Thank you for an incredible year!

On behalf of the staff and board of the Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC), I want to thank you for all of the support and collaboration in 2016. As the State Office of Rural Health and Rural Health Association, the commitment to CRHC’s mission “to enhance healthcare services by providing information, education, linkages, tools and energy towards addressing rural healthcare issues” and our vision “for all Coloradans to have access to comprehensive, affordable healthcare services of the highest quality” has never been stronger. In the face of monumental change across the healthcare landscape, your support has allowed CRHC to continue to accomplish our mission and vision on behalf of our members, partners, and for all people who live, work, and play in the rural parts of our magnificent state.

In 2016, our commitment to programs serving rural Colorado was deepened as we continued to expand our programs and services. The Health Information Technology (HIT) staff provided nearly 350 hours of direct IT support aimed at keeping your facilities running smooth and secure. Over $1.7 million dollars were added to rural economies across the state through our Colorado Provider Recruitment program’s placement of two physicians alone. Our webinars saw over 1000 viewers trained on HIT and Quality measures while our clinics team worked with 51 rural health clinics to increase quality and customer satisfaction metrics. Hospitals and Clinics participating in our iCARE program continue to boast a significantly lower readmission rate than the national average and our events set attendance records in 2016. Through CRHC’s Colorado Resource for Emergency and Trauma Education (CREATE) program 985 students were trained, there were 88 new nationally registered emergency medical and trauma service (EMTS) providers and $543,190 was awarded for education. Through our Emergency/Hospital Preparedness program $1,268,000 in funds were provided in 2016. Our policy team posted a 996% increase in member participation. All of this while CRHC also began participating in the Medical Oral Expanded Care (MORE Care) program, aimed at integrating oral health practices into primary care.

Amidst the transition to a value-based system of care and a tumultuous political environment locally and nationally, our members have once again modeled resiliency and innovation. The importance of the rural healthcare safety net to both the health and wellbeing of people and economies, is one of the few constants in times like these.

As we celebrated our 25th anniversary in 2016, it was hard not to be impressed by how much support we have received over the years from our members, funders, employees, partners, and communities. As the CEO of the Colorado Rural Health Center, it is my privilege to serve all rural communities, to thank you for being an integral part of supporting our work for the past 25 years and we look forward to serving for you for another 25 years.

Michelle Mills, CEO
Thank you to all of our members, partners, sponsors, board members, and staff.

2016 Operating Budget

- Private Foundation Grants: $493,658
- Federal Grants: $1,256,521
- Fee for Service Programs: $586,438
- State Government Contracts: $681,563
- Membership and Donations: $127,727
- Conference and Workshops: $155,932
- Other: $2,713

2016 Board of Directors

Craig Loveless, Board Chair
Brandon Chambers, Secretary
Jason McCormick, Treasurer
John Ayoub
John Gardner

Arlene Harms
Trampas Hutches
Larry Kipe, MD
Karen Tomky
2016 Accomplishments:
Six CAH Quality Network webinars were facilitated with 101 attendees. Topics included:
- The Impact of Lost Knowledge
- TeamSTEPPS
- Benefits of Team Charters for QI Teams
- Eight Wastes in Healthcare
- Improving Workplace Organization with 5S

CRHC sponsored the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) Breakthrough Series, with Custom Learning Systems. The series is comprised of 13 webinars, each webinar focused on one HCAHPS domain and is crafted to provide participants with a step by step actionable blueprint to sustainably improve their patient experience scores.

![Program Area - Quality Improvement Graph](image)

Activity 1.02 HCAHPS: Average "Top Box" Score - Overall Rating of Hospital

- 2014: 74%
- 2015: 75%
- 2016: 76%


- Percentage
- Target 77%
- Linear (Percentage)
Celebrating New Critical Access Hospitals

Arkansas Valley Regional Medical Center was notified by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on Feb. 3, 2017, that the designation as a "Critical Access Hospital" has been awarded to the facility effective Oct. 28, 2016. This designation does not decrease any services at AVRMC, but allows AVRMC to qualify for the payment of 101 percent of its costs associated in the treatment of Medicare patients.

Supporting CAHs through Education and Resources

New Critical Access Hospital (CAH) designated in Colorado

1

Webinar attendees on 16 educational webinars

374

Swing Bed and Utilization Management Manuals
Distributed Nationwide

92

Colorado’s 51 Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) and other rural clinics were supported through mock surveys, patient cycle time studies, billing and coding workshops and audits, healthy clinic assessments (HCA), HIT support, financial feasibility studies and quality improvement initiatives.

2016 Accomplishments:

54 clinics submitted their Clinic Profile to CRHC in 2016 – more than ever before! All but one of these clinics are involved in at least one local, state or national quality improvement initiative.

The overall HCA average score for the 22 clinics participating in 2016 was 85%.

The following areas of the HCA saw the biggest improvement from 2015:

- **Check In**: 11% overall increase
- **Coding**: 12% overall increase
- **Visit Prep**: 19% overall increase
- **Management**: 14% overall increase
Since 2016, CRHC has been a Practice Transformation Organization for both the State Innovation Model (SIM) and Evidence Now Southwest (ENSW) statewide quality initiatives. Our quality and HIT staff play the vital role in promoting practice transformation as Practice Facilitator and Clinical Health Information Technology Advisors. The clinics involved with CRHC in these two initiatives include:

- Rocky Ford Family Health Center – SIM
- Pediatric Associates of Montrose – SIM
- Parke Health Center and Stratton Medical Clinic – ENSW
- Yuma and Akron Clinics – ENSW
- Southeast CO Physicians Clinic – ENSW
- Walsh Medical Clinic – ENSW
- Gordon Clinic, Flagler and Limon Family Practices – ENSW

Technical assistance provided through these initiatives include data analysis, process improvement strategies to improve clinical workflow as well as data submission workflow, communication and collaboration with behavioral health resources and organizations, development and training on quality improvement templates such as project charters, timelines and goal setting.

Definitions: ENSW and SIM

**ENSW** - The initiative is aimed at transforming healthcare delivery by building critical infrastructure to help smaller primary care practices apply the latest medical research and tools to improve heart health.

**SIM** - This initiative is funded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, is helping practices integrate behavioral health and primary care and test alternative payment models.
iCARE: Improving Communications and Readmissions

The three primary goals of CRHC’s iCARE program are to work with hospitals and clinics to:
1. Improve communications in transitions of care
2. Improve the clinical process and systems to reduce readmissions, particularly for heart failure, pneumonia, and diabetic patients
3. Maintain low readmission rates

Data Submission

- 26% increase in 2016 versus 2015 in clinics submitting iCARE measures/data
- 78% of patients who receive care at iCARE participating clinics demonstrate good control of blood glucose levels, compared to 55% of Medicaid patients nationally.

Participation

- 55 clinic/hospital teams from more than 20 rural counties around the state are working together to address a shared goal that will help to improve operational or clinical processes in facilities and communities.
- Two new communities joined iCARE in 2016 (Lincoln Hospitals and Clinics, Wray Hospital and Clinics)

In addition to readmission data, a number of hospitals are reporting the following measures:
- Pneumococcal Immunization, Age 65+ (CMS IMM-1b): hospitals reporting are at 83%
- Influenza Immunization (CMS IMM-2): hospitals reporting are at 78%

Making Progress

For comparison, the readmission rate for Colorado CAHs not participating in iCARE is 14%; and the overall statewide hospital readmission rate is 19%.
The MORE Care program focuses on integrating oral health practice into medical practice and solely with clinics in rural areas of Colorado. The staff at CRHC work with each of the three participating clinics to coach quality improvement methodology and effectively implement these strategies into their day-to-day clinic processes, such as scheduling, workflow, EMR implementation, and clinical practice.

Each clinic is working to achieve improvement in the four MORE Care measures using similar tools, but utilizing them to their own unique needs. These activities occurred during well-child visits and sports physicals during reporting months and is based on 211 patients seen:

- Total number of patients with documented oral health risk: **176**
- Total number of patients who had a documented self-management goal: **176**
- Total number of patients with documented fluoride varnish application in conjunction with assessed risk and self-management goals reviewed: **128**

**Eight counties in Colorado have no dentist and those able to serve the Medicaid population is even lower.**

Eight of Colorado’s 64 counties are dental deserts – meaning they have NO dentists

Another seven counties have no source of Medicaid dental care

![Map showing dental deserts in Colorado](image)

![Graph showing MORECare Project: Oral Health - Assessment Risk](image)
The Colorado Resource for Emergency and Trauma Education (CREATE) provides education and training for emergency medical and trauma service providers working in Colorado.

**CREATE Accomplishments:**

- 88 new Nationally Registered Emergency Medical and Trauma Services (EMTS) providers trained through CREATE
- 249 EMTS providers able to attend educational conferences/workshops
- 648 EMTS providers received continuing education
- 116 applications submitted

$543,191 awarded for education

985 students trained
Hospital Preparedness Program

Through a contract with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to serve as a fiscal agent for a portion of the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) funding, CRHC distributed HPP funds for training and exercises, equipment, and supplies to health care facilities/organizations to help enhance their emergency preparedness capabilities and capacities.

- $78,000 in HPP funding for 24 Medical Reserve Corps (MRCs)
- $280,000 in carry over Budget Period 3 (BP3) HPP funding for Hospitals, RHCs and MRCs
- $15,335 from the Department of Veterans Affairs for hospitals and other response agencies to participate in the 2016 VA Exercise

$90,000 in HPP funding for 30 Rural Health Clinics

$820,000 in HPP funding for 82 Acute Care Hospitals (39 rural)
HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Health information technology or HIT is the use of applications to record, store, protect, retrieve and transfer information electronically. Through Technology for Healthcare Excellence (THE) Consortium, CRHC assists rural facilities to advance their HIT solutions.

Services provided include remote monitoring, server implementation, help desk support, onsite support, AV & patch management support, and special projects.

2016 HIT Accomplishments:

Eight Facilities Received Direct IT Support

341.25 Hours of IT Support Provided

THE Consortium

THE Consortium, operated by CRHC, began in 2010 to provide expert consultation, education and resources to facilities seeking to adopt new or support their current HIT efforts.

Many federal policies and programs address the HIT challenges rural facilities face, including the Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP), and the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (Flex) Program. As the State Office of Rural Health, CRHC manages both of these programs in the state of Colorado.

CRHC hosts EHR User Groups to support the state’s HIT workforce. Participating EHR users benefit from sharing concerns, issues, successes, and super user strengths with each other while troubleshooting problems.
Report writing made SIMPLE for hospitals and clinics

CRHC partners with Cyberscience, makers of a state-of-the-art software designed to simplify reporting on diverse data sets. We are committed to the success of our members and realize that compliance and patient experience starts with having clean, reliable data.

Whether you need help writing reports or cleaning up a messy dataset, Cyberscience and CRHC provide hassle-free solutions. CRHC staff is also your source for expert SQL and Crystal Reports support.

333 Attendees educated on 11 THE Consortium Webinars

22 Clinics participated in the EHR User Groups in 2016

26 Hospitals (CAH and Small Rural PPS) participated in the EHR User Groups in 2016
CRHC’s policy and advocacy program tracks state and federal legislation and regulations that hold the potential of impacting access and delivery of care for rural health providers and communities. In 2016, CRHC advocated for the passage of the influential HB16-1142 Rural and Frontier Health Care Preceptor Tax Credit which incentivizes rural preceptors through a tax credit to train medical, PA, ANP, and dental students.

**2016 Accomplishments:**

- **Bills supported**: 10
- **Bills monitored**: 22
- **Bills opposed**: 3

Increase in member participation in policy efforts from 2015!
The Colorado Provider Recruitment program identifies, tracks and addresses the primary care workforce shortage by offering recruitment and retention services to healthcare providers and employers. Our dedicated recruitment staff provides a crucial service to rural Colorado, bringing years of expertise and a passion for addressing rural healthcare workforce shortages.

**In 2016, CRHC Staff:**

- Recruited for 109 unique job opportunities throughout the year
- Made 12 presentations to students in health professional training programs
- Helped provide 15 rural clinics and hospitals access to a free workforce analysis report with the generous support from Caring for Colorado
- Maintained a five year retention rate for all primary care providers placed of 62.7%, well above the national average of 38.7%.

**In 2016, Colorado Provider Recruitment’s two physicians placed generated over $1,778,000 for the economies of rural communities**
The Colorado Rural Health Center’s Annual Rural Health Forum provides an opportunity for Colorado’s 51 certified Rural Health Clinics (RHCs), rural clinics, and other rural providers and healthcare professionals interested in learning more about rural specific healthcare to convene, learn and network together.

**The Forum**

194 Attendees  

30 Exhibitors

**2016 Annual Conference**

The Annual Rural Health Conference unites representatives of Colorado’s Critical Access Hospitals and other facilities, stakeholders, and policy makers each October. This year’s conference celebrated our 25th anniversary and featured our highest attendance ever!

248 Attendees  

36 Exhibitors
Workshops and Webinars

On-site Trainings

Workshops and on-site trainings are a critical aspect of our efforts to assist our members with coding and quality:
- One Coding Workshop - 2016 CAH Workshop at the Annual Rural Health Conference
- Four Billing and Coding Boot Camps

Public Health Data Education

- CRHC strengthened its commitment to providing our members with up-to-date, relevant public health data for their communities. Staff compiled 13 customized reports with county health rankings data.
- Staff refined data delivery databases internally through the use of the Health Awareness for Rural Communities (HARC) Databank
Thank you to our funders. You make our work possible!
Thank you to our organizational sponsors. We could not do what we do without your support!