The Colorado Health Foundation™

What Would Improve Your Overall Health?

New Report Outlines Five Major Factors

KEYSTONE, CO — Released today at the Colorado Health Symposium, the Colorado Health Foundation's new Data Spotlight, Where Health Happens: Health Begins Where Coloradans Live, Learn, Work and Play, shows that the social and physical conditions we live in everyday have a significant impact on our health. The new report builds on this year's conference theme, "Health is Everyone's Business" and reveals that these conditions, well outside of the doctor's office, will need to be addressed in order to improve the health of Coloradans.

"Our daily life has a direct impact on our health and is shaped by where we work, worship, shop and socialize," said Karen McNeil-Miller, Colorado Health Foundation president and CEO. "Maybe even more importantly, our health is also impacted by how we feel, are valued and respected by others, by the roadblocks we have to go around or break through, and the cumulative effect of our daily stressors. We want to create a movement where every person and every institution believes in and acts as if health is their business. Now is the time for all of us to make Colorado the healthiest state in the nation."

The Data Spotlight uncovers data and stories of promising Colorado-based initiatives that show how different elements of our environment – education and child care; financial security and safety; food access; housing; and transportation – shape our health. The report features stories from three Colorado communities

facing disparities and taking action to improve the health and well-being of local residents.

“Coloradans across the state can see the bigger picture of health in this report,” said Michele Lueck, president and CEO of the Colorado Health Institute, which partners with the Colorado Health Foundation on the Colorado Health Report Card. “This information can help to guide efforts to make their communities healthier."

According to the Data Spotlight:

- Education and health are connected. Men with the highest levels of education live an average of 14 years longer than those with the lowest level. For women, it’s a ten-year difference.
- As the income gap widens, health disparities increase. In 2015, 22.7 percent of low-income Coloradans rated their health as fair or poor compared with just 8.2 percent of more affluent Coloradans.
- Access to fresh food is a must for good health and many Coloradans simply aren’t getting enough. In fact, one in seven – including one in five children – struggle with food insecurity.
- Adequate housing creates a sense of well-being and security but many Coloradans struggle to afford it. One of two renters and one of three homeowners in the state spend more than 30 percent of income on housing, leaving less money for other essential life expenses.
- How we get around – whether that’s driving, biking, walking or taking public transit – impacts our health. In 41 out of 64 Colorado counties, less than 1 percent of commuters bike to work and nine of 10 Colorado commuters drive to work.

The report also highlights key policies and programs working to bring the idea of health out of the clinic and into the community: the Colorado Child Care

Assistance Program (CCCAP); the Colorado Opportunity Project; SNAP; the Denver Social Impact Bond; and FasTracks/Mile High Connects.

The Data Spotlights are part of the Colorado Health Report Card series and delve into key indicators to better understand pressing health issues. View the full Data Spotlight to learn about opportunities for health improvement and read more on what Colorado communities are doing to create positive, healthy change for local residents.

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Announcements

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