



Positive Press

The Official Newsletter of the Southern Colorado Health Network

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SUPPORT SCHN THROUGH THE GIVE! CAMPAIGN / DONATIONS THROUGH DEC. 31

SCHN is once again part of the annual Give! Campaign. Give! is a year-end (November-December giving period) philanthropic initiative that was created to encourage everyone in the Pikes Peak region to give back and get involved with local nonprofits.

The Give! Campaign allows SCHN to highlight its mission of meeting the evolving needs of people throughout southern Colorado affected by HIV and other health conditions through prevention, care and advocacy. Most importantly,

the campaign provides SCHN with the opportunity to raise funds to carry out its mission and to support all SCHN programs and services.

Two Give! Campaign fundraising events benefitting SCHN will take place in December:

Holiday Sex Trivia Night! Dec 20 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

at ICONS, 3 E. Bijou St.

Pint Night with Cerberus Brewing! Dec 27 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

at Seven's Gate Tap Room, 77 S. 7th St.

Call SCHN at 719/578-9092 for additional information on these events.

Information on how to support SCHN through the Give! Campaign can be found at this website: www.GivePikesPeak.org. The deadline to donate is December 31.



CHN Red Ball

The 2022 CHN Red Ball created an evening that united the creative minds of Denver with the advocates of CHN. This year's Red Ball included a high-energy fashion show, igniting awareness for World AIDS Day.

The 2022 Red Ball showcased the talents of Denver's finest fashion designers and brought about a new batch of performances, an all-new venue, a silent auction, live entertainment, and so much more. It was an honor for CHN to be the host for this event again this year.

World AIDS Day

SCHN was the host for World AIDS Day events in Pueblo and Colorado Springs. It was an honor for SCHN to partner with both UCCS and CSU-Pueblo on December 1 through community outreach all-day testing events, education and resource tables, along with World AIDS Day recognition and memorial events.

Students, community members, and others accessed free, confidential HIV testing, other STI testing and resources and information related to Prevention Services and Harm Reduction Strategies. On this day, individuals were able to join fellow community members in honoring loved ones lost to HIV/AIDS.



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SCHN Pueblo: 807 North Greenwood St., Suite 200, Pueblo, CO 81003

www.coloradohealthnetwork.org

Phone: 719.578.9092
Phone: 719.621.1105

HEALTH ACCESS/INSURANCE UPDATE

Open Enrollment is in full swing. If you are receiving insurance assistance on the Marketplace with CHN, please make sure to get in touch with a Health Access Program Coordinator-Kelly, Carly, or Tabitha-before December 15 for coverage that will begin on January 1, 2023. Folks who complete appointments between December 16 and January 15 will have coverage that begins February 1, 2023. If you have not spoken with a Health Access Program Coordinator about confirming your insurance plan information for 2023, please call the SCHN front desk as soon as possible! For those who have already completed appointments, please keep an eye on the mail and email for your first premium invoice for 2023, which is required just once annually to confirm the plan information we have on file for everyone is correct. Once a premium invoice for 2023 is received, please send a photo or a copy to your Health Access Program Coordinator.

Coloradans who have Medicaid will continue to receive benefits with Medicaid Forced Passing until 2023. It is possible for Forced Passing to be extended again, so please keep an eye on your mail and email, and remain in contact with a Health Access Program Coordinator if you receive any correspondence about your Medicaid eligibility/benefits. Please keep a particular eye out for requests for Medicaid redeterminations, because this is required for all individuals on Medicaid, regardless of Forced Passing. If someone fails to complete the required Medicaid redetermination, they risk not being covered by insurance until 2024 or a qualifying life change event.

UTILITIES ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE THROUGH COLORADO SPRINGS UTILITIES & PIKES PEAK UNITED WAY'S 211

Our publicly owned energy provider, Colorado Springs Utilities, can help with flexible payment and assistance programs. If you are having difficulty paying your utilities bill, Colorado Springs Utilities flexible payment plans and assistance programs may be able to help. You might also qualify for federally-funded programs. Options include:

--Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) is a federally-funded program that helps with home heating and water costs from Nov. 1 – April 30.

--Project COPE offers emergency utilities payment assistance regardless of income. Funded by the people and businesses in our community, Project COPE is the only local organization that donates 100% of its funding to utilities payment assistance year-round.

--Home Efficiency Assistance Program (HEAP) offers energy and water efficiency improvements for qualifying homeowners.

Visit csu.org or call 719-448-4800 to learn more.

Also, Pikes Peak United Way's 211 (just dial 211 on your phone) provides referrals to a partner agency for utilities bill assistance and other essential services.



CHILDREN'S GIFTS, FOOD BASKETS AND FOOD CARDS TO BE DISTRIBUTED DECEMBER 13—22



Eligible Colorado Springs area clients who signed up on time for the SCHN Children's Holiday Gift Program will be able to pick-up the gifts from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the weekdays of December 13–22 (not including the Dec. 17-18 weekend days) at the Colorado Springs office. Colorado Springs area clients who signed up for a food basket by deadline time (Dec. 1) can pick it up during the same days and times listed above. Monetary holiday food cards will be mailed to SCHN clients in other service areas during this same time frame.

Thank you to the many community members who made the Children's Holiday Gift Program possible.

On left: Scott Rabinowitz, one of many individuals dropping off gifts for families with children this season. Thank you, all!

The Pueblo prevention team has had a busy fall expanding sexual health services and connections in the community. On November 30, Christine Charron and Kyle Meltzer visited the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment to speak about STI prevention and sex positivity on the health department's podcast, Pueblo's Health. The podcast will be released in January 2023 alongside other episodes featuring key community members who are also working to expand awareness, education, and access for sexual health/STI prevention. Kyle Meltzer provided a lecture at seven different sections of a personal health course at CSU-Pueblo, giving over 100 students an in-depth look at STIs, sexual health, and prevention tactics.

In observance of this year's World AIDS Day, Health Hub staffers Sarah Money and Jereme Maffei tabled at CSU-Pueblo where they provided multiple NARCAN trainings and made some great connections within the community. Christine Charron was able to speak on PrEP and PEP at the event, ensuring awareness of this amazing prevention tool. To wrap it all up, prevention staff provided free STI testing for HIV, Syphilis, Chlamydia, and Gonorrhea to 26 people at CSU-Pueblo on December 2. We are thrilled at the turnout and hope to keep momentum going and get to campus more regularly to provide prevention services to our university community in Pueblo.

Through all of these big accomplishments in sexual health services, Access Point Pueblo has continued to serve hundreds of participants per month providing critical interventions to our community of people who use drugs. We are happy to continue outreach to new groups, as we have expanded supplies beyond injection equipment in this last year. So far this year, there have been 470 overdose reversals reported. In November, we received 24 reports of overdose reversals.

PUEBLO HEALTH HUB UPDATE

November was a month full of progress for the Drug User Health Hub in Pueblo. Sarah Money presented an overview of the Health Hub to the Substance Use Response Ecosystem (SURE) on November 15. Over the course of the month, Health Hub staffers met with multiple community partners including PDPHE, Community Resources United (CRU), Crossroads Turning Point, Health Solutions, and others. The anticipated date of an official launch of the health hub is early January 2023.

In order to successfully move forward, our work must be defined by those we serve. We are currently drafting up interview questions for individuals who access SAP services. We are also prepping for a focus group with peer recovery specialists in Pueblo, scheduled for later this month. We intend to use this information to guide our efforts in providing access to services, as well as prioritize based on highest identified needs in the community.

The Health Hub is fully staffed as of November 14 with the addition of Jereme Maffei (he/they) as our new Peer Navigator! Jereme has joined us from Ohio and carries a wealth of harm reduction experience, from starting grassroots programs to personal experiences with harm reduction. We are thrilled to have Jereme on the team and look forward to the good work Jereme will do here in Pueblo!



CS PREVENTION TEAM OUTREACH

The Colorado Springs Prevention Team completed a very special outreach on Thanksgiving Day. Joined by nine volunteers, the team was able to give out winter supplies including blankets, coats, hats, gloves, and scarves. Narcan, fentanyl test strips, snacks, sandwiches, water, hand warmers, and SCHN brochures were also distributed.

Michael Nichols is SCHN's newest Program Assistant

Please join us in welcoming our newest Program Assistant at SCHN- Colorado Springs, Michael Nichols (He/Him/His). Michael is transitioning from his current role as a Client Services intern to Program Assistant. We are so thrilled to have Michael “officially” join the SCHN team.

Michael has this to share: Hello everyone! My name is Michael Nichols, I go by him/he/his pronouns. I am so excited to be working with SCHN at a more professional level. I started here as social work intern from CSU Pueblo back in the end of August and have absolutely loved my time here! I am so grateful and lucky to have had the opportunity to work as the program assistant here in Colorado Springs. I have learned so much from everyone working here and it is absolutely amazing to see how passionate everyone is about the work. I am looking forward to being a bigger part of the team and to learn even more from the agency!



Jereme Maffei is SCHN-Pueblo Health Hub's newest Peer Navigator

Jereme comes to CHN with a wealth of experience in harm reduction, including an evident passion for community activism and program development. Jereme also brings the perspective of lived experience to our Prevention services. We are so thrilled to have Jereme Maffei join the Prevention – Health Hub team in Pueblo!

A Statement from Jereme:

“My journey with CHN began way before my employment. I somehow managed to cross paths with various folx at CHN in a plethora of ways even though I had been living in Northeast Ohio for the entire 26 years of my life. In Ohio, I worked with multiple harm reduction organizations and I helped start a few programs. Unlike Colorado, Ohio has very strict laws and policies which made it extremely difficult to operate, so I am looking forward to working under much less restriction. I am extremely excited to join such an awesome, passionate team and I am overwhelmingly grateful for the opportunity to connect with so many of our participants. P.S. - If you ever want to nerd out about psychopharmacology, drug policy, prison abolishment or neuroscience feel free to shoot me a message.”



Access Point Pueblo

Free, sterile supplies available for those who need them.

Tuesday & Thursday
10am-12:00pm & 1:30pm-4:00pm



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