



THE
COLORADO
TRUST

ACHIEVING ACCESS TO HEALTH FOR ALL COLORADANS

COMMUNITY *Connections*

VOLUME IX

ACCESS TO HEALTH*News*



A New Study Looks at Coloradans' Ability to Pay for Health Coverage

Kristen Castor, a participant in the affordability study, shares her story of struggling to pay for quality health care. The study was conducted by the Colorado Center on Law and Policy and Colorado Voices for Coverage.

CommunityConnections is a quarterly e-newsletter from The Colorado Trust.

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Irene M. Ibarra

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE COLORADO TRUST,

As national health care reform efforts heat up, we hear more reports about how worried many Americans are about their health care coverage. Nationally, a new poll conducted by the University of Michigan found that nearly half of those polled are concerned about paying for future health care services. Nearly one in four people say they fear losing their health care coverage in the next year. About the same number reported that they or a family member delayed seeing a doctor in the past year because of cost, and 86% of those surveyed said they viewed health care reform as an integral part of tackling the nation's economic crisis.

In Colorado, the story is the same. A new report, *The Cost of Care: Can Coloradans Afford Health Care*, finds that many families can only afford health insurance when their employer pays for a significant portion through group coverage. Many Colorado families have little or no financial means to pay for health care. Indeed, spending more than 5% of their household income on health care means families

often make substantial tradeoffs on other important expenditures, such as transportation, housing, education, child care and savings.

We are pleased that health advocates and Trust grantees are proactively sharing this type of critical information with policy leaders. Representatives of the Colorado Center on Law and Policy and Colorado Voices for Coverage traveled to Washington, DC to share information with Congressional leaders. Colorado is one of five states that has conducted in-depth health care affordability studies. As well, members of the Partnership for a Healthy Colorado met with Colorado's Congressional delegation at The Trust to share their views on what is needed to meet the health needs of Coloradans. It is critical that we continue to uncover the health needs of our population, and to share this information with those leading change to help ensure meaningful reform efforts.

Sincerely,

Irene M. Ibarra
President and CEO



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STRUGGLING TO AFFORD HEALTH CARE

Born two months premature with cerebral palsy, Kristen Castor has never qualified for private health insurance. Despite a lifetime of roadblocks, Castor, 54, always has fought for what she needed. Long before the Americans with Disabilities Act, principals barred her from attending her neighborhood schools. More than once, she had to prove that her brain was powerful and that she could climb stairs like any other student, albeit more slowly.

Castor went on to graduate from high school with honors, major in Greek and Latin in college, earn a master's degree in linguistics and serve in the Peace Corps in Liberia for three years. She taught English in Africa, then later to immigrants in the United States before becoming a disability rights advocate in Pueblo.

For years, Castor barely saw doctors to avoid medical expenses. But she recently needed knee surgery and faces having to get the other knee operated on soon. As well, her shoulders are worn down from 50 years on crutches, requiring rotator cuff surgery.

Castor, who participated in a study to help understand the factors that influence Coloradans' ability to pay for health coverage, says she wants to be a responsible citizen and pay her own way in life. At the same time, she faces heart-wrenching dilemmas: spend down her savings to qualify for Medicaid or continue skipping vital health expenses to conserve her cash, keep her house and stay financially solvent.

Castor has encountered many people with similar dilemmas who would fare much better and save the system money if they received consistent, preventive care. All her life, Castor has fought for access for the disabled into schools, the workplace and public transportation. She believes that achieving health coverage for all is one of the final frontiers for equal access: adequate health care will give more independence and dignity to both the able-bodied, and those with physical and mental challenges.

Learn more about the new study, *The Cost of Care: Can Coloradans Afford Health Care*, at www.coloradotrust.org.



Kristen Castor is one of many Coloradans who struggle to afford the health care they need.

EXPAND *Health Coverage*



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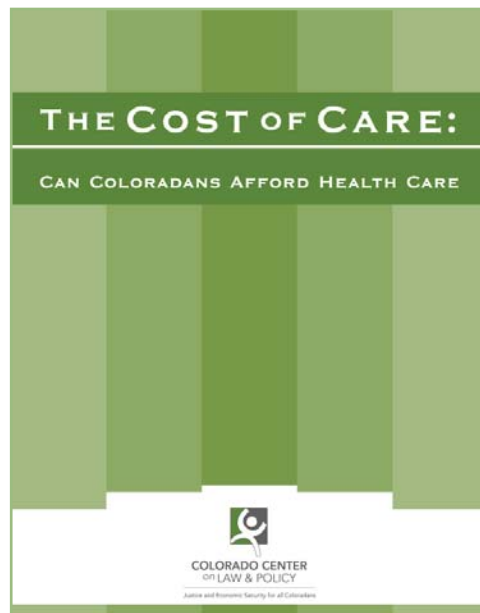
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NEW STUDY EXPLORES HEALTH CARE AFFORDABILITY

The Colorado Center on Law and Policy (CCLP), together with Colorado Voices for Coverage – whose members include the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative (CCHI), Business Health Forum, Colorado Council of Churches and Colorado Progressive Coalition – released their report, *The Cost of Care: Can Coloradans Afford Health Care*. Co-funded by The Colorado Trust, the report explores questions about health care affordability in Colorado. The study findings shows that many Colorado families have little or nothing left at the end of each month to pay for health care and, in many cases, health care costs force families to make financial tradeoffs with other necessary expenses such as food, housing or utilities.

The study is based on research resulting from nearly 100 community budget workshops conducted throughout Colorado in which approximately 1,000 families under 500% of the federal poverty level (FPL) were surveyed. Following the release of the study in Denver, Dede de Percin, CCHI Executive Director and Liz Feder, CCLP Health Policy Analyst, met with key Congressional staff members in Washington, DC to discuss the study's findings. During the summer, Colorado Voices for Coverage will also host health care affordability forums in 11 communities across the state to share the results of the study, update community members on national health care reform proposals, and provide education on advocacy and how to engage in the ongoing reform conversation.

For more information, please contact Christie McElhinney, Vice President of Communications and Public Affairs, or Ed Lucero, Senior Program Officer, at 303-837-1200.



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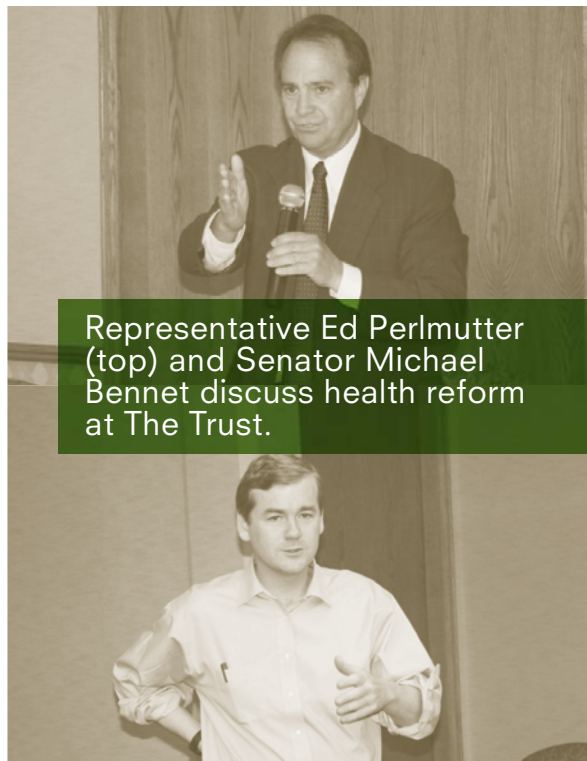
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PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY COLORADO HOLDS CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS

On May 27, the Partnership for a Healthy Colorado (P4HC) held briefings at The Colorado Trust for Colorado's Congressional delegation. P4HC is a coalition of labor, business, health care, advocacy and faith-based organizations that has declared the current health care system unacceptable. The 23 diverse members of the Partnership share the goal of achieving access to quality, affordable health care for every Coloradan, and recognize the need to reach across political and philosophical lines to achieve that goal.

Through the briefings, the Partnership's members provided expertise and insights to help Colorado's Congressional delegation better understand the difficult issues surrounding health care access, costs and quality, and encouraged them to champion health reform.

For more information about The Colorado Trust's support of P4HC, please contact Christie McElhinney, Vice President of Communications and Public Affairs, 303-837-1200, christie@coloradotrust.org.



Representative Ed Perlmutter (top) and Senator Michael Bennet discuss health reform at The Trust.

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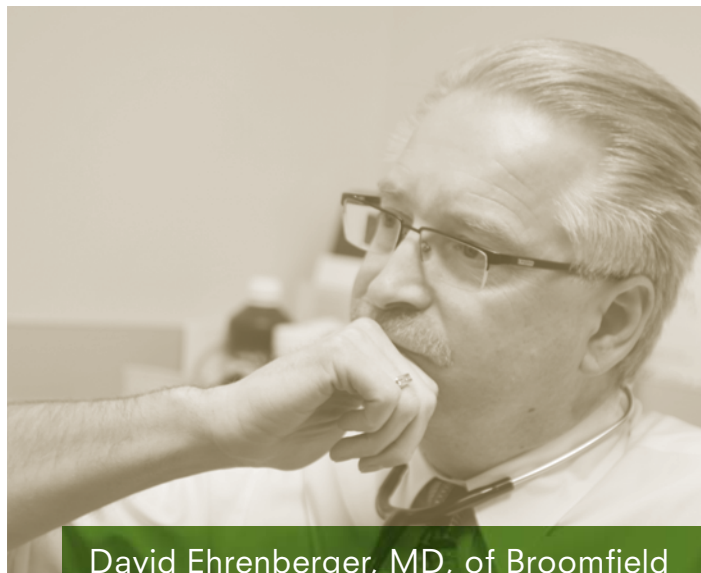
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PATIENT-CENTERED MEDICAL HOME PILOT

Imagine a doctor's office that revolves around the patient. A caring team knows your name, greets you with a plan to achieve your health goals, answers emails quickly and provides same-day appointments so you can see your doctor immediately when you are sick.

The Colorado Trust has granted \$1.4 million over two years to the Colorado Clinical Guidelines Collaborative to work with the state's largest health plans to test the patient-centered medical home concept. As health care reform takes center stage in Washington, DC, this model of a health care delivery system is gaining momentum for its potential to improve the quality of care and reduce costs.

Participating physicians in 17 primary care practice sites across Colorado – serving about 22,000 patients – will receive a standard fee-for-service, a monthly care management fee and bonuses for meeting or exceeding quality outcomes outlined in the program. The Trust, along with The Commonwealth Fund and the Harvard School of Public Health, will evaluate this pilot program to improve primary care delivery by aligning high quality, coordinated care with financial incentives.



David Ehrenberger, MD, of Broomfield Family Practice has implemented the medical home concept to boost communication, cut errors and increase cooperation among health professionals.

“The medical home concept is all about teamwork,” said Dr. David Ehrenberger, a Broomfield-based family physician who is participating in the program announced June 18 at the State Capitol. “This new model of care will play an instrumental role in helping the health care industry understand how best to implement and benefit from the medical home concept on a broad scale.”

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

IMPROVE *Health Systems*



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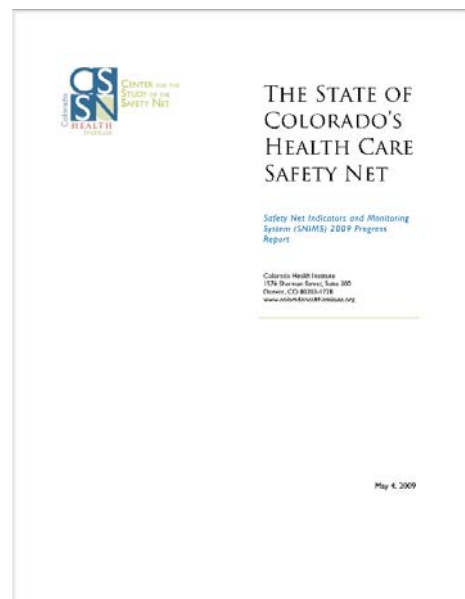
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NEW CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE SAFETY NET

As the number of uninsured and underinsured Coloradans continues to climb, the cost of health care escalates and the caseloads of publicly funded health insurance programs increase, the health care safety net serves as the default, essential source of care for a growing number of vulnerable residents. This network of providers delivers medical, oral and mental health care to low-income uninsured and underinsured individuals, as well as people enrolled in publicly-funded health insurance programs.

Recognizing the importance of Colorado's safety net and the challenges it faces, the Colorado Health Institute (CHI) created the Center for the Study of the Safety Net, to develop a data-driven reporting system that identifies, describes and monitors Colorado's health care safety-net providers and the populations they serve. In particular, the first-of-its-kind center focuses on policy issues related to the state's safety-net providers, the services they provide and the people who rely on them for care. Through its Safety Net Indicators and Monitoring System, CHI has collected and analyzed such data to also provide a progress report, on Colorado's health care safety net.



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

INCREASE *Availability of Care*



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LITTLETON IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION INITIATIVE RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD



Littleton Mayor Doug Clark and Alejandra Harguth, LI3 Immigrant Information Coordinator, with the "E Pluribus Unum" prize for their city's exceptional efforts to integrate immigrants into the community.

Colorado civic and government participants in the Littleton Immigrant Integration Initiative (LI3), connectingimmigrants.org, are addressing changes in their community brought about by immigration. In 2005, local leaders launched LI3 to foster closer ties between native-born residents and immigrants, encourage civic engagement and greater cultural understanding, and connect immigrants with services that bolster their professional, educational and health outcomes.

Recognizing LI3's accomplishments, the Washington, DC-based Migration Policy Institute selected this Trust grantee as one of four recipients of its inaugural *E Pluribus Unum* prizes for exceptional immigrant integration initiatives. Doug Clark, Mayor of Littleton, accepted the \$50,000 award at a reception at the Library of Congress on May 20.

The prize rewards exceptional efforts that uphold and update the ideal of "out of many, one." The winners, selected from more than 500 applicants, reflect the diversity of government and non-government organizations involved in immigrant integration efforts at the state and local levels. LI3 offers a one-on-one citizenship mentoring program, and operates an

innovative One-Stop Information Center to assist immigrants on topics ranging from jobs, education, health and dental care, transportation, banking and housing.

For more information about The Colorado Trust's support of strengthening healthy communities through immigrant integration, please contact Ed Lucero, Senior Program Officer, 303-837-1200, ed@coloradotrust.org.

ADDITIONAL *Programs*



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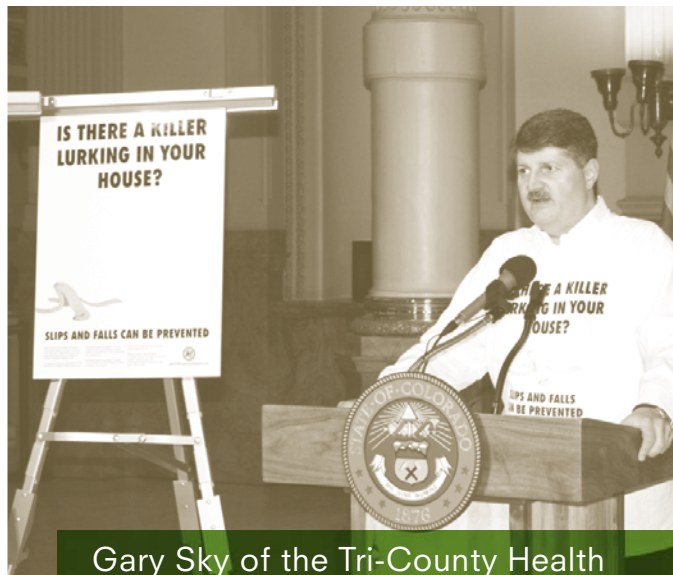
SENIORS' FALL PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that falls are the leading cause of injury deaths among older adults. In Colorado, more than 300 people die from falls every year, and there are nearly 8,000 hospitalizations from falls for people over age 65.

To address this health challenge, the Tri-County Health Department, which serves Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas counties, has developed a statewide campaign to promote fall prevention. According to the Fall Prevention Network, fallpreventionnetwork.com, injuries from falls can often be prevented through physical activity to improve balance, avoiding medications that cause dizziness, receiving regular eye exams, and removing hazards at home that could lead to slips and falls.

On June 22 at the State Capitol, Tri-County Health – supported through The Colorado Trust's Partnerships for Health grant – launched the educational campaign to help prevent deaths and injuries from falls. "Costs for older adults hospitalized for fall-related injuries in Colorado total more than \$263 million each year," said Gary Sky, Public Information Officer and Head of Creative Services at Tri-County Health. "But it's important to realize that falls are preventable. That's why this campaign is so important, to raise awareness about ways to keep falls from happening."

For more information about The Trust's support of coordinated health services at the community level, contact Ginger Harrell, Program Officer, 303-837-1200, ginger@coloradotrust.org.



Gary Sky of the Tri-County Health Department created a statewide campaign to prevent slips and falls that result in injuries or deaths among seniors.

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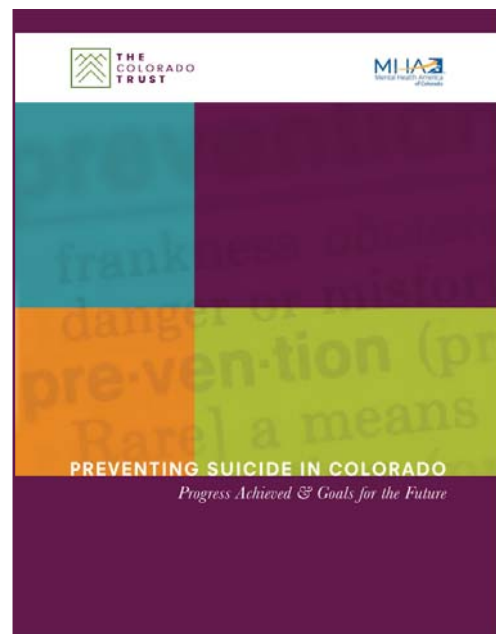
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NEW PUBLICATIONS

Preventing Suicide in Colorado – Progress Achieved & Goals for the Future

Issued jointly by Mental Health America of Colorado and The Colorado Trust, this report updates the state's 1998 Suicide Prevention and Intervention Plan to address Colorado's historically high suicide rate, and The Trust's 2002 report *Suicide in Colorado*, which documented the problem of suicide across the state and identified suicide-prevention resources. The new report details key facts and figures about the suicide rate in Colorado, many of the prevention achievements accomplished over the past 10 years, and sets forth recommendations to strengthen suicide prevention and awareness efforts into the future.



National Civic Review Features Immigrant Integration Grantees

Diversity, Social Capital and Immigrant Integration, a special edition of the National Civic Review, features former Littleton Mayor and Denver Post columnist Susan Thornton on her city's immigrant immigration project. As well, Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh writes about OneMorgan County, a refugee and immigrant program on the eastern plains of Colorado. Both programs are grantees of The Colorado Trust's Immigrant Integration effort.

This issue also includes an introduction by Robert Putnam, author of such influential books as *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Additional contributors include Rinku Sen, co-author of *The Accidental American*; Joshua Hoyt of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights; Eboo Patel and Becca Hartman of the Interfaith Youth Core; and Terry Amsler and Greg Keidan of California's Institute for Local Government.



WEB*Extra*

