The Colorado Health Foundation™

Building Better Health: Lee's Story



The hardy souls populating Leadville — altitude: 10,152 feet; average low in January: 3.1 degrees — have always learned to adapt. So that's what coverage guide Lee Trujillo does, as he scours Lake County for anyone who hasn't yet heard about the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Reaching Hispanic residents who think Medicaid's not for them? The bilingual Trujillo can speak Spanish to a Saturday night Mass in the local church. Young Invincibles who run Leadville's Ski Cooper ski lifts and think they'll never get sick? Trujillo can check their IDs at his local bar and hand them a business card.

"To them, I'm Uncle Lee," Trujillo laughs.

And for the really tough holdouts, Trujillo can talk from personal experience. He nearly died from a sudden medical incident and spent six months in the hospital. Without the ACA's removal of lifetime insurance caps, the $2 million-plus bills would have ruined him.

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