ACCESS GETS CLIENTS ENROLLED IN INSURANCE

The Health Access team has been incredibly successful in getting clients enrolled in comprehensive insurance – so successful that the average team member has a list of over 80 individuals with whom they must work with to get re-enrolled in insurance. Fewer than 140 people statewide lack insurance that are eligible for it at this time, out of over 5,000 clients on the AIDS Drug Assistance Program.