



The Colorado
Health Foundation™

CHF Statewide Listening Tour

Southern Tour Executive Summary

November 16 – 17, 2015

Purpose of Tour: The new Foundation President and CEO, Karen McNeil-Miller, is touring Colorado in order to learn about health needs and concerns within communities across the state. The statewide #HealthiestCO Listening Tour is an opportunity for grantees, community residents and local leaders to come together and share their perspectives on health. Karen is interested in speaking with community members about the major assets as well as concerns and barriers to good health that exist within communities across Colorado. Karen believes that health is everyone's business, not just for individuals that work directly in healthcare, and hopes to engage community members across all sectors.

Who participated? The delegation included ten staff members from The Colorado Health Foundation and three staff members from Community Resource Center. The Southern tour reached approximately 110 persons in the region, including tour session attendees as well as site visit hosts and participants.

Where did we go? The Southern Region Listening Tour took place on November 16 – 17. The delegation met with representatives from Las Animas, Huerfano, Fremont and Pueblo counties. Due to weather conditions, the delegation was unable to travel to Custer and El Paso counties. Site visits and tour sessions will be rescheduled in Westcliffe and Colorado Springs. The tour consisted of three sessions hosted in the communities of Trinidad, Canon City and Pueblo, Colorado. Additionally, the delegation participated in site visits of Eckhart Elementary School in Trinidad, Walsenburg Family Resource Center and Pueblo Triple Aim. A full itinerary of the tour is available in Appendix A.

What did we do? The Foundation is hoping to start an on-going conversation with communities across Colorado to effectively address the needs of the state. In open discussions, community leaders described the region's character, existing needs, and efforts currently underway to address a variety of health related needs.

What did we hear? At each tour session we heard concerns of community members and various barriers to achieving overall health and wellness. While each community presented its own unique perspectives, we found overarching themes and challenges that are experienced among community members within the Southern Region. Participants used the following similar terms to describe the character of the region and its inhabitants: traditional, collaborative and diverse. The residents of the region highlighted their access to many outdoor activities and a high quality of life. The top three issue areas that were identified by session attendees were a growing drug culture and increased substance abuse, the lack of adequate behavioral health services and the need for acceptance of prevention efforts.

Regional Themes

Substance Abuse: The rising drug culture in the region has had many negative impacts on children and their families. Attendees in Pueblo expressed that addiction and substance abuse seem to be the root causes of many issues in their community including education, homelessness, crime and the displacement of children. Community members described an increase in the number of grandparents taking care of grandchildren, due to parental drug usage and substance abuse issues. Children are becoming increasingly aware of drugs, with substance abuse being seen at an earlier age. Many counties have seen a drastic increase in heroin and marijuana use and abuse. Alcohol and prescription drug abuse remains a persisting issue among all populations. There is an expressed need for preventative measures in middle schools and high schools to address the rising drug culture among school aged children.

Behavioral Healthcare: In all four sessions, residents expressed concern over the lack of mental health services available. Attendees in Pueblo stated that there is not only a lack of mental health providers but also a shortage of treatment facilities. Residents are seeing children being taken away from parents as a result of mental health and addiction related problems. Mental health concerns are being identified in children, creating a clear need for early intervention and greater access to mental healthcare for all ages. Many attendees also spoke of the need for behavioral health programs geared towards parenting. The board of health in Canon City has reported an increasingly high number of suicides among community members and young residents. Rocky Mountain Behavioral Health is an asset in Fremont County and the surrounding counties, however the organization does not have the capacity to provide services to all those in need.

Prevention Efforts: We heard about the challenge of increasing awareness of preventative efforts in the community and creating a stronger health-related culture. Pueblo attendees spoke of the persistent stigma among community members and the need to introduce new and improved experiences related to health and mental health. Community members are currently more focused on intervention rather than prevention, likely due to generational views on healthcare. While all communities spoke of various existing programs and initiatives that are focused on prevention, there is a challenge in recruiting residents to actively participate.

Assets: Communities spoke of many assets that exist in their communities. Attendees in Pueblo and Canon City highlighted their access to outdoor activities that promote exercise and a high quality of life among residents. Quality hospitals, clinics and health departments serve as a large asset within the region, with residents highlighting recently improved access to health and wellness services. Additionally, tour session attendees referenced the variety of youth services and strong early childhood councils that exist in their communities.

Topics and Projects Unique to Specific Counties

Trinidad (Las Animas County): Trinidad residents highlighted the ability to access food through farmers markets and co-ops. Schools gardens are educating children about the benefits of growing produce and healthy eating. Trinidad is a satellite partner for Cooking Matters, which features programs that teach residents how to feed a family of four a healthy meal using ten dollars. Attendees discussed the need to increase participation in such programs.

Canon City (Fremont County): School districts in Fremont County have seen a sudden increase in enrollment. Many families are moving into the area with new and increased needs, creating a challenge among schools, public health and human services departments.

Pueblo (Pueblo County): Attendees stated that Pueblo has been the “best kept secret” in Colorado for many years. Pueblo’s traditionally poor reputation has deterred people and business from coming into the area. As a result of this, fewer economic opportunities are available to residents. Pueblo Community College and Colorado State University serve as major assets to the community, however the challenge is in keeping students in the county after graduation.

Appendices:

Appendix A. Listening Tour Itinerary

Monday, Nov. 16

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM: Trinidad Tour Session @ Mt. Carmel Health, Wellness, and Community Center

12:15 PM – 1:00 PM: Site Visit @ Eckart Elementary in Trinidad

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM: Site Visit @ Walsenburg Family Resource Center

Tuesday, Nov. 17

9:30 – 10:30 AM: Canon City Tour Session @ The Abbey Events Complex

11:30 AM – 12:00 PM: Site Visit @ Pueblo Community Health Center – Pueblo Triple Aim

2:00 – 3:00 PM: Pueblo Tour Session @ Pueblo Community College

Appendix B. Session Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Organization	Tour Session
Todd	Oberheu	Spanish Peaks Regional Health Center & Spanish Peaks Veterans Community Living Center	Trinidad
Arlene	Lopez	Las Animas County Dept. Human Services	Trinidad
Andrea	Jimenez	HOLY TRINITY ACADEMY	Trinidad
Kimberly	Gonzales	Las Animas - Huerfano County District Health Dept.	Trinidad
Jennifer	Sanchez McDonald	HULA Early Childhood Advisory Council	Trinidad
Laura	DeBella	Trinidad Community Foundation	Trinidad
Bill	Knowles	Colorado Working Press	Trinidad
Danielle	Kolakowski	Mt Carmel Center	Trinidad
Carmela	Vanore	Trinidad Community Farmers Market	Trinidad
Joyce	Cuccia	Trinidad Community Farmers Market	Trinidad
Mary JO	Baudino	Nursery Rhyme Center	Trinidad
Jayne	Mazur	CHICF	Canon City
Pat	Whitten	Valley Wide Health Sys	Canon City
Judy	Lohnes	Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments	Canon City
Kelly	Janis	Valley Wide Health Systems	Canon City
Kathleen	Kennedy	Starpoint	Canon City
Paula	Buser	Canon City Schools	Canon City
Sheri	Trahern	St. Thomas More Hospital	Canon City
James	Hoyt		Canon City
Emma	Glancy	Centura Health	Canon City
Dominic	Carochi	Canon City Schools	Canon City
Sarah	Ley	Canon City Schools	Canon City
Joshua	Johns	Pueblo Community College Fremont Campus	Canon City
Steve	Hinson	Boys & Girls Club of Fremont County	Canon City
Kay	Martin	SolVista Health	Canon City
Scott	McFadden	Rocky Mountain Behavioral Health	Canon City
Ashley	Smith	City Council	Canon City
Ed	Norden	Commissioner	Canon City
Rochelle	Reiter	Valley Wide Health Services	Canon City
Rick	Miklich	Fremont County Public Health	Canon City
Matt	Guy	Pueblo Triple Aim Corporation	Pueblo
Shylo	Dennison	Pueblo City-County Health Department	Pueblo
Linda	Russell	Centura / St. Mary-Corwin Health Foundation	Pueblo
William	McAuliffe	Pueblo City Schools - Health Academy	Pueblo
Pamela	Parks	retired ER Doctor / Physician	Pueblo
Rachel	Brown	Pueblo Community College	Pueblo
Sylvia	Proud	Pueblo City-County Health Department	Pueblo

Hannah	Phillips	Pueblo City Schools & District 70	Pueblo
Jill	Kidd	Pueblo City Schools	Pueblo
Donald	Moore	Pueblo Community Health Center	Pueblo
Jesse	Sena	Pueblo County Department of Social Services Child Welfare	Pueblo
Donna	Garcia	Habitat for Humanity of Pueblo, Inc.	Pueblo
Lauren	Leomiti	Sangre de Cristo Hospice & Palliative Care	Pueblo
Linda	Tremblay	Pueblo Community College	Pueblo
Anne	Courtright	Health Care for All CO, SECO Chap.	Pueblo
Pamela	Doyle	Pueblo StepUp	Pueblo
Nancy	Ortiz	Pueblo StepUp	Pueblo
Richard	Veatch	Health Solutions	Pueblo
Nanette	Santos	Pueblo Community Health Center	Pueblo
Desiree	Skyba	Pueblo Community Health Center	Pueblo
Eileen	Dennis	Pueblo	Pueblo
Lindsay	Reeves	Pueblo Triple Aim	Pueblo
Barbara	Burch	Sangre de Cristo Arts center	Pueblo
Atrelle	Jones	Sangre de Cristo Arts Center	Pueblo
Jim	Richerson	Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center	Pueblo
Ruth	Mitchell	Custer County Community Sharing Center	Pueblo