



# Positive Press

The Official Newsletter of the Southern Colorado Health Network

## November 2023

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### DECEMBER 1—"World AIDS Day 35: Remember and Commit"

Each year on December 1st, the world unites to commemorate World AIDS Day. This annual event serves as a reminder of the global struggle to end HIV-related stigma, an opportunity to honor those we have lost, and a rallying cry to continue working toward a day when HIV is no longer a public health threat. In 2023, we mark the 35th commemoration of this important day with the theme "World AIDS Day 35: Remember and Commit." This year's theme pays tribute to those we have lost to HIV/AIDS. The impact of this epidemic has been profound, affecting individuals, families, and entire communities across the globe. Remembering the lives lost not only honors their memory but also emphasizes the urgency of our commitment to end the HIV epidemic. Through remembrance, we draw strength and determination to redouble our efforts in fighting the disease and providing support to those with HIV. The



National HIV/AIDS Strategy and PEPFAR Strategy outline actions that are necessary to accelerate our progress: 1) Increase Awareness and End Stigma and Discrimination; 2) Accessible Healthcare and Support Services; 3) Prevention Efforts; 4) Research and Innovation; 5) Community-Driven Responses.

Local public events to commemorate World AIDS Day are in the planning stages right now. Details to come at [www.coloradohealthnetwork.org/events/](http://www.coloradohealthnetwork.org/events/) or call your case manager for event updates.

### SAVE THE DATE!

#### 2023 CHN RED BALL ON DECEMBER 1: "Igniting Awareness for World AIDS Day" The Cable Center, 2000 Buchtel Blvd. S, Denver, CO 80210

The annual CHN Red Ball aims to create an evening that unites Denver's creative minds with CHN's advocates. The Red Ball is a collaboration of artists and activists, stylists, and social workers all coming together to support one incredible cause.

This year's Red Ball will still showcase the talents of Denver's finest fashion designers while bringing about a new batch of performances, an all-new venue, a silent auction, and so much more. CHN is thrilled to bring the community together again to ignite awareness for World AIDS Day and those impacted by HIV, both past and present.

For more information, visit [www.coloradohealthnetwork.org/events/red-ball/](http://www.coloradohealthnetwork.org/events/red-ball/).

## CHILDREN'S GIFTS, FOOD BASKETS AND FOOD CARDS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED DEC. 13-21

Eligible Colorado Springs area clients who signed up for the SCHN Children's Holiday Gift Program and turned in the form prior to the deadline date will be able to pick-up the gifts from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekdays from December 13-21 at the Colorado Springs SCHN office. Colorado Springs area clients who signed up for a food basket can pick it up from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on week days from December 13-21. The deadline to sign up for a food basket is Dec. 1.



Eligible SCHN Children's Holiday Gift Program clients in Pueblo and other southern Colorado service areas can pick-up the gifts during this same time frame (Dec. 13-21) by making arrangements with their case manager. SCHN clients in Pueblo and other southern Colorado service areas will be mailed holiday food gift cards during this same time frame.

## Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) Started on November 1

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) got underway on November 1. LEAP is designed to help eligible low-income households with winter home heating costs and is available to all individuals meeting certain financial guidelines.

If you applied last year, you should have received the 2023-24 application in the mail. If you did not apply last year and would like to apply this year, your SCHN case manager can mail you an application or you can call 1-866-432-8435 to receive an application.

LEAP does not pay the entire cost of home heating. If qualified, you will receive a one-time payment sometime between November 1, 2023, and April 30, 2024. For additional information, call the toll-free LEAP telephone number listed above in paragraph two.

## TORRIE "TEEJ" JORDAN, NEW BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINICIAN IN PUEBLO

Teej has been deeply immersed in the study and application of Harm Reduction over the last five years, including a study abroad program in Switzerland. She received her Bachelor of Social Work from Weber State University in Utah and her Master of Social Work from the University of Kentucky.

She has a strong passion for community development, program development, and drug policy reform. Teej is grateful to have found CHN during a period of such transition so she can participate in the ongoing growth and development. During her personal time, you will find Teej reading books, riding motorcycles with her partner, chilling with her pups, and trying far too many new hobbies.



## PREVENTION UPDATES- COLORADO SPRINGS

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### Access Point:

- We have registered 112 new participants this month as of 10/27.
- We are working on outfitting the single-occupancy bathroom at Access Point to safely allow participants to use the facilities while they are at programming.
- We are also in the process of writing an MOU (Thanks, Nora!) to partner with Hope COS, a no-barrier warming shelter, to supply them with safe disposal and harm reduction supplies.

### Hey719:

- We tested 65 people for HIV in October so far. This has been one of our busier testing months in a while!
- We held a successful testing event at Icons in tandem with a Keep Colorado Springs Queer open mic on National Coming Out Day (October 11). We spoke with the new GM about more regular testing events in 2024.
- Manuel passed his phlebotomy course and is now certified to complete blood draws with clients.
- Melissa, Andrea, and Lupe met with staff from the PRISM Community Collective, the queer community center opening this year, regarding partnership around testing and syringe access.
- We tested two guests at our Halloween Party on 10/28 at Hey719.
- Andrea Root (she/her) was promoted to Lead Prevention Services Coordinator. She will be responsible for growing our testing services moving forward. Congratulations, Andrea!



## PUEBLO PREVENTION & ACCESS POINT PUEBLO UPDATES

- 2 HIV reactivities who were connected to PCHC
- Served 785 unique clients with 1205 visits over the month
- 788 doses of naloxone distributed
- 314 fentanyl test strips distributed
- Coordinators launched re-vamped presentations on sexual health, harm reduction & stigma at CSU-Pueblo and received positive feedback from students and professors in late October and coordinators will provide the lectures to another eight classes in November.

We continued to see high demand for smoking equipment, with many anecdotal stories from participants that show changes in use from injection to smoking. We also received some comically large shovels from our smoking distributor meant to be used as a scoop, which participants have been loving!

## UPCOMING HOLIDAY CLOSURES FOR SCHN OFFICES

Thanksgiving Day & Day After Thanksgiving: November 23-24, 2023  
Half Day, Noon to 5 p.m. on December 22, 2023  
Christmas Day: December 25, 2023  
Half Day, Noon to 5 p.m. on December 29, 2023  
New Year's Day: January 1, 2024



## HALLOWEEN SPIRIT



From SCHN Colorado Springs staff members (left photo) and SCHN Pueblo Prevention Staffers (right photo)

## HEALTH ACCESS UPDATE

Open Enrollment (OE) 2024 started on Nov. 1 and runs through Jan. 15. Our statewide team is training to complete almost 875 enrollments during this time frame. If you're a client who has already been enrolled into an insurance plan by Health Access, it is imperative that you schedule an appointment before December 15th to meet with a Health Access Program Coordinator to secure insurance coverage for 2024. OE is also the only time in the year that folks can purchase dental or vision insurance without a special enrollment period. The final cut off for insurance coverage that begins January 1st is December 15th, so please do not delay responding to emails, calls, or letters from your Health Access Program Coordinator-Kelly, Tabitha, Linda or Carly.

Undocumented Coloradans can enroll into creditable coverage on Colorado Connect. Like last year, the OmniSalud program will offer \$0 premium plans to qualifying applicants with income below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). These \$0 premium plans are limited to the first 11,000 qualifying applicants. Health Access is NOT prioritizing taking these slots for our ADAP clients, in preference to reserve them to prevention clients or other folks who don't have programmatic support with ADAP. If you have questions about the OmniSalud program for your household, don't hesitate to reach out to a Health Access staff member for more information.

Welcome to the Health Access Team Linda Ruiz! Linda, formerly a SCHN Colorado Springs office Program Assistant, has accepted a Bilingual Statewide Health Access Program Coordinator position. We are thrilled to have Linda on the team working with monolingual Spanish-speaking clients statewide. Congratulations Linda!

### 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!



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