



The State Office of Rural Health

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Colorado Rural Health Center Celebrates Safety Net Clinic Week in Del Norte

The State Office of Rural Health celebrated safety net clinics with a governor's proclamation and a celebratory luncheon at Rio Grande Hospital in Del Norte, CO

Del Norte, CO. – August 26, 2026 – The Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC) celebrated Colorado's annual Safety Net Clinic Week (August 23-29, 2026) with an event honoring the work of Rio Grande Hospital and Clinics in Del Norte, CO. CRHC provided lunch for staff, community members, and local leaders, as well as hosted a [video screening](#) on the importance of primary care preceptors in rural healthcare workforce sustainability.

"Safety net clinics are the go-to facilities for rural residents and visitors in need of high-quality healthcare. They serve those who are uninsured, underinsured, or insured through public programs and are vibrant parts of local communities and economies," said CRHC CEO Michelle Mills. "CRHC hosts Safety Net Clinic Week (SNCW) each year to educate policymakers, healthcare advocates, and community leaders on the necessity of keeping our safety net intact and thriving."

Even though supplemental federal funding is unavailable to them, safety net clinics still provide essential healthcare services to rural and underserved populations. While safety net clinics are diverse in their business and practice models, they are comparable in their commitment to providing healthcare services to people in need. They continuously deliver valuable care to their communities despite limited funding to support general operations, workforce challenges, growing reporting and accountability requirements, and changing payment and delivery models. The clinic types recognized during SNCW include certified Rural Health Clinics (RHCs), rural practices and other clinic types that serve Coloradans who are uninsured, underinsured, or insured through public programs like Medicaid, CHP+, and Medicare.

This year, the CRHC luncheon for local healthcare leaders, educators, providers, and other healthcare partners was held in Del Norte on August 26th. CRHC chose to honor Rio Grande Hospital and Clinics in light of their recent designation as both a [Top 10 Hospital](#) and a [Top 10](#)

[Clinic](#) for Overall Performance and their outstanding contributions to training the next generation of rural primary care physicians.

“Rio Grande Hospital and Clinics serve the residents of the San Luis Valley with a dedication to quality and efficiency,” said Mills. “The access to care provided by safety net clinics is invaluable and we were honored to celebrate in Del Norte. Happy Safety Net Clinic Week!”

Governor Polis also signed [a declaration proclaiming August 23-29, 2026 as Safety Net Clinic Week in](#) the state of Colorado. According to the proclamation, “rural safety net clinics provide essential healthcare treatment and preventive services to vulnerable populations in communities throughout our state... We express our appreciation and gratitude to rural safety net clinics who designate their time, energy, and resources to serving their communities”

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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