

Fact Sheet for the 2012 Colorado Health Symposium

What is the Colorado Health Symposium?

Now entering its 31st year, the Colorado Health Symposium is regarded as one of the most widely discussed health policy conferences in the country. Produced by the Colorado Health Foundation, this three-day event gives experts a forum for sharing real-world solutions to challenges in health and health care.

Each year, the Symposium draws more 400 participants who have heard from thought leaders such as Dr. Donald Berwick, current administrator of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services; former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee; former U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona; Nancy-Ann DeParle, now deputy chief of staff for policy in the Obama Administration; and Kavita Patel, MD, a fellow and managing director at the Brookings Institute.

What's happening at the 2012 Symposium?

The theme of this year's Symposium is "Health Equity: Bridging the Divides." In recent years, economic uncertainties have imposed financial burdens on our health systems and services as more people join the ranks of the poor and the unemployed. But it's not just those who live in abject poverty who suffer when people lack affordable health insurance, quality medical care or good choices. Poor health undermines our country's fiscal health and ultimately impacts every U.S. citizen.

Setting the tone for a more equitable future, this year's Symposium will challenge presenters and participants to identify opportunities for greater affordability, access and choice -- resulting in enhanced productivity, reduced health care costs and, ultimately, improved lives.

Confirmed speakers include:

- Jeffrey Brenner, MD, a New Jersey doctor who developed the groundbreaking "hotspot" health care model
- Dr. Michael Minor, a Southern pastor and wellness advocate who banned fried chicken from his church
- Wes Moore, author of "The Other Wes Moore," which compares his life with the very different life of another man with the same name
- Manuel Pastor, an expert in disparities among the minority and immigrant populations
- Marguerite Salazar, regional director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and longtime champion of the medically underserved.

Evening events include an Oxford-style debate (or "food fight") about the government's role in food policy in the United States.

Although Colorado is doing well compared to other states by some measures, recent statistics show there are many divides to bridge:

- According to the 2011 Colorado Health Report Card, 18 percent of Colorado children live in poverty compared with 16 percent in the 2010 Report Card. With the rise, Colorado's ranking among states fell from No. 14 to No. 20. Studies show poverty dramatically impacts the health and well-being of Colorado children, contributing to poor health and low academic performance.
- In the 2011 Report Card, the state ranked No. 36 in uninsured children (or 9 percent) compared with No. 44 (or 12 percent) in the 2010 Report Card. The increase could be attributed to a number of factors, including an increase in kids who qualify for coverage under Medicaid or the Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+) because of the downturn in the economy, outreach efforts to enroll more kids in

public insurance plans and efforts to expand CHP+ eligibility. Despite these advances, there's still work to be done in this area.

- While Colorado still has the lowest obesity rate among adults (making it the No. 1 leanest state), our rate of obesity rose from 19 percent to 22 percent between the 2010 and 2011 Report Cards. With the increase, Colorado lost the distinction of being the only state in the nation with an obesity rate lower than 20 percent. How does this tie to this year's Symposium theme?
- A 2009 report, "Healthy Food, Healthy Coloradans: The Need for More Supermarkets in Colorado," shows that many Coloradans lack access to affordable fruits and vegetables, whole grains and other components of a healthy diet.

Attend the Symposium online

If you are unable to attend this year's event, you can still follow the discussion real-time through Ustream or other social media channels, including blogs, email updates and frequent postings on Twitter and Facebook. More information about Symposium social media is available on the Colorado Health Foundation's [website](#).

To learn more about the Symposium's agenda, speakers and other activities, visit the [Colorado Health Symposium webpage](#).