

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: April 2, 2009

CONTACT: Christine Groves, 303-838-1224

c.groves@beasmartmouth.com

Kay Volkema 303-832-7493

kv@coruralhealth.org

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ON ORAL HEALTH, RURAL HEALTH NEEDS, AND ADVOCACY SET FOR APRIL 16 AT BURLINGTON

BURLINGTON, CO -- Oral and rural health needs and barriers to dental and medical care in Northeastern Colorado will be among the topics of discussion at “A Community Conversation on Oral Health and Rural Health,” scheduled for 9-11:30 A.M., Thursday, April 16, 2009 at the Burlington Community and Education Center in Burlington, Colorado.

The presentation will be part of a pre-conference program for the Progressive 15 Spring Conference, set for April 16-17.

Christine Groves, managing director of Oral Health Awareness Colorado! (OHAC!), will lead the discussion on oral health with Northeast Colorado community leaders, health care providers and local residents. Groves also will provide a status report on current OHAC! activities and resources, and discuss coalition efforts already underway to improve access to oral health care.

Lou Ann Wilroy, executive director of the Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC)--the State Office of Rural Health--and Terri Hurst, policy analyst for CRHC, will discuss rural health needs, barriers, and advocacy efforts on behalf of CoRHAC, the Colorado Rural Health Advocacy Coalition. Progressive 15 is one of the CoRHAC partner organizations, as is the Colorado Rural Health Center. There also will be a legislative update about current and pending legislation at both the state and federal levels and how it may impact rural health care services.

The Colorado Rural Health Advocacy Coalition is comprised of five partner organizations – Progressive 15, Action 22, Club 20, Colorado Rural Health Center and the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union – with the intent to develop a structure and advocacy voice for rural health care needs in Colorado. Collectively, the five partner organizations represent all rural, frontier and mountain communities in the state. Progressive 15 represents Northeast Colorado. For more information, visit www.corhac.com

OHAC! is a statewide coalition of professionals representing a wide range of public, private and non-profit organizations interested in advancing oral health care in Colorado. Its mission is to develop and promote strategies that achieve optimal oral health for all Coloradoans. Created in February, 2004, it developed the state’s first formal oral health plan aimed at improving the general health of the residents of Colorado.

The coalition also launched a statewide public awareness campaign, “Be a Smart Mouth”, to heighten understanding of the importance of good oral health to general health. For more information, visit www.beasmartmouth.com.

The Colorado Rural Health Center was established in 1991 as the first nonprofit state office of rural health in the U.S. Although every state has an office of rural health, it remains one of three offices of rural health organized as a nonprofit.

CRHC’S mission is “enhancing health care services in Colorado by provide information, education, linkages, tools and energy toward addressing health care issues”. It has a statewide constituency of over 3,500 individuals and organizations. For more information, visit www.coruralhealth.org, call 303-832-7403, or toll free 800-851-6782.

###