

Colorado Access Launches Foundation to Address Health Equity Needs in the State

Aurora, CO – Colorado Access, the state’s largest and most experienced public sector health plan, announced the formation, funding, and launch of the Colorado Access Foundation. The Foundation, working with partners from across the state, will be a catalyst in improving community health in Colorado. By strategically investing in communities, the Foundation will promote innovative health care, health-supporting services and community partnerships to advance health equity for Coloradans.

With its first project, the Foundation invested \$750,000 over seven years in the Housing to Health project in Denver. Colorado Access Foundation joins partners, including the City of Denver, Denver Health, The Corporation for Supportive Housing, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless and others, to create supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness. Participants will be able to access wraparound supportive services, including counseling, substance use treatment, psychiatric care and medical care.

“From a social determinant of health perspective, we know that stable and affordable housing has substantial positive effects on a person’s health and wellbeing,” Gretchen McGinnis, senior vice president of health care systems at Colorado Access said. “We are pleased that the Foundation is partnering with other community leaders to invest in and launch this innovative housing program.”

The Foundation recently awarded additional grants totaling \$385,000 to increase access to pharmacy services for individuals with lower incomes, provide behavioral health and support services for adults and youth experiencing homelessness, deliver medically tailored meals for people with severe illness, and support resources and services for LGBTQ+ community members.

“We are proud to launch the Colorado Access Foundation with its vision that Colorado is a place where all can achieve their fullest potential for health,” said Annie H. Lee, JD, president and CEO of Colorado Access and the chair of the Foundation board of directors. “The Foundation is a natural extension of the mission of Colorado Access and demonstrates our long-term commitment to investing in healthy communities.”

The inaugural board of directors includes Annie H. Lee, JD, president and CEO of Colorado Access as chair of the Foundation; Ben L. Bynum, MD, MBA, MPH, senior director of impact investing for the Colorado Health Foundation; and Jeffrey L. Harrington, senior vice president and chief financial officer at Children’s Hospital Colorado. The locally-governed board will expand, including additional community representatives, to ensure that its investments are focused on Colorado and clearly benefit under-resourced communities.

“I am honored to join the Foundation board of directors where our investment decisions will incorporate the voices of our communities and an expert understanding of the social determinants of health that influence better health outcomes,” said Bynum. “The Foundation will focus on impactful, innovative projects and partner with organizations with the proven ability to execute and deliver results.”

The Foundation is a newly formed 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization in Colorado and it is fully-funded by Colorado Access, which has invested almost \$20 million over the past two years. Colorado Access will continue to make discretionary contributions to the Foundation based on its financial and operational performance.

“We’re striving for health equity across Colorado through transformative investments that support local initiatives and include members of our community,” said Cassidy Smith, executive director of the Colorado Access Foundation. “The number one priority for the Foundation and its funding decisions is that the experiences, insights and hopes of community members are front and center.”

The Foundation’s funding will focus on opportunities to build, expand, and retain a diverse health care workforce and on efforts that influence a person’s health, such as access to safe and stable housing, safe and reliable transportation, and affordable, nutritious food. More information is available at coaccessfoundation.org.

About the Colorado Access Foundation

The Colorado Access Foundation strives for health equity in Colorado through transformative investments. Working with partners from across the state and national thought leaders, the Foundation will be a catalyst in transforming the health care ecosystem in Colorado. By strategically investing in Colorado communities, programs, and projects, the Foundation will promote innovative health care, health-supporting services, and community partnerships to advance health equity for Coloradans. The ultimate vision of the Foundation is to make Colorado a place where all can achieve their fullest potential for health. Learn more at coaccessfoundation.org.

About Colorado Access

As the largest and most experienced public sector health plan in the state, Colorado Access is a nonprofit organization that works beyond just navigating health services. The company focuses on meeting members’ unique needs by partnering with providers and community organizations to provide better, personalized care through measurable results. Their broad and deep view of regional and local systems allows them to stay focused on members’ care while collaborating on measurable and economically sustainable systems that serve them better. Learn more at coaccess.com.