The Colorado Health Foundation™



The Year Ahead: What Our Policy Agenda Will Focus on in 2019

At the Colorado Health Foundation, we believe policy advocacy is an important and effective tool for improving the health of Coloradans. This is because public policies enacted at the local, state and national level can have a substantial impact on the health of individuals, their families and their communities. There is much power in sharing Coloradans' perspectives with policymakers so they, too, can recognize and act on the opportunities they have to support health across Colorado.

Our policy advocacy approach is informed by our cornerstones and commitment to serving Coloradans who are living on low income and have historically had less power or privilege. Throughout the year, we listen intently to the perspectives of those we exist to serve to deepen our understanding of what makes it easy or challenging to lead a healthy life in our state.

For us, listening takes many forms, and it often generates insights about opportunities for government to take action that advances health equity.

As we reflect on what we've heard from Coloradans throughout 2018, it is clear that public policy decisions are important forces in each of the Foundation's four focus areas. That is why we have created opportunities for organizations to apply for funding to support advocacy related to each of our priorities.

We are excited by the incredible partners who join us in our advocacy efforts, as it often takes many voices speaking together to be heard at the tables where policy is made.

These committed partners work hard to proactively tackle some of our state's long-standing challenges, such as with the launch early last year of the Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger. We also appreciate those who stand with us against proposed policies that threaten to create or reinforce barriers to the social, emotional or physical well-being of Coloradans.

In the year ahead, you can expect to see us continue to engage in community, build relationships and listen for opportunities to advocate for health equity. You can also expect to hear us speaking out to advance progress on our 2019 policy agenda. This agenda focuses our advocacy on policy issues you have told us will be key to bringing health in reach for all Coloradans, and it includes:

- Advancing local policies that preserve and increase affordable housing stock in ways that address local needs, circumstances and inequities
- Advancing local policy approaches that improve resources for behavioral health prevention, treatment and recovery in ways that address local needs, circumstances and inequities
- Advocating for local, state and federal policy changes that improve food security for all Coloradans
- Advocating for equitable access to participation in safety net programs addressing food security, housing affordability and primary care access

These four items will serve as a general roadmap to guide the Foundation's policy advocacy work in 2019. However, they are by no means exhaustive. Given the unpredictable nature of our political landscape, we're constantly listening to become aware of – and responsive to – other equity-related challenges affecting Coloradans' health.

We look forward to continuing our efforts to listen and amplify voices across the state going forward. Here's to a more just, equitable and healthy Colorado in the years to come.

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