The Colorado Health Foundation™

Primary Care

Focus Area: Advance Health and Well-Being



The Colorado Health Foundation believes that all Coloradans should have access to high-quality, patient-centered, comprehensive primary care.

We envision a future in which all Coloradans, including those currently facing barriers due to race, income and geography, have access to culturally responsive, high-quality primary care.

Why It Matters

According to the?National Academy of Medicine,?high-quality primary care is “the provision of whole-person, integrated, accessible, and equitable health care by interprofessional teams who are accountable for addressing the majority of an individual’s health and wellness needs across settings and through sustained relationships with patients, families, and communities.”

Primary care providers provide preventive care, help manage chronic conditions and detect serious illnesses. Access to primary care is related to lower rates of illness and death.

Some Coloradans, especially Coloradans of color,?face barriers to accessing quality primary care. These barriers include discrimination in the delivery of services, a lack of providers who look like them and cost-related challenges. Because of this, Coloradans of color may face higher rates of illness and?worse health outcomes. Rural Coloradans also face barriers to quality primary care, including a lack of providers in their communities and high health care-related costs.

How We are Addressing Threats to Primary Care in 2025 and Beyond

Currently, the Primary Care safety net infrastructure in Colorado is in a precarious position. As a result of the termination of the Medicaid continuous coverage requirement in May 2023, approximately 776,000 Coloradans have lost Medicaid coverage. The people most negatively impacted by Medicaid disenrollment are those with limited English proficiency, those living on low income, those with low literacy and those living with a disability. The current presidential

administration is also considering reducing federal Medicaid by nearly $900 million over the next 10 years.

The Colorado Health Foundation is taking action to meet this moment. At the end of 2024, $6.4 million in emergency response donations were made to 10 clinics critical to the Colorado primary care infrastructure. Due to the immense need to stabilize the primary care field, an additional $3 million was disbursed through general operating grants for federally qualified health centers, safety net clinics and charitable clinics who were absorbing the increased number of uninsured patients resulting from the 2023 Medicaid Unwind.

Over the next 18 months, we will collaborate with our partners to:

- Support legislative and administrative solutions to maintain clinic capacity
- Increase access to behavioral health services, particularly in rural areas
- Protect clinics from current threats from the federal administration
- Expand access to care for vulnerable populations, especially those being targeted by the federal administration
- Recruit highly-qualified, mission-aligned international medical graduates to work in integrated primary care settings
- Retain primary care providers who are facing burnout and unprecedented stress.

Resources

- Read a blog about health care perceptions among low-income Coloradans, the economic impact of Medicaid Unwind in Colorado or how access to gender affirming care is essential.

- Access the latest information about Coloradans' perspectives on health through?Pulse, the Colorado Health Foundation Poll

- Stay updated about our work by joining our?mailing list

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