



Positive Press

The Official Newsletter of the Southern Colorado Health Network

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Needed Services for the Colorado Springs Queer Community Receive Funding

Some of the big gaps in services for the Colorado Springs queer community are about to be closed. The Colorado Health Network (CHN) recently signed a contract with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that will provide funding for services to the LGBTQ+ community in Colorado Springs.

Southern Colorado Health Network (SCHN) Prevention Services Manager Melissa Chizmar and Prevention Services Coordinator Rebecca Willey conducted a lengthy study over the past year and a half to determine the gaps in services for the Colorado Springs queer community. The study data was given to the CDC for potential funding purposes and the twosome did a formal presentation to the Colorado Springs community at the end of May.

The study found that the participants of the needs assessment felt that there is a lack of community, visibility, queer spaces, queer-affirming healthcare, and other services in Colorado Springs which impedes the community's ability to survive and thrive. "This lack of services increases the risk of negative downstream effects like contracting sexually transmitted infections, other negative health outcomes, violence, homelessness, and substance misuse," said Chizmar and Willey.

All of the needs assessment participants and survey respondents for the study felt there was a need for a queer community center with free sexual health services. The participants and respondents also called for a need to create a space to access basic needs, to gather and build community, and to organize and engage in activism to resist oppressive systems and create change.

"Where there is a center, there is power and there is voice," said one study participant.

So now that the funding is available, the top priority is to find a space to establish a community center. The new center will be called Hey719 and will be modeled after HeyDenver that has been successful in providing sexual health and other services to LGBTQ+ people in Denver for quite some time.

Many who took part in the study/survey said they believe Colorado Springs' queer population has grown to the point of needing to have a larger voice in the community and be recognized for who they are; where they have a space to gather for events and educational workshops, obtain sexual health services, meet other like-minded residents, advocate for certain causes, and hang out without feeling threatened.

All of this is about to become a reality in the not too distant future.



Are you 18 - 29 years old?

Are you a cisgender man or a transgender person?

Have you used PrEP in the past or are you currently using PrEP?

Want to help us improve PrEP access for you and others in your community?

WHAT'S YOUR PREP STORY?

Join us and other members of your community to help us understand what helps young people access and use PrEP and what gets in the way of accessing and using PrEP.

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COLORADO
HEALTH
NETWORK
INC.



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Sign up here!



Email Donny at donny.gerke@du.edu to find out how to get involved and ask any questions!

All participants will be compensated for their time with a \$50 gift card.



Festival For Life

Registration is now open! Colorado Health Network is thrilled to bring the Festival For Life back in 2021 with a hybrid virtual and in-person event! Help us raise funds to support our programs and services to support People Living with HIV throughout Colorado.

The 5K Walk & Run will be exclusively virtual components, with runners able to complete a 5K route of their choosing then upload their finishing time and route details to our event site between Monday, 8/2/21 and Sunday, 8/22/21. Walkers are invited to complete their 5K walk during the same timeframe.



On Saturday, August 21st we will host an in-person Festival at Cheesman Park in Denver from 9am – 1pm. This socially distanced, outdoor event will include display of panels from the AIDS Memorial Quilt, a ceremonial walk around the park (not a full 5K), the 10th annual Diva Dash, a refreshment garden, and informational booths from partner agencies and vendors.

See you there! For more information: www.coloradohealthnetwork.org/events/festival-for-life/



Bar Wars is Back! Colorado Health Network is excited to host the 10th Annual Bar Wars mixology competition on July 17th with this year's host X Bar in Denver! In addition to being a whole lot of fun, Bar Wars is an important source of funding for people living with and impacted by HIV. Information and tickets here: www.coloradohealthnetwork.org/events/bar-wars/

Red Ribbon Ball

Save the Date for this year's Red Ribbon Ball in-person at the Antlers Hotel in downtown Colorado Springs on **Saturday, November 6th**.

ACCESS POINT PUEBLO UPDATE

With STI testing now available, Pueblo Prevention tested 11 clients in the month of June! Pueblo is excited to be a place where people can access easy and supportive testing. Access Point Pueblo had a busy month serving **625+** participants. Participants had the chance to try out new cellulose filters, which are better at reducing harms than other available and affordable options, and many participants provided helpful feedback on the potential new supply.



Access Point Pueblo teamed up with CSU Pueblo's School of Nursing in June. Nursing students conducted informal interviews with participants to learn about their wound care and experiences with healthcare providers. One interesting finding was that 64.3% of participants spoken to had overall negative experiences with healthcare providers. The next cohort of students hopes to do outreach to educate providers on how to better treat people who use drugs. The Pueblo Prevention team looks forward to a busy July!



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HEALTH ACCESS/INSURANCE UPDATE

Do you have a plan via Connect for Health? You might be eligible for a lower premium. Please contact your Health Access Program coordinator if you haven't had a meeting to update your premium tax credit.

Be sure to watch for any mail or emails from Colorado Choice/ Medicaid. The current information is that everyone with Medicaid will have it through the end of the year, but that could change. If you lose Medicaid (or any other insurance), you have 30 days to enroll in something different. Please let your case manager or insurance coordinator if you will or already have lost insurance coverage.

People with plans through Connect for Health have been receiving rebate checks from their insurance carrier. These checks need to be signed back over to the program and will be sent back to ADAP. To sign a check over, you would write 'Payable to CHN' on the back of the check and then sign your name below. Please let your insurance coordinator know as soon as you receive a check back from your insurance company and we'll help assist you with this process.

SCHN Presents the 5th Annual Women's Retreat

September 30th through October 2nd

Sept. 30th & Oct. 1st—Online (Zoom)

Oct. 2nd—In Person (Address Below)

Franciscan Retreat Center in Colorado Springs

7744 Deer Hill Grove, COS 80919



Sign Up by calling Melissa Bernstein-Linan or Jessica Curry at 719-578-9092 by August 20, 2021

Crochet Corner

If you have been itching to get out to safely socialize and love to crochet or knit (or want to learn)—Join us at SCHN for some yarny fun! SCHN's Crochet Corner will be held the third Tuesday of every month for an hour to relax and let your creative side free! This group is open to all clients or staff who want to explore what fiber art is all about. Bring your own hooks, yarn, and projects – or let Case Manager Jennifer know ahead of time and we will have supplies available. You are welcome to bring your sack lunch. We are limited to 8 participants so please call asap to reserve your spot!

When: The 3rd Tuesday of every month, 12pm to 1pm

Where: SCHN Conference room (masks required)

Please RSVP to: Jennifer Bailey, 719-578-9092, jennifer.bailey@coloradohealthnetwork

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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Are you interested in receiving the Positive Press through e-mail? If so, please contact your Case Manager to be added to our e-mail list! You'll get the newest Positive Press in the fastest way possible, and you'll save some trees, too!

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



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