The Colorado Health Foundation™

New Report Finds More than Two Million Coloradans Have Access to Medical Homes

KEYSTONE, CO — More than two million Coloradans — 40 percent of the state's population — are now connected to a medical home, an innovative model of health care delivery that many experts view as one of the most promising ways to improve quality while lowering costs, according to a new report released today at the annual Colorado Health Symposium by the Colorado Health Foundation and the Colorado Health Institute (CHI).

The report also states that nearly 200 medical practices in the state are officially recognized as patient-centered medical homes by the National Committee for Quality Assurance, compared with just 17 practices in 2012. The number of Colorado health care providers working in certified medical homes has climbed to 1,252 from 57 in 2012.

However, Colorado ranks 26th out of 50 states for adults and 19th for seniors with access to medical homes. And it's just 35th in providing medical homes for children. Children from low-income families, as well as black and Hispanic children, are even less likely to have medical homes.

"Colorado Medical Homes: Creating Healthy Connections" is the latest in a series of Data Spotlights accompanying this year's Colorado Health Report Card. The Health Report Card is an annual health indicator assessment from the Colorado Health Foundation that measures where the state is making progress and where grades need to be improved compared to other states in the U.S.

“A lot of work is underway to extend integrated primary and behavioral health to the majority of Coloradans, including the recently awarded $65 million State Innovation Model federal grant,” said Amy Latham, interim vice president of philanthropy at the Colorado Health Foundation. We thought it was the perfect opportunity to reflect on how far we’ve come and explore the paths ahead for improving the care and health of Coloradans.”

While every medical home model is different, each strives to offer patients access to comprehensive and integrated primary care, which could include behavioral health, oral health, nutrition and lifestyle assistance, referrals to specialty care and connections to community groups that offer food aid, transportation and other vital non-medical help.

The big idea behind medical homes is simple: The patient sits at the center of care. Doctors are part of a comprehensive care team that works collaboratively through co-location, referrals or technology, and each professional steps in as needed. This patient-centered ideal means care is tailored for each patient.

The report highlights Colorado’s innovation, starting with the Accountable Care Collaborative in the state’s Medicaid public insurance program. More than 700,000 Medicaid enrollees have medical homes.

Public and private medical home initiatives began with the Colorado Multi-Payer Medical Home Pilot, one of the nation’s first tests of medical homes with multiple health insurance plans. The Comprehensive Primary Care Initiative, in which Medicare is working with private insurers as well as Medicaid, expects to reach more than 444,000 Coloradans with coordinated care through medical homes.

Finally, many private initiatives are leading the way with forward-looking medical home projects.

“This is the first time a comprehensive overview of medical homes has been completed in Colorado,” said Sara Schmitt, director of community health policy at the Colorado Health Institute, who led the research. “CHI’s research finds that medical homes are playing an important role in transforming health care across the state.”

The report also delves into early evidence of the medical home model and outlines some potential health policy options.

Five innovative Colorado clinics are profiled in a section called “On the Front Lines,” offering first-hand glimpses into the daily life of a medical home. The clinics are:

- The Colorado Adolescent Maternity Program (CAMP) clinic in Aurora, which serves as a medical home for young mothers and their children.
- High Plains Community Health Center in Lamar, which uses a team-based approach to deliver care to nearly 9,000 patients from the Eastern Plains counties of Prowers, Baca, Bent and Kiowa.
- The Northside Child Health Center in Montrose, a school-based health center at Northside Elementary School.
- Family Medicine Clinic in Littleton, a patient-centered medical home connected with Physician Health Partners.
- Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics, a medical home focusing on caring for children under the age of 21 at three clinics in the Denver metro area, four school-based health centers and three mobile units.

“Colorado Medical Homes: Creating Healthy Connections” will be featured during a special live streaming Symposium session on Wednesday, July 29, 1:30 – 3 p.m. (MT).

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Announcements

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