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**The Colorado Rural Health Center Hosts Rural Health Clinic Virtual
Showcase During the Sixth Annual Safety Net Clinic Week**

The Safety Net Clinic Week virtual showcase hosted by the Colorado Rural Health Center included rural clinic virtual tours, release of the rural snapshot publication and presentation of the 2015 Rural Champion Award to Senator Larry Crowder.

Denver, CO – August 19, 2015 – Colorado’s federally certified rural health clinics (RHCs) and community safety net clinics (CSNCs) recently celebrated Safety Net Clinic Week, August 17-21, with a variety of local and statewide events. The Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC) was proud to participate in the week-long celebration, which included a virtual showcase event held on Monday, August 17 at the CRHC offices in Aurora.

The virtual showcase debuted clinic tours from four RHCs located in Lake City, Oak Creek, Trinidad and Walsh, Colorado. Each clinic pre-recorded a clinic tour and the footage was compiled into a documentary-style video that was shown during the showcase event.

Five policymakers, in addition to healthcare providers and other professionals attended the event, and Conor Hall from the Office of Governor John Hickenlooper, read the Governor’s proclamation declaring Safety Net Clinic Week.

Senator Larry Crowder - present at the event - was recognized as the first annual Rural Health Champion.

“All we talk about in the statehouse is cost, and I understand cost, but the reality is healthcare is the issue and we need to continue supporting rural Colorado,” said Senator Crowder. “The citizens of rural Colorado should have the same rights and benefits as anybody else in the state. I’m a firm believer in that, and I will keep working toward that end.”

“Senator Crowder is an instrumental advocate for rural health,” explained Michelle Mills, CRHC’s chief executive officer. “He was the main proponent behind the passage of Senate Bill 197, which reduced barriers for family nurse practitioners working in Colorado. Larry’s passion for rural Colorado is unmatched.”

Safety Net Clinic Week is a great opportunity to highlight the success stories and achievements in Colorado’s RHCs, but also serves to educate the public and policymakers concerning their unique challenges.

Each of the four clinics showcased at Monday’s event described unique barriers their facilities and communities are facing. Common themes were the struggle with limited grant funding, a shortage of providers and an aging workforce. One challenge that remains unclear is the high volume of patients that safety net providers serve, given their limited number of resources and funding.

It is estimated that RHCs serve approximately 194,400 unique patients per year with 630,560 annual visits. CRHC works to provide advocacy, education, and lobbying at the state and national level on behalf of Colorado’s 51 RHCs.

CRHC thanks everyone who participated in Safety Net Clinic Week and asks that you continue to advocate for and raise awareness of the unique challenges these clinics face in the ever-changing healthcare landscape.

If you are interested in learning more about rural health, we invite you to review the recently released 2015 edition of the Snapshot of Rural Health. The publication includes over 30 rural-specific data measures and highlights current demographics, workforce trends, access and coverage impacting rural patients and providers, health disparities, and the status of health information technology.

To access the publication visit <http://bit.ly/snapshot2015>. To learn more about Safety Net Clinic Week visit <http://coruralhealth.org/safety-net-clinic-week>.

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 health care issues; and as the State Rural Health Association, advocating for policy change to ensure that rural Coloradoans have access to comprehensive, affordable health care 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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