



# Positive Press

The Official Newsletter of the Southern Colorado Health Network

## March 2023

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### 2023 RED RIBBON BALL April 21st 6-10pm

We are pleased to invite you back for the Red Ribbon Ball. This event raises funds for programs and services that benefit people impacted by HIV in the Pikes Peak region. This event, scheduled for April 21st at The Pinery, has been a staple of Southern Colorado for decades. This all-new venue offers a picturesque view of Colorado Springs and beyond. Your participation at this event allows us to create further impact across the Pike Peak Region. Purchasing a ticket, a table, and even just bidding on an auction item enables us to further assist in providing vital services that our clients depend on.

**Purchase tickets here: [Rebrand.ly/RRB23](https://rebrand.ly/RRB23)**



### Transportation Assistance for SCHN Clients

SCHN offers transportation assistance for our clients enrolled in Case Management.

- Assistance offered includes bus passes, gas cards, and Lyft rides.
- Clients are asked to notify their Case Managers of assistance requests at least 10 business days before the scheduled appointment.
- Transportation assistance must only be used for medical, mental health, dental, vision, SCHN-related appointments and other medical appointments deemed necessary by physician.
- Your case manager will require verification that you have scheduled appointments before you will be provided with assistance
- Client is asked to provide verification of appointment attendance to case manager (visit summary, letter from physician, or physician signed Transportation Verification Form).
- Please reach out to your Case Manager for details, eligibility criteria, and to request assistance.

### Syringe Access Data:

- Syringe Access saw 41 new participants in February as of 2/27/23.
- conducted a quality improvement survey with 30 existing participants to assess people's greatest health needs and gain understanding of other programmatic needs/ideas. Results will be reported next month.
- working on a pamphlet with a map of resources specifically focused on people experiencing homelessness for Access Point.

### Testing:

- had four confirmed new HIV cases identified through Hey719 testing services since July.
- following up with clients who tested positive for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis in January/February to ensure linkage to care.
- working more closely with HeyDenver on collaborative content for social media.
- now have at-home HIV tests that we can start advertising for people who may be more concerned about confidentiality and/or accessibility, such as clients inquiring about testing on Grindr and Access Point participants.
- have two major outreach testing events scheduled for March and April at Colorado College and UCCS, respectively.

### Love Alive:

- is attending regional opioid settlement meetings to provide input on the gaps in El Paso and Teller County and to advocate for spending on Narcan/fentanyl test strip distribution and training. Syringe access is just too contentious to promote given the voices in the room at these meetings. Some of our most well-known adversaries are voting members. By focusing on other harm reduction interventions, we can hopefully expand the impact of Love Alive while avoiding potential media controversy.
- distributed 10 emergency overdose kits (including total of 20 Narcan doses) to CC Athletics Department in February.
- is providing training opportunities with Food to Power, Dale House, and 4th Judicial District coming up soon!

## SCHN ADDS NORA WATKINS TO THE CS PREVENTION TEAM

Hi all, my name is Nora Watkins (they/them). I grew up in Chicago and graduated from Colorado College in 2019 with a degree in Molecular and Cellular Biology. Since then, I've spent a couple of years living in Asheville, NC working as a ceramics instructor and studio assistant/barista/tool library manager.

I moved back to the Springs to be closer to friends and family this past April and am currently living at an educational farm in Manitou Springs with my partner, two dogs, four other humans, three cats, seven ducks, eight chickens, and seven goats (one of four November additions to the flock, Manchego, is pictured here). Currently, I'm spending my free time getting back into my ceramics practice, reading about mycology, and reconnecting with my community here.

I come to SCHN inspired by my time as a part of a pandemic-response mutual aid collective in Asheville and working in housing navigation at Westside CARES here in the Springs. I'm excited to deepen my knowledge of harm reduction principles and practices and build more community space at Hey719 as a Prevention Services Coordinator. Looking forward to working with you all!



SCHN Pueblo Prevention completed 9 HIV/STI testing sessions in January while working to build capacity to begin regular testing at CSU-Pueblo's Wolfpack Wellness Center. We hope to launch regularly scheduled testing days on campus by the end of March, greatly expanding our reach in the Pueblo community and providing much needed access to sexual health services for students.

Prevention Services Coordinator Jefferson Campos and Health Hub Navigator Jereme Maffei traveled to La Junta's Otero College to attend the Southeast Colorado Peer Summit, where they networked with fellow professionals in the region while reflecting on the role of Peer Support Professionals working within substance use.

Access Point Pueblo staff updated 511 participant's demographic and injection practice data, allowing us to close out our Biomedical grant and creating the opportunity for connections with participants. Through our data update, we were able to provide letters of defense for nine participants who had received a paraphernalia charge as well as notifying more than 100 participants of the Never Use Alone resource and Medicaid re-evaluation. We have completed preliminary analysis of a participant survey carried out in the new year and look forward to providing information on the insights from participants in our next update!



## **HEALTH ACCESS/INSURANCE UPDATE**

Folks on Medicaid should expect to receive a message in the next year about their redetermination date. Please check your mail, email, and PEAK mailbox for this notice. It is required of every person currently receiving Medicaid to complete a redetermination to verify that they qualify to remain on Medicaid. If you have moved or changed contact information since starting on Medicaid, you will need to update your contact information to ensure that Medicaid's notices get delivered to you. Visit [CO.gov/PEAK](https://CO.gov/PEAK) or call Medicaid to update your contact information. Redetermination notices from Medicaid sent my mail will not include Medicaid or PEAK logos on the envelope, so be sure to inspect each piece of mail before discarding it so you don't miss your Medicaid notice.

**Free Tax Assistance:** If your household income was \$73,000 or less in 2022, you are eligible for FREE, trustworthy tax filing services from an IRS-certified preparer!

Visit the following websites for a complete list of sites around Colorado offering free tax preparation assistance: (These resources have been IRS-approved and guaranteed safe and secure by the filing companies, not by CHN.)

<https://taxhelpco.org/find-a-free-tax-site/> and <https://myfreetaxes.com/>

Clients enrolled in a marketplace plan that the program pays for are required to file taxes. If there is a balance owed to the IRS due to an overpayment of Advance Premium Tax Credits for a marketplace plan that the program paid for, SDAP and the Colorado Health Network (CHN) are able to assist with the payments. If a refund is issued due to an underpayment of Advance Premium Tax Credits, that amount of APTC refund credit is due back to the program. You can connect with a Health Access staff member to assistance in any of these situations.



**MICHAEL NICHOLS:  
FROM INTERN TO PROGRAM ASSISTANT TO CASE MANAGER IN JUST SIX MONTHS**

"Hi everyone, my name is Michael Nichols, and I go by he/him/his pronouns. I am really excited to take on the role of medical case manager. Since I started my journey of higher education, this was my dream job! When I started as an SCHN intern last August, I was able to work with case management and even more so when I became an employee in November, a program assistant.

I now have the opportunity to do a job I absolutely love and admire. Case management was always something I was interested in and especially working at an agency like SCHN. The woman who inspired me to go into social work when I was in high school actually worked at SCHN back when it was called S-CAP. I am beyond grateful and excited for this opportunity SCHN has given me!"



**AMANDA FORD IS THE NEW YOUTH ADVOCACY PROGRAMS ASSISTANT**



"Hello, everyone! My name is Amanda Ford (she/her/hers), and I am delighted to be stepping into my new Youth Advocacy Programs Assistant role. I am currently double majoring in international business and global politics and minoring in economics at the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs. My experience is in local government and campaigns, and my passion is community fieldwork!

After connecting with CHN during a discussion I led at UCCS about the political public policy dimensions of HIV, I knew I had found the perfect organization I wanted to work for to advocate for youth within my passion realms of social justice and public health. In my free time, I am quite active in the local El Paso County Democratic party or hanging out with my rescue kitty, Milli. I am excited to join the team and get to work."

**Social Circles for 50+ Adults Living with HIV Start March 23 in Colorado Springs**

CHN's PATH2Wellness (People Aging & Thriving w/ HIV – aka PATH) Social Circles program is coming to SCHN in Colorado Springs from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on March 23. PATH is a statewide wellness program for older adults (50+) living w/ HIV.

Please contact Lupe Joyner (Lupe.Joyner@coloradohealthnetwork) or Jennifer Bailey (Jennifer.Bailey@coloradohealthnetwork) via email or by phone at 719-578-9092 by March 20 to RSVP.

**Access Point Pueblo**

Free, sterile supplies  
available for those who  
need them.

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



**Sign Up for Our E-Newsletter!**

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 at the moment its published!

