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**Colorado Rural Health Center Receives \$400,000 Grant from Kaiser Permanente**

*Funds will help improve efficiency and quality of care in 19 rural health clinics*

**DENVER**— As rural community health centers across the state struggle with an increase in demand for care while budgets are tightening, new support has become available. Today, the Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC) announced a three-year, \$416,000 grant from Kaiser Permanente Colorado which will help many of Colorado's rural health clinics improve overall quality and consistency of care provided.

The grant will provide assistance to 19 rural health clinics located mainly on Colorado's Western Slope. The program focuses on improving the quality of care and increasing efficiency and revenue by assessing basic business operations and identifying areas for improvement. Each clinic will begin the program by conducting a Healthy Clinic Assessment (HCA) to identify baseline capacity and greatest areas of need. With support from CRHC, the staff will then work to put systems and processes in place to strengthen the basic infrastructure of the clinic.

"Our rural health care providers are caught in the perfect storm," said Michelle Mills, CRHC's chief executive officer. "Demands for greater coordinated care, prevention, data, and patient outcomes are growing, while budgets are tightening. CRHC recognized this challenge as an opportunity to invest in the Healthy Clinic Improvement Program that supports rural health clinics and ensures they remain viable given the changing healthcare landscape."

The Healthy Clinic Improvement Program began last month and is funded through August 2016. By the end of the three-year project, participating clinics will have made sufficient improvements in central operations to enable them to move forward and focus more resources on quality improvement initiatives. This will be demonstrated by clinics actively participating in initiatives such as Patient Centered Medical Home, accountable care organizations and/or Colorado's Accountable Care Collaborative, CRHC's Improving Communications and Readmissions (iCARE) project, Stage Two Meaningful Use (EHR measures focused on quality indicators), use of patient registries to monitor patient care and outcomes, and/or other quality improvement activities.

Additionally, clinics will have diversified their services and engaged in new ways with their respective communities as a result of the improvements made through this project. Clinics will increase their ability to treat more medically complicated patients with better chronic disease management. More resources within the community can be accessed with community wide collaboration; for example partnerships with the public health department, local recreation centers, mobile screening units, or support groups for chronic illness.

Kaiser Permanente Colorado has been a major supporter of CRHC's vision to improve health care services available in rural communities to ensure that all rural Coloradans have access to comprehensive, affordable, high-quality healthcare.

"We know first-hand that patients are happier with their care, physicians are more satisfied, and medical outcomes are improved when care is delivered in a coordinated fashion," said Jandel Allen-Davis, MD, vice president of government and external relations for Kaiser Permanente Colorado. "We are honored to partner with the Colorado Rural Health Center in its efforts to focus resources where they're needed in our rural communities."

Kaiser Permanente, the state's largest nonprofit health plan, is committed to supporting Colorado and its rural communities. This year, the health plan awarded a \$64,000 grant to Health Access Pueblo to support health coaching, cost sharing and access to the services needed to prevent chronic disease, control health conditions that are already present, and promote overall wellness. In 2009, Kaiser Permanente made a \$2.4 million grant to establish the University of Colorado Denver's Interdisciplinary Rural Training and Service Program (IRTS) in an effort to train more medical professionals interested in rural health practices. To learn more about Kaiser Permanente community benefit programs, go to [kp.org/communitybenefit](http://kp.org/communitybenefit)

### **About Kaiser Permanente Colorado**

Kaiser Permanente Colorado is the state's largest nonprofit health plan, proudly working to improve the lives and health of Colorado residents for more than 40 years. Kaiser Permanente Colorado provides comprehensive health care services to more than 540,000 members through 26 medical offices and a network of affiliated hospitals and physicians. The health plan was named "[Highest in Member Satisfaction](#)" among Commercial Health Plans by J.D. Power and Associates for the sixth straight year. Kaiser Permanente was recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) [as the top-ranked commercial health plan in Colorado and the fourth ranked Medicare plan in the nation](#). Kaiser Permanente was also recently recognized as a [2012 Hypertension Champion](#) by Million Hearts™. In 2012, Kaiser Permanente proudly directed more than \$92 million to community benefit programs to improve the health of all Coloradans. For more Kaiser Permanente news, visit [kp.org/share](http://kp.org/share) or follow us on twitter [@kpcolorado](https://twitter.com/kpcolorado) or [facebook.com/kpcolorado](https://facebook.com/kpcolorado).

### **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](http://www.coruralhealth.org), call 303-832-7493, or call toll free 800-851-6782 from rural Colorado.

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