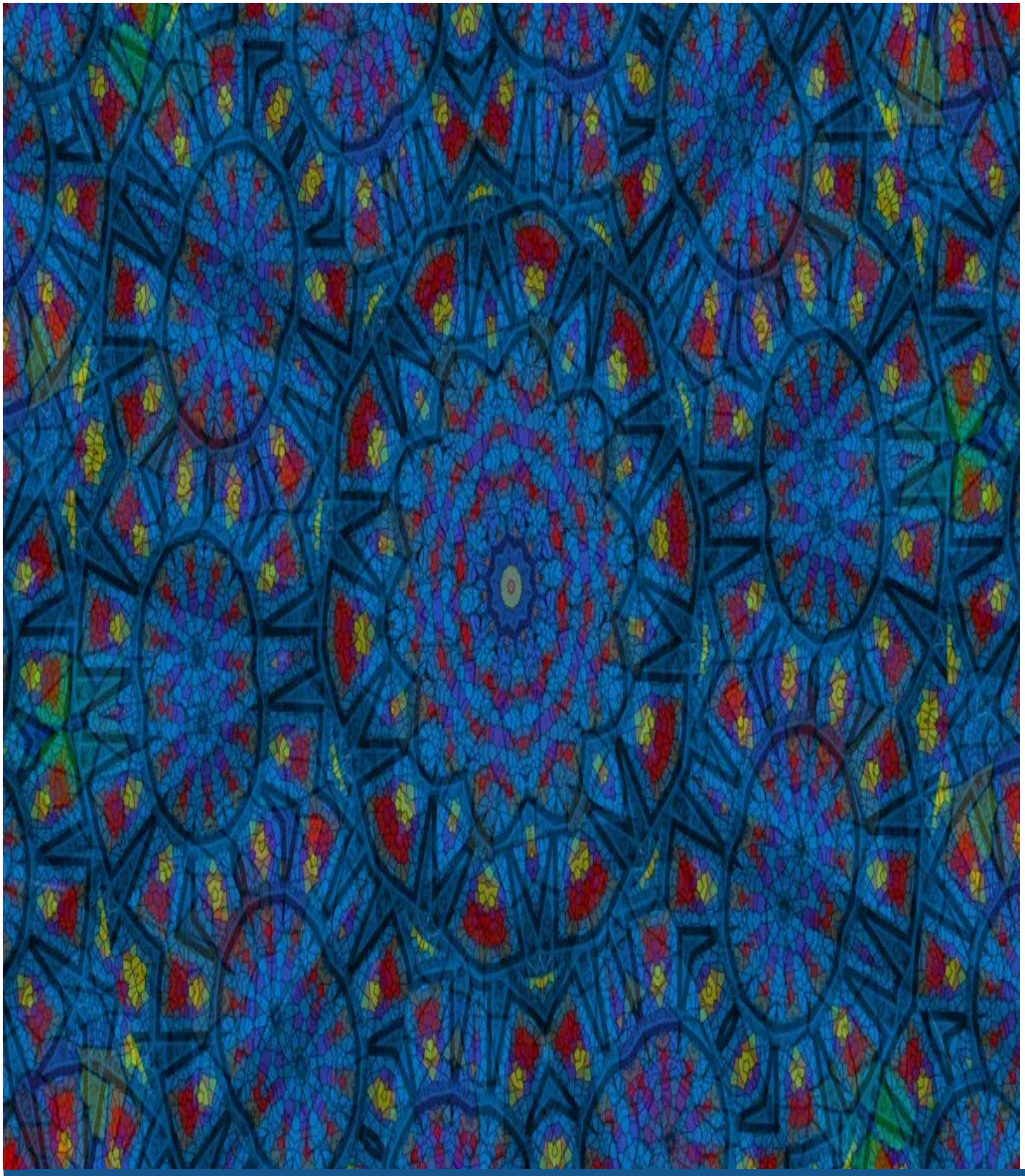
The Colorado Health Foundation™



A Kaleidoscope of Possibilities: Addressing Health from a Local Perspective

Remember those toy kaleidoscopes many of us played with as children? The ones you would shake and then peek in to discover a view of visual patterns and possibilities? Each piece gleamed in its own right, but also contributed to the beauty and intricacy of the entire composition.

As a child, the excitement of a new view each time drew me back. But early in my philanthropic career at the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust in North Carolina, it struck me that the kaleidoscope view is a metaphor for how I could view community. It helped me value the uniqueness that each place offers and a reminder to consider different angles and viewpoints.

In North Carolina, I led an effort around what is often described as "place-based work." Essentially, it required us to build relationships, learn and work as locally as possible to support communities over a long-term period. My team worked closely with community members and leaders, businesses, nonprofits, elected officials, health care providers, educators and many others in rural parts of the state. Why? To harness the ingenuity and energy that only a community can produce to solve its most pressing health challenges. We brought more than investments, we also brought our knowledge and connections.

I'm excited to continue this type of work at the Colorado Health Foundation through a new effort that is locally focused, and we're starting in a handful of communities across the state:

- **Alamosa County**
  Steeped in cultural heritage, this county is the gateway to the Great Sand Dunes National Park and offers fertile agricultural land. Monique Johnson,

program officer, will be working in this area.

- **Eagle County**
  A quilt of many small, unique and diverse communities and landscapes from dense forests to mountainous terrain. Tanya Weinberg, senior program officer, will be working in this area.
- **Morgan County**
  A High Plains county with a growing immigrant and refugee community and numerous family-owned farms and ranches. Rose Green, program officer, will be working in this area.
- **Pueblo**
  A city where the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek converge and is well-known for chilies and a downtown riverwalk. Christopher Smith, senior program officer, will be working in Pueblo.

In a recent blog post, Changing the Program Officer Role for More IMPACT, Amy Latham, vice president of philanthropy, outlined how the Foundation is shifting our approach and focusing on developing a stronger understanding of local communities and contexts. And as that work continues, you can connect with programs officers that are working in your area.

We have also spent the past year designing this new effort, which differs from and will complement our regular grantmaking. This local focus helps us better understand where communities lack resources and connections, and to fill those gaps with homegrown solutions.

This new effort means that we show up in these communities regularly. To lead by listening and find ways to invest at the right time and in ways that truly promote a community's resilience – based on their needs.

We have a new opportunity to build local capacity around important skills such as leadership and advocacy. We can help cultivate networks or foster those already

in place so the community’s solutions can become reality. Lastly, we have the opportunity to invest in and fight for policies that will bring health closer in reach for a community.

How else does this locally-focused effort differ? The first step is about learning and finding that kaleidoscope view that tells us the deeper story. We’re spending the time that is needed on the ground in these communities to learn the local issues and how people feel about them. We’re taking time to understand, see and feel things like cultural heritage, local energy and the rhythms of a community. We’re experiencing as much of the local vibrancy and offerings as possible.

We have a long road ahead of us, but we couldn’t be more excited. I personally feel that I have more opportunities than ever to capture that kaleidoscope view.

As the Foundation moves further into this new effort and expands into more communities, we intend to document and share our progress and challenges. We look forward to your thoughts about what we share.

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Blog

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