



Positive Press

The Official Newsletter of the Southern Colorado Health Network

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SOUTHERN COLORADO HEALTH NETWORK

2023 Women and Girl's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Luncheon

March 10, 12-1 pm, virtually via Zoom

Save the Date! SCHN will be the host for its annual Women and Girl's luncheon virtually this year.

HIV incidence is one of the six Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. indicators. HIV incidence refers to the estimated number of new HIV infections in a given year. In 2019, 18% of these new HIV infections were among women. The overall goal is to decrease new infections to 9300 by 2025 and to 3000 by 2030.

Join us as we discuss advancements and work within the HIV medical community and Southern Colorado Health Network's impact on our local communities! Hear from women experts in the field, hear impactful client stories, and join us in our quest to learn more on accomplishing this goal.

Join us March 10, 12-1 pm @:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82044842370?pwd=YVlsb0ZRSRSGhCa1dubTVYc0tKNnZ0dz09>
Meeting ID: 820 4484 2370, Passcode: 600332

2023 Red Ribbon Ball: "Meeting the Need"

April 21, 6-10 pm, at the Pinery at the Hill.

Save the Date! SCHN will be the host for its 31st annual Red Ribbon Ball.

Join us for an elegant and outrageously fun evening at the beautiful Pinery at the Hill to support Southern Colorado Health Network in "Meeting the Need" of fellow community members impacted by HIV here in the Pikes Peak region.

This year's Gala offers entertainment with Out Loud, Auction, Music and Dancing, Paddle Raise, Videos, and so much more! The annual Red Ribbon Ball is the Southern Colorado Health Network signature fundraising event each year.

The Pinery at the Hill,
775 W Bijou St, Colorado Springs, CO 80905
Friday, April 21, 6:00 pm

Tickets on Sale Soon!



ALL-NEW VENUE



SCHN COLORADO SPRINGS PREVENTION UPDATE

The SCHN Prevention Department in Colorado Springs is setting limits on the number of testing appointments scheduled per day while short staffed. Staffers Andrea Root and Jason Clark have taken turns working Tuesday evenings at Access Point. Thankfully, support from our weekly volunteer, Lauren, and our intern, Molly is still happening.

An overdose response policy for Access Point and Hey719 is being drafted in order to have a formal written procedure in place in case of emergency. SCHN COS prevention is hiring for an open Prevention Services Coordinator position and the field was down to two candidates as of 1/30/23. Whoever is offered the position is expected to start in mid to late February. In the meantime, Marlee Yost-Wolf (NCHN) will be assisting with testing and syringe access for a few days as she transitions to part-time employment.

CHN/SCHN staff members Melissa Chizmar, Jaime Harrell, and Matt Fischer attended the Regional Opioid Advisory Committee Meeting on 1/25 to learn more about next steps for funding allocation in El Paso and Teller Counties.

On the horizon:

Andrea is working with Hot Mess Sports, a queer recreational sports organization that participated in our resource fair this past summer, to schedule a testing event for early March for members of their dodgeball team. The COS prevention team is also coordinating with UCCS and CC to plan testing events for the spring.

There have many requests from the community for Narcan trainings, such as Dale House and DHS, and the staff is discussing how to prioritize these requests. Sarah Money from the Pueblo office has graciously offered to assist with these trainings while COS prevention remains understaffed. The SCHN Narcan and fentanyl test strip vending machine is in production. A temporary place for it to be delivered will be determined until a permanent location is established.

Corri Mercy's last day was January 6. They are embarking on a new adventure at NASTAD, consulting with treatment centers and providing technical assistance to public health departments on best practices for people who use drugs.



CHN's PATH2Wellness is Starting Social Circles in Colorado Springs in March

CHN's PATH2Wellness (People Aging & Thriving w/ HIV) is coming to Colorado Springs! PATH2Wellness (PATH) is a statewide wellness program for older adults (50+) living w/ HIV, and PATH will be hosting one of its weekly Social Circles at the SCHN Colorado Springs office on March 23rd from 11a.m. to 1p.m. (light refreshments included).

PATH is the host of a weekly social circle on Thursdays in the Denver CHN office. While the social circles are hosted in-person in Denver, clients are also welcome to join us virtually via Zoom. Typically, PATH invites a community expert to speak with the group on topics related to HIV & Aging (i.e. advanced care planning, AARP 50+ Back to Work, vision care, and much more) or PATH staff members will facilitate groups on Positive Aging.

PATH staff members are excited to join you in Colorado Springs, and hope that any interested clients will attend! Please contact Lupe Joyner (Lupe.joyner@coloradohealthnetwork.org) at (719) 578-9092, or Jennifer Bailey (Jennifer.Bailey@coloradohealthnetwork.org) at (719) 578-9092 to confirm your attendance!"

Pueblo Prevention has begun 2023 with a stellar team of coordinators. Kyle Meltzer, who began as an intern with us in Spring 2022, has hit a stride in our sexual health programs and is working on expanding access to STI testing at CSU-Pueblo with the addition of monies from The Packard Fund that can help assist clients with treatment costs.

We hope to begin regular outreach testing at the CSU-Pueblo Wolfpack Wellness Center this spring and we will be bringing on CSU-Pueblo student Claire Pauley to assist Kyle in marketing and outreach efforts within the CSU-Pueblo athletics department.

Jefferson De Matos Campos has settled in well after beginning as a coordinator in December. Jefferson has quickly learned the ropes of our programs, while continuing to complete CDPHE-required trainings. In six short weeks, Jefferson has already begun overseeing our social media content creation, so keep an eye on the SCHN Facebook and Instagram platforms for new posts coming soon, and for the initial analysis of the participant survey that was recently conducted for the SCHN syringe access program. Jefferson will continue exploring various aspects of our programs as he continues training and we have already begun brainstorming some exciting ideas of sexual health outreach for him to spearhead.

Finally, James Wyatt was transferred into a Pueblo Prevention Services Coordinator position at the end of January. James brought a wide variety of skills to the role of Program Assistant in the SCHN Pueblo office and NCHN Fort Collins prior to that and we are excited for James to dive into our harm reduction programs and outreach.

December 31, 2022, brought an end to our ARPA funding with the City of Pueblo. This funding provided a large stockpile of sharps containers, allowing us to expand access to containers for safe storage and disposal among our syringe access program participants. With this increased access, we saw a 78% increase in sharps container distribution among participants between 2021 and 2022.

We faced some challenges with our project’s original idea for community outreach related to sharps disposal and pivoted in the last half of the funding cycle to focus on local business outreach. We were able to connect with 24 businesses in Pueblo, providing 23 containers and more than 100 outreach/education cards on syringe disposal to these businesses. The containers include a sticker with our phone number so that safe disposal and replacement of the container may be accessed once the initial containers are full. With plenty of supplies remaining, we have brought on CSU-Pueblo student Bailey Earls to carry out continued business outreach in the Pueblo community and we plan to provide the Mayor’s office with an additional report this May to demonstrate continued work made possible by their funds.



JAMES WYATT TAKES ON A NEW ROLE IN THE SCHN PUEBLO OFFICE

James Wyatt, previously a Program Assistant in the SCHN Pueblo office, has moved into a new role as a Prevention Services Coordinator with the prevention team in the Pueblo office.

He had this to say about his 2½ years of accomplishments as a program assistant: “As Program Assistant, I played an integral role in forging relationships with the Green Chile Bike Bank and One Colorado, navigating the rental of our office space so both programs could expand to serve more clients in the greater Pueblo area. I also have taken a hands-on approach to facilities and coordinated the re-flooring of our Syringe Access Program area. Last summer, I had the pleasure of working with our community partners to offer a Resource Fair in our parking lot, allowing us to connect with our participants, clients and neighbors and introduce them to vital services offered here in our city.”

HEALTH ACCESS/INSURANCE UPDATE

CHN Health Access is finishing up Open Enrollment for 2023. SCHN statistics are below.

Southern Region Open Enrollment Stats	<u>Employer</u>	<u>Marketplace</u>	<u>MP Ineligible</u>	<u>Region Total</u>
	102	51	31	184

CHN Health Access is so proud of the team for working so hard to connect with clients. This year, Colorado offered creditable insurance to undocumented Coloradans, and CHN Health Access was able to take the number of statewide uninsured clients from 301 to 121 in 2023! SCHN Health Access has an additional 66 clients in the southern region who are currently on Medicaid who may likely be transitioning off in 2023, so that will be our next major push as a team.

If SDAP is paying for your insurance premiums on the marketplace or Colorado Connect, be sure that you've sent at least one of your premium invoices for 2023 to a Health Access staff member. This is only required once a year- no need to send premium invoices monthly throughout the year.

Medicaid will begin to transition out of Forced Passing, so please keep an eye on your mail and email for correspondence from Medicaid. If you are contacted by Medicaid and fail to respond, you risk losing Medicaid and not qualifying for a marketplace plan mid-year, so it is incredibly important to get in touch with your Health Access Program Coordinator or Case Manager if you receive a notice from Medicaid.

COLORADO SPRINGS UTILITIES & PIKES PEAK UNITED WAY'S 211 PROVIDE HELP WITH UTILITY BILLS AND OTHER ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Our publicly owned energy provider, Colorado Springs Utilities, can help with flexible payment and assistance programs.

--**Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)** is a federally-funded program that helps with home heating and water costs. **The deadline to apply is May 1.**

--**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.

Access Point Pueblo

Free, sterile supplies available for those who need them.

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



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