The Colorado Health Foundation™



Creating a Healthier Colorado

Our Bold Investment in a Voice Our Health Deserves

Our mission at the Colorado Health Foundation is to improve the health of Coloradans. It's a bold goal – and one that can only be achieved through boldness in our everyday work and our everyday thinking.

Influencing public policy is one of the primary – and most effective – tools the Foundation uses to drive our mission forward. Our newly released white paper, Creating a Healthier Colorado, demonstrates how the Foundation leveraged resources to influence public policy and amplify the voice of Coloradans on important issues affecting their health.

Our unprecedented journey to creating and endowing a 501(c)(4) organization arose in 2011, when the Foundation began to transition its nonprofit tax status from public charity to private foundation. At a time the Foundation was undergoing significant change, we recognized that *how* we engage in advocacy would need to change but did not question *whether* advocacy should continue as an important channel to advancing our mission.

Today, the rules of our new tax status prohibit us from lobbying for or against specific pieces of legislation, but we continue to have ample opportunity, as a private foundation, to educate the public and policymakers about important policy issues and how they impact the health of Coloradans. We strive to keep the question of what's best for Coloradans front and center.

Prior to the Foundation's official tax status transition in 2016, we had a time-limited window of opportunity to think creatively about how we could sustain – and even increase – the influence of Colorado's health advocates.

The Foundation reflected on how and where health advocacy had been successful in shaping policy in our state. The Foundation and its advocacy partners had many strengths and victories to celebrate but also areas in which additional capacity could increase our impact. During this time, we identified the need to support more organizing at the grassroots level to amplify the voice of the people of Colorado in policy debates that influence their health.

Recognizing this opportunity, the Foundation pushed to be bold and creative with how we deployed our resources. This willingness to stretch beyond the conventional led the Foundation to do something unprecedented: to create and endow Healthier Colorado, a separate and independent 501(c)(4) political organization that was free to actively engage in direct lobbying with policymakers, as well as organize and activate Coloradans to speak up about important health policy issues.

Our newly released white paper takes a deep dive into how the Foundation weathered a potentially disruptive tax status transition while preserving — even expanding — Coloradans' ability to influence health policy.

Access the white paper and read Healthier Colorado's companion report to learn about the Foundation's journey to creating and endowing Healthier Colorado, and how this innovative approach was a risk worth taking to ensure Coloradans have the policy voice our health deserves.

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