



COMMUNITY CONNECTION

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Dr. Tammy Gregg can't wait to settle in the San Luis Valley to practice rural medicine in Alamosa, where the need for doctors is urgent.



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CommunityConnection is a quarterly e-newsletter from The Colorado Trust

PRACTICING MEDICINE IN RURAL COLORADO

The soaring peaks that encircle Alamosa in the San Luis Valley beckoned Tammy Gregg who dreamed of being a country healer like “Doc” in *Little House on the Prairie*. The urgent need for doctors also called Gregg, 29, to rural medicine. A family doctor with training in obstetrics, she is eager to use her broad training to care for entire families – bringing infants into the world and helping to heal their grandparents.

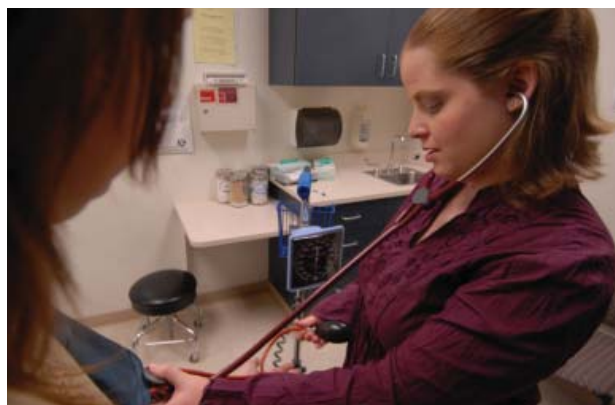
Gregg’s arrival in Alamosa this summer, along with five other new recruits, is a major coup for health officials in the San Luis Valley, which has been limping along with temporary doctors for the past few years. Not only can Gregg deliver babies, she is also trained to perform sometimes-necessary Cesarean sections.

Gregg has spent the last three years training at Southern Colorado Family Medicine at St. Mary-Corwin Medical Center in Pueblo and completed a required rural rotation, which helped confirm her desire to work in a small community. The program – part of the [Colorado Commission on Family Medicine](#) and supported through The Colorado Trust’s [Health Professions](#) initiative – gives incentives to family medicine residents to train, work and settle in rural sites.

In Alamosa, Gregg will get a warm welcome. Health officials will provide Spanish language immersion classes and help Gregg and her husband find a home, blend into the community, nurture their hobbies and form a community of support with fellow doctors and their families.

Dr. Ricardo Velasquez, medical director for the San Luis Valley region of Valley-Wide Health Systems, is overjoyed to have nabbed Gregg. “We have been the most short of physicians in the last two to three years than I ever remember during my career over the last 30 years,” he said.

Velasquez loves to take recruits cross-country skiing and hiking to showcase the beauty of the area, home to Colorado’s oldest settlements. But he also wants to entice physicians who will relish rural medicine and will want to stay. “What I like about Dr. Gregg is that she’s up for the challenge,” he said. “She’s interested in learning other cultural and language skills.”



A family doctor with training in obstetrics, Dr. Tammy Gregg is eager to apply her broad training to care for entire families when she begins her rural practice in Alamosa this summer – from bringing infants into the world to helping to heal their grandparents. Here, she administers a blood test on a patient. Hear Dr. Gregg’s story online at www.coloradotruster.org.

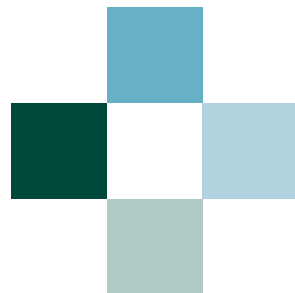
REALLIFE, *continued*

Gregg grew up on a block in Fort Worth, Texas, where everyone knew each other – but as Fort Worth exploded into a large metropolis, she yearned for that small-town atmosphere. While training in Pueblo, fellow residents told her about Alamosa, a place that twinkled with Christmas lights in the winter and offered hiking and skiing minutes from town.

Gregg is eager to jump in, face an array of medical challenges and build relationships with her patients. “It’s getting harder and harder to be the old-timey family doctor who lives in a small town. But that has always appealed to me,” she said.

Gregg’s patients rave about her skill and warmth. Alcia Mgebhoff, 69, a patient in Pueblo, came to Gregg paralyzed with rib pain after a failed chiropractic treatment for osteoporosis. Trained as an osteopathic doctor, Gregg used pressure and massage techniques to provide instant relief. “The excruciating pain just went away,” said Mgebhoff, who used to live 25 miles outside of Pueblo and knows what it’s like to live in a rural area, stranded without a doctor.

For more information about The Trust’s [Health Professions](#) initiative, contact Laurel Petralia, Program Officer, laurel@coloradotrust.org or 303-837-1200. For information about the associated evaluation, contact Nancy Csuti, Director of Evaluation, nancy@coloradotrust.org or 303-837-1200.



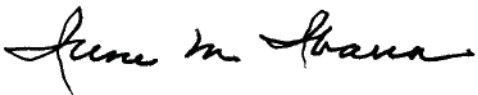
GREETINGS FROM IRENE M. IBARRA

Colorado is scrambling to build its health professions workforce, and with good reason. While there is a nationwide shortage of nurses, it's estimated that the shortage of registered nurses in Colorado is already twice that of the national average and is expected to triple by 2020. There also are extreme shortages in rural parts of the state. Fourteen of Colorado's rural counties lack a hospital, eight do not have any assisted-living or long-term care facilities, four don't have a single primary care physician and five have no dentists.

These shortages are driven by several factors, including the state's growing population, an increase in demand for health care services by an aging population, the retirement of baby boomer health professionals, difficulties in providing competitive salaries for clinical faculty and rural providers, and disparity of salaries between clinical and academic positions.

An inadequate number of health care providers presents a serious challenge to the provision of safe, quality patient care. It also increases the already significant problem of providing access to health care for all Coloradans. The good news is that multiple efforts are underway to develop fiscally and morally responsible means to provide health care coverage for Coloradans. While that offers hope to the estimated 790,000 people in our state who now lack health insurance, it would not solve our access to health challenge to more fully provide coverage without also making sure that Colorado has an adequate number of trained health care professions prepared to provide care.

In collaboration with many dedicated partners, The Trust is committed to supporting a coordinated system of policies, programs and services that both expand health coverage, and improve and expand health care. In this newsletter, we feature efforts underway to build Colorado's health professions workforce.



Irene M. Ibarra
President and CEO



Irene M. Ibarra, President and CEO,
The Colorado Trust

BUILDING COLORADO'S HEALTH PROFESSIONS WORKFORCE

Health care providers, educators and experts agree that multiple efforts are needed to shore up Colorado's lagging supply of nurses, physicians and pharmacists. Several recommended strategies to achieve this goal have emerged through the Health Professions Workforce Roundtable, which The Trust convened in January, and through The Trust's recently concluded three-year, \$10.2 million **Health Professions** initiative.

Preliminary evaluation findings of the Health Professions initiative indicate that a combination of three components is needed to find a long-term solution to the shortage of health professionals, namely:

1. Creating awareness and readiness among students to generate interest in health careers
2. Supporting and expanding training opportunities
3. Promoting employer efforts and community partnerships to recruit and retain health professionals.

The Trust convened a Health Professions Workforce Roundtable – attended by representatives from state health agencies, community colleges and universities, hospitals, professional organizations, government, health care providers and students – who strongly recommended that a comprehensive, statewide policy agenda is necessary to address the shortage.

The Trust has committed an additional \$5.7 million in funding over the next three years to develop and implement strategies tied to these recommendations. Under this funding, the Roundtable participants will reconvene in May to begin the collaborative work of creating a public policy framework. This framework will address key health professions workforce issues and systems improvements, such as loan repayment, primary care Medicaid reimbursement, higher education funding and compensation disparity. The Trust further supports evidence-based approaches to reduce the shortage of providers. Grant programs under this strategy will increase the number of education and training opportunities for students, strengthen the amount of loan support for faculty, and improve the recruitment and retention of providers in rural and medically underserved communities.

For additional information, contact Laurel Petralia, Program Officer, laurel@coloradotrusted.org or 303-837-1200.

“SCOPES OF CARE” STUDY UNDERWAY

The results of an intensive study on the effectiveness of utilizing mid-level providers in primary care settings will inform legislative discussion in the 2009 session. Pursuant to Governor Bill Ritter’s [Executive Order B 003 08](#), a review will be conducted of the scopes of care for advance practice nurses, physicians assistants and dental hygienists. Together with the [Caring for Colorado Foundation](#), The Colorado Trust is providing support for the study through a grant to Governor Ritter’s Office of Policy and Initiatives.

The [Colorado Health Institute](#) will conduct the review and analyze research on the regulation of the professional practice of medicine, nursing and dentistry in Colorado and other states. Additionally, stakeholders will be convened to review the study and to discuss the feasibility of expanding the scopes of practice of select health care providers in the face of increasing need for access to health.

For more information, contact Laurel Petralia, Program Officer, laurel@coloradotrust.org or 303-837-1200.



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2008 JOHN R. MORAN LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT

The Colorado Trust's second annual John R. Moran, Jr. Grantee Leadership Award was awarded to the **Denver Indian Family Resource Center** (DIFRC). The \$25,000 award – created in honor of The Trust's former, long-time CEO – recognizes exemplary leadership by a current Trust grantee.

“These funds are certainly unexpected and will be very helpful to expand the work we do,” said Phyllis Bigpond, DIFRC Founding Executive Director. “While our primary focus is on child welfare, we’ve identified many other areas – particularly behavioral health – where we want to do more.”

Supported in part through The Colorado Trust's **Equality in Health** initiative, the DIFRC provides culturally appropriate therapy for American Indian and Alaskan Native families – especially children and youth who show symptoms of serious emotional and behavioral disorders.

“The DIFRC has established itself as a leader in consistently helping other Equality in Health grantees and community-based nonprofits to learn more about this important, but often underserved population,” said Ginger Harrell, Program Officer, The Colorado Trust. “This award is a wonderful opportunity for us to recognize and further the hard work and significant impact of the Center which has served some 513 families and 1,265 children since 2000.”

For more information, contact Ginger Harrell, Program Officer, ginger@coloradotrust.org or 303-837-1200.



The Denver Indian Family Resource Center is this year's recipient of The Colorado Trust's John R. Moran, Jr. Grantee Leadership Award. DIFRC staff members include, left to right: Susan Yellow Horse, Clinical Services Supervisor; Phyllis Bigpond, Executive Director; Sidney Stone Brown, Child and Family Therapist; and Isabelle Medchill, Program Development Manager.

IN MEMORIAM

DR. DONALD FINK, FOUNDING TRUSTEE

Surrounded by loving family and friends, Dr. Donald Fink passed away on March 6, 2008. He was 76 years old.

A founding Trustee of The Colorado Trust, Dr. Fink served as chief of the Department of Radiology at St. Luke's Hospital in Denver. During his tenure with The Trust – from 1985 to 2002 – Dr. Fink served as chairman, vice chairman and secretary of the Board of Trustees.

“Don Fink was a tremendous asset to The Colorado Trust. He had a keen vision of the importance of the foundation to the health and well-being of the people of Colorado, and was an enthusiastic advocate for many valuable initiatives,” said Dr. William Maniatis, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, The Colorado Trust. “The last founding member to retire from the board, Don was thoughtful, dedicated and fair in his leadership. To go along with his generous wisdom, he was one of the kindest people you could ever hope to know and had an ever-present, subtle humor. He was a truly conscientious citizen of the board and community. His passing is a personal loss for me and all who knew him.”



Dr. Donald Fink

Dr. Fink earned an M.D. from the University of Wisconsin and interned at Miller Hospital in St. Paul, Minnesota, followed by two years' military service as a Captain at Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas. After five years' general practice in St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin, Dr. Fink entered practice as a radiologist at St. Luke's Hospital in Denver. He became a fellow in the American College of Radiology and completed two terms as president of the Colorado Radiological Society. In 2006, Dr. Fink was honored by the Denver Medical Society for 50 years of meritorious service.

In addition to his many contributions to the medical field and The Colorado Trust, Dr. Fink served terms as director of the Samaritan Institute and president of the board for MDS Counseling Services. A music lover, Dr. Fink also served on the board of Augustana Arts and sang in the Wellshire Presbyterian Church's sanctuary choir for over 40 years.

Dr. Fink is survived by his wife of nearly 54 years, Helen; daughter Katy; sons Don Jr., Karl and Brian; and 11 grandchildren. He will be dearly missed by many others, including his friends at The Trust.

TRUST BOARD AND STAFF NEWS

AWARD

Jerome M. Buckley, M.D. – former chairman and CEO of COPIC Insurance Company and current member of The Colorado Trust’s Board of Trustees – is the first recipient of the *Dr. Gary Vanderark We Can! We Must! We Will! Award*. Presented at the Doctors Care 20th anniversary gala, the award – named for Gary VanderArk, M.D, **Doctors Care** founder and board president – recognizes individuals who demonstrate Doctors Care values, including integrity, compassion, adaptability and inclusiveness in their work. Congratulations, Jerry!



Jerome M. Buckley, M.D.



Deidre Johnson

PROMOTION

One year after her hire as Assistant Program Officer, Deidre Johnson has been promoted to Program Officer. Since she joined The Colorado Trust last April, Deidre has been a strong, insightful and consistent contributor to various projects. Her main responsibilities center on working with the children’s health community to significantly increase and expand health coverage and care for children. Deidre formerly served as Vice President of Development and Marketing for Qualistar Early Learning, as a senior consultant with JVA Consulting, and she held various leadership positions in development and communications with the Urban League of Metropolitan Denver, the Mile High Child Care Association and the Colorado I Have a Dream Foundation. Congratulations, Deidre!

POSITION OPENING

The Trust is searching for a Vice President, Program to join the senior executive team. The VP will report directly to the CEO and be responsible for the leadership and management of grantmaking, program and policy-related activities. You may view the [full position description](#) to learn more. Note that The Colorado Trust strongly supports diversity in its hiring practices. This position closes on Friday, May 2, 2008.

FAREWELL

Carol Breslau and Susan Downs-Karkos – formerly Vice President of Programs and Senior Program Officer, respectively – have left The Trust, each after 13 years of dedicated service. Since her departure from The Trust in December 2007, Carol has been consulting in various capacities. Susan left at the end of February to join the [Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning](#) as Director of Integration Strategies. We thank both Susan and Carol for their many valuable contributions over the years, and wish them success in their new endeavors!

FRONTLINE

SICK AROUND THE WORLD

Four in five Americans say the U.S. health care system needs fundamental change. Are there lessons we can learn from health care systems around the world? A new PBS Frontline film, *Sick Around the World*, explores how other industrialized countries deliver health care and what the United States can learn from their experiences. Reported by T.R. Reid, a longtime foreign correspondent and now Rocky Mountain bureau chief for the *Washington Post*, this hour-long film looks at health care systems in five countries – Taiwan, Japan, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Along with several other funders, The Colorado Trust provided underwriting support for this film, which first aired on April 15, as well as outreach support to Rocky Mountain PBS. You may now [view this film online](#).



Please contact Christie McElhinney, Director of Communications, christie@coloradotrusted.org or 303-837-1200, to learn more.

BEST WISHES TO SUE CARPARELLI

Since the early beginnings of the [Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence \(CCNE\)](#) in 2002, Sue Carparelli – founding president and CEO – has worked hard to turn the tide of Colorado’s nursing shortage. By focusing on this challenge, the organization has emerged as a statewide leader to address the critical, escalating shortage, as well as issues related to quality of care.

“In Colorado, we have about 12 percent fewer nurses than our population needs,” said Sue, who will resign from her post in June. “So in our startup phase, we looked at the entire state from the perspective of the nursing workforce to better understand the nursing needs and build evidence around that.”

CCNE brought together educational institutions, hospitals, government agencies, foundations and the business community to identify the sources of the shortfall, develop strategies to address it and secure funding to implement those plans.

“Sue has been visionary in her approach to strengthen statewide efforts to improve the quality of nursing care,” Laurel Petralia, Program Officer, The Colorado Trust. “For example, through The Trust’s [Colorado 5 Million Lives Campaign](#), the CCNE is operating the [WELLS Center](#) to meet the growing demand for technology simulation learning, which in turn helps to improve the quality of care.

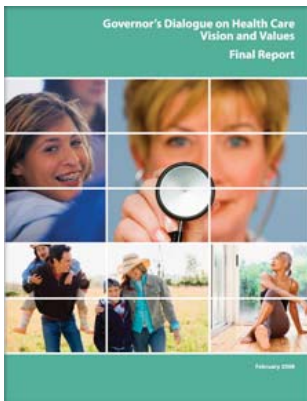
“Sue has accomplished so much and we will really miss her. At the same time, it’s great to know that Sue will leave CCNE well-positioned to continue to address all aspects of nursing excellence in Colorado.”

While Sue will leave her current role this summer after ensuring a smooth transition to new leadership, she is looking forward to a sabbatical at her family’s farm in North Dakota before returning to Denver to explore her next career challenge.



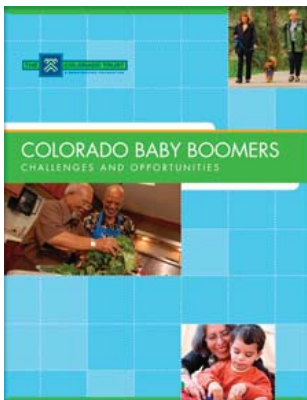
Sue Carparelli, President and CEO, Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence

NEW TRUST PUBLICATIONS



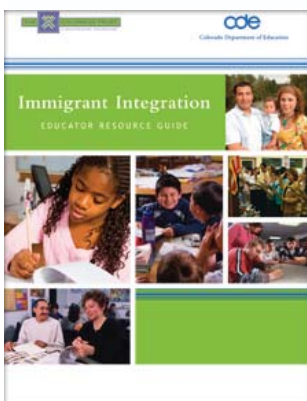
GOVERNOR'S DIALOGUE ON HEALTH CARE VISION AND VALUES

The Colorado Trust supported Governor Ritter in his efforts to convene, inform and engage people across the state in a conversation about what they want from their health care system and values underlying that vision. The process was designed to complement the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission for Health Care Reform and provide further input to the Ritter Administration in setting a course for change. This guide provided a baseline of information about the health care system in Colorado and was used to stimulate creative thinking around the topic of health reform in the community discussions. To order print copies, contact Liza Fox, Health Policy Research and Public Education Specialist, Governor's Office of Policy and Initiatives, Liza.Fox@state.co.us or 303-866-4234.



COLORADO BABY BOOMERS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This look at the state's 55- to 65-year-old population provides insights into how senior-serving organizations and agencies can better plan, prepare and address the needs of the growing number of Coloradans approaching retirement. Baby boomers – nearly half a million strong – offer unique opportunities to communities, employers and charities through their considerable knowledge, skills and enthusiasm for life. At the same time, this report notes significant challenges to providing aging boomers with adequate health care and coverage, employment, education and service opportunities.



IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

Developed by the **Colorado Department of Education** and The Colorado Trust, this guide identifies, explains and provides recommendations for promoting immigrant integration in schools. Intended primarily as a resource for district administrators, school administrators and teachers, the guide highlights critical areas that influence immigrant integration in schools – from school enrollment and classroom instruction to family and community outreach. To order print copies, contact Laura Blancas, Colorado Department of Education, blancas_l@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6490.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Efforts by The Colorado Trust and its grantees to advance the health and well-being of the people of Colorado included Trust support for the following recent events:

- [Asian Pacific Development Center](#) – Annual Dinner
- [Colorado I Have a Dream Foundation](#) – 20th Anniversary Gala
- [Colorado Nonprofit Association](#) – Awards Luncheon
- [Denver Health Foundation](#) – Triumph Over Challenge Gala
- [Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce](#) – Boots ‘N Business Luncheon
- [Hospice & Palliative Care of Western Colorado](#) – Black Tie & Boots Gala
- [Jefferson Center for Mental Health](#) – Destinations & Dreams Gala
- [Martin Luther King, Jr. Business Social Responsibility Awards](#) – Luncheon
- [Mental Health America of Colorado](#) – Legislative Education Day
- [Urban Peak](#) – Maverick Thinkers Awards Dinner



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