



Positive Press

The Official Newsletter of the Southern Colorado Health Network

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Are COVID Vaccines Safe for People Living with HIV?

The U.S. vaccine safety system makes sure all vaccines are as safe as possible. COVID-19 vaccines have gone through the same safety tests and meet the same standards as other vaccines. People with HIV were included in clinical trials, though safety data specific to this group are not yet available.

People with HIV are part of the group of people with underlying medical conditions. If you have HIV, you may choose to get vaccinated if you have not had a severe or immediate allergic reaction to any of the vaccine ingredients. If you have a weakened immune system, you should also be aware of the potential for reduced immune responses to the vaccine. If you decide to get vaccinated, continue to take everyday preventive actions to protect yourself against COVID-19. Speak to your provider if you have any further questions regarding the COVID vaccine.

*Source: CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/covid>



Experiencing Challenges due to COVID-19?

COVID has really affected a lot of people in the past year. If you have been affected by COVID in anyway, please contact your case manager to see if you qualify for assistance. We would love to see if we could provide additional support through these difficult times.

Kimberly Reisiger is SCHN's Newest Case Manager

My name is Kimberly Reisiger and I come from a background in medical genetics where I have worked as Genetic Counselor to help people understand and utilize their genetic information since 2004. I have worked with families raising children with undiagnosed disabling conditions as well as with pregnant women and their families facing a potential birth defect or genetic condition in a pregnancy. I have also worked occasionally with same-sex couples seeking to utilize fertility technologies to have a child. In my career, I have sought to advocate for decision-making that is reflective of each person's/family's goals and values. I believe that through demonstrating empathy and compassion, I can help to empower decision-making that promotes overall health and wellness. Prior to entering the field of genetic counseling, I was a volunteer on the HIV/AIDS/HEPC Nightline in San Francisco, CA where I provided support to people living with and at risk for HIV and Hepatitis C. The prognosis for HIV at that time in the early 2000's, was of course very different than it is today. I am grateful for the medical advances in the treatments of HIV that have been made since that time and I am excited to circle to back to serving the communities affected by HIV and bring my skills of advocacy gained through Genetic Counseling in working with the clients and staff at Southern Colorado Health Network.



I am also a mom to a 10 year-old son and a 6 year-old daughter who keep me very busy! In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my kids, friends and extended family, reading, yoga, hiking, meditation, watercolor painting and jewelry-making. My kids and I enjoy all the beauty and outdoor activities that Colorado has to offer.

ACCESS POINT PUEBLO UPDATE

Access Point Pueblo has been quite busy over the last month. We have continued to do community syringe clean-ups monthly. We have now partnered with Pueblo PD, who calls us when they are alerted to syringes in the community. Fentanyl rates are continuing to climb, with a 71% positivity rate. We are working hard to continue to educate our folx about ways to keep themselves safe. We have had many wonderful conversations with our participants over the past month regarding wound care, treatment, employment resources, and legal support. We have learned some really wonderful things about the people who come to our program – we have quite a few people who do not use drugs, but pick up supplies for their friend who is too scared to come to Access Point. We have learned that 25% of the time someone picks up naloxone, it is because they have given their last dose to a friend. We are so grateful that our participants care for each other and the community, and we are grateful to have the support of our community to continue on with the good work we all do.

National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day April 10th

National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NYHAAD) is observed annually on April 10. NYHAAD increases awareness, generates conversations, and spotlights the work being done to reduce HIV among young people.



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National Transgender HIV Testing Day April 18th

National Transgender HIV Testing Day (NTHTD) is observed each year on April 18. This day is an opportunity to recognize the importance of routine HIV testing and status awareness, as well as HIV prevention and patient-centered care for transgender and gender non-binary people.



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HEALTH ACCESS PROGRAM UPDATE

- Did you have a plan in 2020 through Connect for Health Colorado? If so, you can get your taxes done for free through H & R Block (if your income is below 400% FPL) This is only available through specific locations, and not on a walk-in basis. To schedule your appointment, call 303/320-0026. This service is unfortunately not available for clients that had employer based insurance, Medicare or Medicaid in 2020. If you had a Connect for Health/ Marketplace plan in 2020, you are required to file federal taxes for 2020.
- If you have a current plan through Connect for Health, you may receive a premium invoice with a new amount due. Please bring a copy of your new premium invoice to your case manager or insurance coordinator as soon as possible so we can adjust your premium payments moving forward.

Connect for Health has extended their Special Enrollment Period until at least August 15th, 2021. If you are uninsured, contact your case manager or insurance coordinator as soon as possible to set up an appointment to get yourself enrolled in insurance.

CHN Community Advisory Board (CAB) for Clients

Would you like the opportunity to meet other people living with HIV?

Ask questions about services you receive?

Learn about new services?

Learn important information that can help you with your health care?

Have a voice in service delivery?



If you answered yes to these questions, the Community Advisory Board (CAB) might be a great opportunity for you. The Community Advisory Board (CAB) meets monthly. The CAB meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month from 1-2:15pm.

If interested please RSVP to Victoria Schreiber Victoria.Schreiber@coloradohealthnetwork.org or call her at 303-962-5309.

Once you let Victoria know you want to attend, you will receive a meeting invitation with login information. If you have additional questions about the CAB, please connect with your Case Manager. A release of information/confidentiality statement is required to participate in the monthly CAB meetings.



PUEBLO FOOD PANTRY UPDATE FROM TERESA MARTINEZ

The food pantry in the Southern Colorado Health Network Pueblo office is now offering many more food choices.

Thanks to the Hunger Task Force of Pueblo, the SCHN Pueblo food pantry has been able to obtain a variety of "to go" foods. The pantry also is now offering chicken, beef and Pueblo green chili frozen and in jars.

Clients, come on down and take advantage of the additional items in the Pueblo food pantry!

Please call ahead on Mondays & Fridays for food pantry



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Positive Press

How do you feel about the COVID-19 vaccine? What are some barriers you face to access? Please let us know through this short survey. Available in English and Spanish.

Five randomly selected participants will receive a \$20 gift card in appreciation for their time. The survey is open until April 25th.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/IOYS-COVIDSurvey>

SYRINGE ACCESS SURVEY

The Prevention team at SCHN is seeking feedback from El Paso County residents who use drugs about their needs, including how they are currently accessing harm reduction supplies. If you or someone you know are interested in providing anonymous feedback about what you would like to see in a Colorado Springs-based syringe access program, please consider taking the survey at the link provided below and/or reach out to Melissa Chizmar, Prevention Services Manager, at prevention.secure@coloradohealthnetwork.org. Paper surveys are available!

<https://forms.gle/nQEo5HtsoRbrmTsK8>

Access Point Pueblo

Free, sterile supplies available for those who need them. **Tuesday & Thursday**
10am-12:00pm & 1:30pm-4:00pm
Southern Colorado Health Network
807 N. Greenwood St., Ste 200
Pueblo, CO 81003



719-621-1105

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<https://www.facebook.com/SoColoAIDSProj>



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