



The State Office of Rural Health

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Eighth Annual Safety Net Clinic Week

A week-long celebration that profiles vital community safety net clinics (CSNCs) and rural health clinics (RHCs)

Aurora, Colo. – September 13, 2017 – Public officials and community leaders get a firsthand look at Colorado’s community safety net clinics (CSNCs) and federally certified rural health clinics (RHCs) during the 8th Annual Safety Net Clinic Week, September 11-15. These safety net clinics provide high quality care and offer much needed access to healthcare services in urban and rural communities to those who are uninsured, underinsured or insured through public programs like Medicaid, CHP+ and Medicare.

Even though supplemental federal funding is unavailable to them, 94 CSNCs and RHCs provide essential healthcare services to approximately 344,000 Coloradans through an estimated 1,125,000 visits. While CSNCs and RHCs are diverse in their business and practice models, they are comparable in their commitment to providing health and healthcare services to people in need. They deliver meaningful results and value to their communities despite limited funding for general operations, workforce challenges, growing reporting and accountability requirements and changing payment and delivery models.

“Safety Net Clinic Week is a key opportunity to educate state and national policymakers about the present need to support safety net providers,” says Michelle Mills, chief executive officer at CRHC.

“We are rallying support to ensure all safety net providers are recognized and remain adequately funded so that they may continue delivering care to some of Colorado’s most vulnerable populations,” adds Mills.

Helping to raise awareness of these clinics, Governor Hickenlooper granted an official proclamation of September 11-15 as Safety Net Clinic Week in Colorado. The proclamation was presented by House Health, Insurance & Environment Committee member, Colorado State Representative Susan Lontine, at the annual Rural Health Clinic Community Showcase event hosted at the Colorado Rural Health Center in Aurora on September 12.

The event offered a rare look into the unique challenges facing healthcare in rural Colorado and a special glimpse into rural life via three short videos. The featured clinics include Southwest Health System in Cortez, Roaring Fork Family Practice in Carbondale, and Yuma Hospital and Clinics in Yuma.

Each video focuses on the unique challenges and opportunities for providing care in the community, and highlight the importance of healthcare in supporting the rural way of life. The videos are available for viewing in the CRHC website: <http://coruralhealth.org/safety-net-clinic-week>

“Our rural health clinics are located throughout the state – sometimes in very remote and hard to access locations and our goal is to bring the stories and voices of rural health clinics to a larger audience,” explains Mills, “CRHC offers urban healthcare professionals, partners and elected officials the unique opportunity to tour rural health clinics without leaving the Denver metro area.”

Colorado’s eighth annual Safety Net Clinic Week runs September 11-15. During this week elected officials and community partners will be visiting clinics throughout the state.

For further information or details about participating in Safety Net Clinic Week events, contact Brooke Powers at brookepowers72@gmail.com To contact the Colorado Rural Health Center, visit <http://coruralhealth.org/> or contact Kelly Erb at ke@coruralhealth.org

About Colorado’s Community Safety Net Clinics

Community Safety Net Clinics were created by civic-minded individuals, healthcare professionals and systems, churches and other community organizations who recognized that despite the presence of other safety net providers in their communities, there are many individuals, children and families still in need of timely access to healthcare services. They provide essential healthcare treatment and preventive services to vulnerable populations in communities throughout our state primarily serving Coloradans who are uninsured, underinsured or insured through public programs. For more information, call Brooke Powers at 720-233-7375.

About The Colorado Rural Health Center

The Colorado Rural Health Center was established in 1991 as Colorado's State Office of Rural Health. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, CRHC serves dual roles as the State Office of Rural Health with the mission of assisting rural communities in addressing healthcare issues; and as the State Rural Health Association, advocating for policy change to ensure that rural Coloradoans have access to comprehensive, affordable healthcare services of the highest quality. For more information visit www.coruralhealth.org, call 303-832-7493, or call toll free 800-851-6782 from rural Colorado.



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