The Colorado Health Foundation™



Behind the Numbers: La Junta

Medicaid Expansion Drives Real Jobs in Real Colorado Communities

Local leaders in southeastern Colorado proudly proclaim themselves a “rural frontier.” The remoteness presents challenges in luring new doctors, but it also magnifies the impact of dozens of new, well-paid health care jobs that come with vital benefits. Southeast Health Group – the predominant mental and behavioral health provider in the Arkansas River region and a growing provider of primary medical care – has added dozens of new positions as a result of Medicaid expansion. Director of Operations J.C. Carrica said Medicaid clients have grown from 12,850 to 17,366 since Medicaid expansion went into effect. To serve them, Carrica said, “You need more providers; you also need more front desk support, IT support staff. As a result of building expansion, we increased our maintenance staff; business services increased, especially the billing department; the compliance department increased. That’s one or two employees in each area.” They have also added 16 “peer” positions, three of them full-time: Drivers trained in multiple health needs that transport patients throughout the region for specialized care, including frequent runs to Pueblo. Southeast Health Group’s employment has gone from 84 to 123, with most of those jobs attributable to expanded Medicaid, Carrica said. They have also used local contractors to build 4,000 square feet of newly constructed provider offices and meeting space

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