



The Colorado
Health Foundation™

Funding Update



Consumer Advocacy Funding Initiative

Introduction

In 2014, the Colorado Health Foundation kicked off the [Consumer Advocacy Funding Initiative](#), a new funding strategy **designed to ensure public policy adequately addresses consumers' needs for a health insurance system that is stable, affordable, and adequate**. The initiative seeks to advance five health policy targets with advocates over the next four years:

- Convergence across payer sources and provider networks around models for effective payment and delivery reform to reduce costs and improve outcomes.
- Decreasing healthcare costs without decreasing the quality of care, including increased transparency around costs.
- Building the public's healthcare literacy, including their understanding of how to use their insurance to access preventive care and improve their health outcomes.
- Protection of policy budgetary successes from the past few years, including but not limited to the Medicaid expansion, the Essential Health Benefits requirement and the health benefit exchange.
- Driving integration of different health care delivery modalities including primary care, specialty care, oral health and behavioral health.

As part of this strategy, the Foundation will hold an *Advocacy and Strategy Convening* twice a year to meet with advocates and discuss the health policy environment, the viability of specific policy targets, and the supports advocates need to be effective in the coming year.

A brief published in December, [Health Policy and Advocacy in Colorado In 2014](#), describes the outcomes of the first convening. This brief describes the rapid response supports the Foundation will provide as a result of those findings.

Representatives from nearly 40 health-related advocacy organizations gathered for a facilitated



discussion to reflect on the current health policy environment and identify strategic priorities for future advocacy focused on consumer interests. When asked to vote on top supports needed by the field, they overwhelmingly identified two priorities: Communications and engaging consumers as advocates. As part of both priorities, advocates talked about the need for assistance in collecting and using consumer stories.

Follow-Up Activities

In order to better understand how the Foundation can take concrete action on the supports requested by advocates, a survey was sent to advocates who attended the convening. The survey presented a set of potential supports the Foundation could provide and a set of topics for the next advocates' convening.

Using results of the survey, the Foundation is offering the following supports:

- **Consumer Engagement Fund:** Funds will be available to the Consumer Health Advocacy general operating grantee cohort, [recently approved in January 2015](#), to support consumer engagement and education. Specifically, funds can be used to support stipends that will cover travel, lodging and meals for up to three days per consumer. Grantees can apply for up to \$5,000 per organization. [Click here to learn more about the Consumer Engagement Fund.](#)

- **Communications Campaign Technical Assistance:** The Foundation will contract with a Communications firm (TBD) to offer communications campaign technical assistance to up to (5) eligible general operating grantees. We are currently negotiating a contract with a communications firm, and will release more information on this opportunity in early March.
- Upcoming program grants will be used to expand and diversify the voices of the grantee cohort. More information will be available at www.coloradohealth.org in April 2015.

The Foundation is also committed to providing new and ongoing communications and policy supports that compliment the policy targets, including:

- Story collection and collaboration in promoting the importance of health coverage in Colorado, as well as developing further opportunities for advocates to build communications capacity.
- Promotion of a shared vision of a “no wrong door” approach to health coverage in Colorado that maximizes the use of technology and targets in-person assistance where needed.
- Advocating for a financially sustainable health insurance marketplace in Colorado.
- Promoting stability in kids coverage by advocating to maintain program structure and stable funding levels for states under the Child Health Insurance Plan.
- Monitoring activity of the Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care and identifying opportunities for delivery system and payment reform policy advances.
- Leveraging work of the Better Care, Better Cost, Better Colorado (BC3) [collective impact project](#). Specifically, the Foundation will work to better connect the Consumer Health Advocacy cohort to the work of BC3.
- Developing opportunities for Consumer Health Advocacy grantees to learn more about health literacy policy.

Finally, the Foundation is meeting with other health policy funders in Colorado and will share the results of the survey to build a broader understanding of supports helpful to health advocates.

Consumer Advocacy General Operating Grantees

The Foundation [recently announced](#) the grantees that are funded as part of the general operating grants in the Consumer Advocacy Funding Initiative. In addition to ensuring a diversity of consumer representation, one of the other factors under consideration was the breadth of advocacy strategies that the grants can support based on the strengths of the participating organizations. A matrix representing what grantee partners identified to be their top advocacy tactics is attached on page three of this brief.

Again, the Foundation plans to utilize upcoming program grants to expand and diversify the voices of the grantee cohort. We will have more information on our website in April 2015.

Evaluation

The [evaluation approach](#) for this funding strategy balances accountability around progress towards policy targets with real-time information to inform ongoing adaptation. The evaluation is also designed to engage grantees, other advocates and the Foundation in directing what information is needed, interpreting the results of data collection, and using the information to inform strategy.

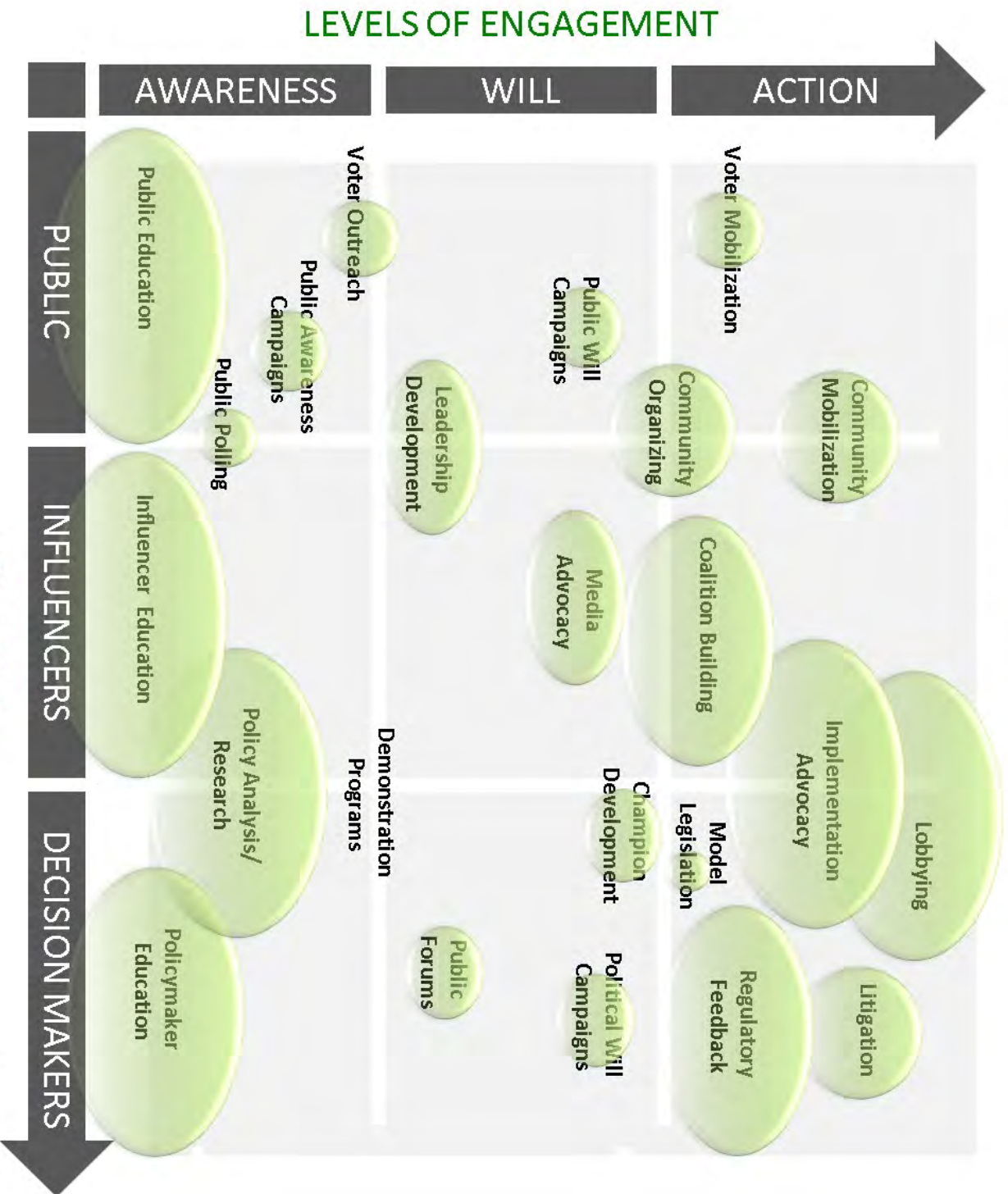
Next Steps

In late May or early June, the Foundation will host the second *Advocacy Strategy & Learning Convening* for 2015. The survey requested information about potential topics and two rose to the top:

- An expert speaker who can bring new information on one of a variety of topics, including grassroots engagement examples from other states, examples of effective communications campaigns, and information about the current political environment in Colorado.
- Time for advocates to work in-depth on advocacy strategies including potentially mapping the strategies across advocacy organizations to identify gaps.

The Foundation will use this feedback to design the next event, and an invitation will be sent to advocates soon. Please contact Erica Snow, senior program officer of Health Care and Health Coverage at 303.953.3656 or esnow@coloradohealth.org with any questions.

Advocacy and Policy Framework



Adapted by Spark Policy Institute from the Advocacy and Policy Framework created by the Center for Evaluation Innovation