



THE PROGRESS REPORT

The Colorado Health Foundation's newsletter provides updates highlighting programs, policy issues and events related to our mission to improve the health of Coloradans.

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In Good Health: Learning to Broaden How We Think About Health

Editor's note: "In Good Health" is now featured on the Foundation's website in [our blog](#).



When it comes to the meaning of health, we tend to think first and foremost about our physical health. For many of us, our health reflects what we consume, how much we move, how we prevent or manage a disease and what happens in the doctor's office.

For me, personally, health is so much more than simply not being sick. It encompasses our whole mind, body and spirit. As a mother, I really learned what this means when my son — who was only eight-years-old at the time — began experiencing anxiety. He was the first to acknowledge that he couldn't stop overthinking and worrying about things. He was also experiencing physical symptoms, such as digestive issues and hair loss, and suffered a panic attack at a crowded event. While he recognized that something was wrong, I didn't. I couldn't wrap my head around how it was possible for such a young child to have what seemed like such an adult problem. And I could hardly bear to see that his bright, shining spirit was fading.

We were fortunate enough to have access to a behavioral health care provider, who helped my son learn coping strategies – essential tools for dealing with his anxiety. The counselor went further, though, and helped me learn how to let my son share his feelings without judging or interrupting him.

At the Foundation, over the years, we have worked to broaden our idea of health — exploring the roles of education, transportation and physical environments in health, as well as investing in clinics that offer integrated care (addressing physical, behavioral and oral health). We have also expanded our work to apply a health equity lens to all we do, and we continue to broaden the way we think about health.

For us, our picture of health is infinitely tied to how well we are when it comes to our hearts and minds. Our experiences on the ground in Colorado — in addition to the data (according to our 2016 Colorado Health Report Card, there are several [mental health indicators that haven't improved in the last decade](#)) — have underscored the fact that many Coloradans are experiencing tremendous

behavioral health challenges. For example, I heard from communities in every corner of the state [during our listening tour](#) that behavioral health must be a top priority. Coloradans have voiced their concerns about the struggles of treating behavioral health issues, as well as the socioeconomic factors contributing to them. We know there are inequities that drive these issues, along with access and general awareness deficits that need to be remedied.

In fact, as an organization dedicated to improving the health of Coloradans, we have recently committed one of our six focus areas to behavioral health. While we are still defining this focus area and how we will engage within it, our hope is that we can help foster long-term and promising solutions that nurture the hearts and minds of all Coloradans throughout their lives.

As we explore how to have the greatest impact in our new Behavioral Health focus area, we have much to learn about how to intentionally fund those working to improve behavioral health and how we can work together to address the whole picture of health in communities throughout Colorado.

Look for new developments on our upcoming work in behavioral health and keep your stories and feedback [coming our way](#). Perspectives and voices are how we will best shape this bigger story of Colorado's health. Yours matters.

In good health,



Karen McNeil-Miller



Symposium Registration Opens Soon

The 2017 Colorado Health Symposium registration will open Monday, May 22. Join us in Keystone Aug. 2-4 to be part of the conversation on this year's theme: Let's Talk About... Inequity.

[Learn more...](#)



Can an Extra Dollar an Hour Improve Health?

What effect will the voter-approved increase in minimum wage have on health? Proponents point to studies that show higher wages can improve physical and behavioral health.

[Read...](#)



Health Insurance Literacy Tools Available

CoveredHQ is a one-stop-shop where health coverage guides can find resources on health insurance literacy. Use messaging by topic to better communicate about health insurance and accessing care.

[View...](#)

Nominate Today for the 2017 Dr. Licona Award



Do you know someone in the Colorado health community who has demonstrated exceptional leadership in the areas of rural, migrant or community health? [Nominate them today](#) for the new Dr. Virgilio Licona Community Health Leadership Award.

A nationally recognized advocate for social justice and the health of vulnerable populations, Dr. Licona contributed to the health of Coloradans as a physician and expert in rural health care delivery and migrant health. Dr. Licona's role as a leader in communities brought a critical voice to some of the most important conversations and decisions related to how all Coloradans can live the healthiest lives possible. The award recognizes Coloradans who are working to implement effective solutions to community health barriers within the state.

Each individual is allowed one nomination. The award will be presented to the recipient at the 2017 Colorado Health Symposium on Thursday, Aug. 3. [Access additional nomination criteria here.](#)

Please [submit your nomination](#) by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 28. Questions? Contact [Keri Jones](#), communications officer, at 303-953-3695.

Coming to Our New Building? Ride a B-cycle



The Foundation recently partnered with Denver B-cycle to offer free rides for visitors who are commuting to or from our new building, located at 1780 Pennsylvania St. in Denver. [Denver B-cycle](#) is a bike-sharing service that allows you to check out a bike for a 30-minute ride and return it to any station in the city. There are [stations and bikes in many locations](#) around Denver. The closest B-cycle station to our office is around the corner at 17th Ave. and Pearl St. [Contact us for more details](#) and a code to ride to our office.

Every Student Succeeds Act in Colorado



The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law in December 2015. ESSA represents the greatest shift in federal education policy since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Among other changes, ESSA grants states and local school districts significantly greater control over education policy and funding decisions. Each state is required to submit a state plan for implementing the new law to the U.S. Department of Education in 2017.

In February, the Foundation submitted comments to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) on their [draft state plan for ESSA](#) implementation. We commended CDE for prioritizing better integration between the state's K-12 and early childhood systems. In the comments, we urged the Department to: include child health experts as stakeholders in the development of the state's accountability policies; support local schools in collecting appropriate data to better understand the causes of chronic student absences; and use the state's flexibility in spending federal funds to better resource the support they provide local districts in implementing high-quality physical education and health programs. CDE is currently reviewing the comments they received on their draft state plan and is submitting a final version to the U.S. Department of Education soon.

Apply Now for Grant Opportunities from Community First Foundation



Community First Foundation released two new requests for proposals for nonprofits working to address community needs in Jefferson County and the Denver metropolitan area:

[Enhance Home Visitation](#) aims to improve the effectiveness of early childhood professionals delivering home visitation programming for families in the area of social-emotional development and to improve outcomes for children and families receiving home visitation services. The deadline for this grant opportunity is June 12, 2017.

[Improving Conditions of Community Health in Jeffco](#) will support a wide-range of organizations, agencies and groups providing services in Jefferson County currently improving conditions of community health such as food security, early childhood development, arts and culture, access to health care and access to affordable housing. The deadline for this grant opportunity is July 13, 2017.

[Learn more.](#)

Mark Your Calendar

[Deadline to Nominate for the Dr. Licona Award](#)

April 28

[Next Grant Application Deadline](#)

June 15

[Colorado Health Symposium](#)

Aug. 2-4
