The Colorado Health Foundation™

Building Better Health: Cheryl's Story



Open enrollment takes on new meaning in rugged mountain counties like Chaffee and Lake, home to the breathtaking views around Salida and Leadville, yet also home to heart-straining social challenges.

You need to find a pass through the rugged terrain, says Cheryl Walker, family health coordinator for Chaffee County.
Residents who get paid to change beds at luxury resorts on the I-70 corridor rarely make enough to afford insurance on their own. Even the toughest ranchers have been known to shed a tear when they find out they can qualify for Medicaid expansion or an exchange subsidy.

Now, Walker wants to sign up even more this next go-round. The county uses funding from Connect for Health Colorado to hire coverage guides. The guides work with new clients to write letters to the editor of local newspapers explaining the Affordable Care Act.

“In small communities, it’s all about building a trusted network,” Walker says.

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