



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Bridgette Olson, Outreach Program Manager

303-832-7493 or bo@coruralhealth.org

Lindsey Sidener, Marketing Coordinator, Corporate Marketing & Communications

720-858-6071 or LSidener@copic.com

Colorado Rural Health Center Receives \$25,000 Grant from COPIC Medical Foundation

Funds will help reduce the nursing shortage in rural Colorado by providing operating support to Colorado Rural Health Center's full service recruitment program

Denver, CO –The Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC) is proud to receive a one-year, \$25,000 grant from the COPIC Medical Foundation that will fund the expansion of CRHC's full service recruitment program. The program places health professionals in rural and underserved areas, provides recruitment and retention training for communities and facilities, loan repayment navigation and community development.

The grant will be used to provide operating support for the recruitment of nursing personnel. "Most rural communities experience provider shortages and a current workforce that is nearing retirement," says Michelle Mills, chief executive officer at CRHC. Thirty-two percent of Colorado's nurses are over the age of 55 according to the Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence.

In addition, the Institute of Medicine puts a point on the issue of nurse shortages by estimating that 1.2 million additional registered nurses will be needed in the United States by 2020.

"We are already seeing high demand for nurses at many rural facilities," said Melissa Bosworth, director of workforce and outreach. "There is currently no source that recruits nurses specifically for rural Colorado and we know that nursing staff are often charged with providing care in remote areas where physicians are unable to travel or practice."

According to a recent survey by NurseWeek, one of the top trends involved with nursing shortages is physician over-load. "Nurses are essential for providing primary and preventative care as part of a community's overall healthcare delivery team," says Bosworth.

“Our goal is to place registered nurses in rural and underserved communities and ultimately reduce the number of healthcare shortages in the state,” Bosworth added.

In Colorado, a large majority of rural areas are identified as medically underserved and are located in federally designated health professional shortage areas (HPSAs), meaning those locations have a need for primary medical, dental or mental healthcare providers.

With the potential flood of new patients accessing health coverage under the Affordable Care Act, rural communities have minimal additional resources for recruiting providers. Nursing retention is a challenge for many facilities with positions remaining open longer than one year, and costing a facility upwards of \$50,000 when using an outside firm.

This grant will go a long way to ensuring primary care remains the foundation of healthcare prevention in rural communities. “We understand the vital role nurses play in clinical support, education and workflow of a healthcare facility,” says Mills. “We are very thankful for the support offered from COPIC Medical Foundation to make these goals reality.”

COPIC Medical Foundation is an active partner in achieving CRHC’s mission and vision of enhancing healthcare services available in rural Colorado communities.

“The shortage of providers of any level in rural medicine is an issue we recognize and want to work to solve,” said Dr. Brian Harrington, Chair of COPIC Medical Foundation’s Grants Committee. “By expanding their recruitment program, CRHC is connecting providers with areas that need them most”.

For over twenty years, COPIC Medical Foundation has provided grants of more than \$4.5 million to programs and organizations that improve health care outcomes, patient safety and quality of care.

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's 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.

About COPIC Medical Foundation

COPIC Medical Foundation works to improve health care outcomes by providing grant funding for programs and initiatives focusing on improving patient safety, quality of care, reducing medical errors, and improving disease management and transitions in care. For more information visit www.copicfoundation.org.

###