



The State Office of Rural Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Matthew Enquist, Associate Director for Outreach
303-832-7493 or me@coruralhealth.org

Colorado Rural Health Center Announces Workforce “Grow Your Own” Initiative

The Colorado Health Foundation awarded \$300,000 to promote sustainable workforce solutions in rural Colorado

Centennial, CO – The Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC) today announced the participating clinics in a new Grow Your Own Program (GYOP) initiative designed to create a robust workforce pipeline across rural Colorado. The initiative is funded by a generous grant from the Colorado Health Foundation.

This new grant funded program is being called PROVIDERS (Promoting Resources, Opportunities, Vocations, Internships, and Developing Educational Routes Successfully) and focuses on designing a GYOP that supports individuals interested in healthcare careers through structured, wrap-around mentorship and learning experiences throughout the entirety of the program.

“The best way to recruit quality healthcare providers to serve rural areas has always been to invest in local students who are from the community,” said Colorado Rural Health Center CEO, Michelle Mills. “By identifying rural students interested in serving their neighbors and by investing in their education and training, we hope to ease the stress of finding rural healthcare providers in the future.”

Eligible candidates are students who are currently enrolled in a healthcare training program or are interesting in upscaling their current certification or degree within the medical field (i.e., Registered Nurse to Nurse Practitioner). Students will be compensated financially to support wrap-around needs such as tuition, transportation, childcare, housing, and certification fees while also receiving mentorship from their community's healthcare leaders. Facilities will be provided with training in evidence-based methods for identifying, recruiting and retaining high quality students.

Rural clinics face increasing pressure to build a stable workforce due to rising recruitment costs, a decreasing pool of interested job seekers in rural, increased burn out of medical professionals, financial barriers of rural facilities, isolation, and challenges of an unpredictable political landscape being just some of the many obstacles to maintain a robust healthcare workforce in rural Colorado. GYOPs offer a strategic, long-term solution by investing in local individuals who already understand and appreciate the culture, challenges, and values of their rural communities as well as reflect the demographic diversity of their community.

CRHC has partnered with 4 rural health clinics specifically chosen for their commitment to sustainable workforce solutions:

- Northeast Colorado Family Medicine Associates in Sterling, CO
- Family Practice of Holyoke in Holyoke, CO
- St. Vincent Health in Leadville, CO
- Lake City Area Medical Center in Lake City, CO

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 and the State Rural Health Association. The organization's mission is to enhance healthcare services in the state by providing information, education, linkages, tools, and energy toward addressing rural health issues. CRHC's vision is to improve healthcare services available in rural communities to ensure that all rural Coloradans have access to comprehensive, affordable, high quality healthcare. For more information visit www.coruralhealth.org, call 303-832-7493, or call toll free 800-851-6782 from rural Colorado.