

2017 Annual Report



Mile High
Health Alliance

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Mile High Health Alliance

Achieving Better Health Through Collaboration

Every Denver resident should have the opportunity to live their healthiest life, but the systems that influence health – medical care, housing, transportation and food – are not well-aligned nor effective.

That's why the Mile High Health Alliance is building a collaborative network among health, human, social and other organizations to make Denver the healthiest place to live, learn, work and play. With 21 diverse organizational members, we focus on improving the health and access to care for the almost 50 percent of Denver residents who are uninsured, underinsured or insured through Medicaid. Our core priorities are:

- Connecting patients to specialty care
- Integrating physical and behavioral healthcare
- Supporting high-needs patients

MHHA also reserves capacity to identify and respond to emerging issues. This allows us to nimbly address the needs of our members, innovating to solve new challenges affecting residents of Denver.



From the Executive Director

Dear Members, Partners and Community Friends:

Our annual report is an opportunity to thank our members and partners for their support, as well as to highlight past successes and future plans. We achieved significant milestones in our third formal year of operations in all areas – operations, program and strategy.

In 2017, MHHA moved into our own independent office at 1420 Ogden Street. It was wonderful to have the community celebrate our new home at the April open house. Soon the office was abuzz as we expanded programs and staff. Our new Regional Health Connector, Stephanie Salazar-Rodriguez, played an important role in the new statewide workforce focused on improving integrated and cardiovascular health by connecting primary care providers and communities. VISTA Tyller Kerrigan-Nichols advanced MHHA's organizational development, including strategic, communications, and sustainability planning. And Vicente Cardona joined the team to support our growing Mile High Specialty Care Network.

Members, partners, board of directors, and staff developed a strategic framework to guide programs and activities during the next three years. This diverse group of stakeholders clarified our goals and our commitment to moving beyond the medical setting upstream to community prevention by focusing on social and economic barriers to health. Members concerns regarding housing, transportation, immigration and food/hunger, are some of the sectors through which MHHA will expand and deepen our health equity work.

A significant role for MHHA is identifying emerging issues affecting our members and their patients. These “strategic initiatives” are one example of the value of collaboration and information sharing. Through this process we identified a noticeable decline in access to care by people from the immigrant and refugee communities. Nimble and responsive, MHHA was able to develop and implement a strategy to directly engage community members about this issue, with the goal of helping our members better serve their constituencies.

MHHA's work focuses on improving health in the City and County of Denver. We also understand that when it comes to access to care, boundaries are permeable, and effectiveness depends on collective capacity. MHHA initiated discussions with metro area health alliances to identify and develop ideas for potential regional collaborations to address urgent and important health challenges.

As we reflect on MHHA's tremendously successful year, I want to offer my sincere and appreciative thanks to the members, partners, supporters and most importantly, the Denver community, who we have the privilege of serving and are instrumental to our achievements.



Dede de Percin

Dede de Percin, Executive Director

2017 Accomplishments

After several years of incubation at Denver Public Health, in February MHA moved to 1420 Ogden Street, setting up our own independent office with room for seven staff. We are now at full capacity, and even managed to squeeze in two medical student interns over the summer.

Connecting Unserved Patients to Specialty Care

Underinsured, uninsured and Medicaid patients have a difficult time finding specialty care in Denver. The wait is sometimes over a year to secure an appointment, and some people never receive care at all.

MHA has launched a network that connects primary care physicians at community health centers with physician specialists. The Mile High Specialty Care Network has recruited physicians in ophthalmology and dermatology – and is seeking others in orthopedics – to accept patients who are going without needed care. MHA was also selected to be part of a new Kaiser Permanente cohort of organizations, which is called ASCENT (Access to Specialty Care Engagement Network), that are collectively focused on tackling the challenge of access to specialty care.



Integrating Physical and Behavioral Healthcare



MHA's Regional Health Connector is providing primary care practices with education concerning poly substance misuse, depression and blood pressure – and then gives them tools, resources and information so that they can connect their patients with the programs and services they need to achieve and maintain their best possible health outside the medical setting.

An MHA collaboration with Porter Adventist Hospital and College View Community Center Life/Line, along with 37 community organizations, put on a Health and Wellness Expo in September, distributing over 1,000 pounds of food. More than 150 local families took home free fresh fruit and vegetables, accessed integrated health services, and participated in fun health-focused activities.

Supporting High Needs Patients

In July MHHA convened a regional summit to focus on tools to reach and serve people who have high medical needs but do not have a regular and consistent source of care. These “high utilizers” have poor health outcomes and frequently receive expensive medical care at emergency departments. More than 100 participants including medical, human and social service providers learned about outreach, coordinating care, apps and other tools focused on supporting high needs patients through social determinants of health.

In addition, MHHA launched a data sharing pilot program among several of its members, cross matching an initial list of 4,000 patients and eventually identifying 30 very high needs patients. By reviewing patient data, we intend to develop new strategies to better reach and serve high needs patients.



Responding to Emerging Health Issues

Assessing Immigrant and Refugee Access to Care

An MHHA survey revealed that our member safety-net clinics – even those deeply rooted in the communities they serve – have experienced an estimated average 20 percent decrease in people from the immigrant and refugee communities making healthcare appointments, along with increases in no-shows, cancellations and requests for behavioral healthcare. We summarized results in a report, *Sick and Afraid*, which has been widely shared and used as the basis for understanding the impact of the chilling effect that has resulted from federal policy and public rhetoric.

Ensuring Safe and Healthy Housing

Housing has a direct impact on people’s health, and was identified as the top issue for MHHA members during our strategic planning process. To address both housing instability and living conditions, MHHA is collaborating with Denver Public Health, Denver Health and Hospital Authority, DU Student Law Office, Colorado Poverty Law Center and Colorado Legal Services to develop a Medical-Legal Partnership. The pilot, underway in spring of 2018, will screen patients at two clinics for housing issues and make legal referrals as appropriate.



Understanding Health Spending

MHHA released “Follow the Money,” a report documenting that virtually all of Denver’s direct health spending is spent in the medical setting. Less than two percent of Denver’s \$4.5 billion in annual healthcare expenditures in 2015 went to important public health and human services. This groundbreaking research by the Colorado Health Institute reveals that we could be much more effective and efficient with available resources by investing “upstream” in community prevention and social and economic barriers to health.

Planning our Future

MHHA developed a new three-year strategic plan during 2017, which was approved by the full board the following January. Our framework includes four interconnected goals:

- **Continue work on core priorities:** Implement programs to address urgent priorities for under-resourced Denver residents – specialty care, high needs patients and integrated physical-behavioral care.
- **Act as a connector:** Lead as a convener to explore, integrate, connect and advocate for MHHA members and external partners.
- **Address social and economic barriers:** Identify and engage key stakeholder tables to align activities in addressing member priorities around difficulty accessing services and advancing health equity.
- **Enhance communications:** Provide relevant and actionable information and communication tools on health-related issues to members and other stakeholders.

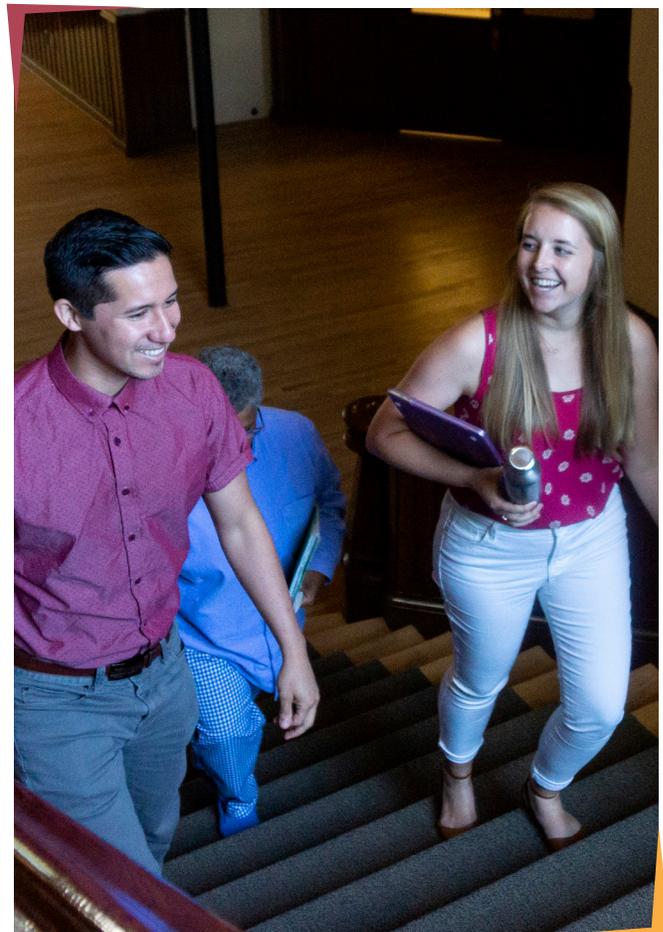
In 2018 we will complete communications and sustainability planning, complementing and supporting our strategic plan.

Regional Health Connector

After a successful inaugural year, the Regional Health Connector program will continue working with a new cohort of primary care practices to understand patient needs and identify appropriate resources and strengthening relationships with community stakeholders to respond to the social and economic barriers to health. As Denver maps out its strategy for responding to opioid misuse, MHHA and the RHC will continue to be involved in the collective impact partnership.

Connecting Medicaid Patients to Specialty Care

Two medical students from the LEADS (Leadership, Education, Advocacy, Development, Scholarship) program at CU School of Medicine will be conducting research and developing strategies to help us recruit physician specialists for the Mile High Specialty Care Network. We will also be collaborating with the Daniels School of Business to hold a competition between two business communications classes to develop the best communications strategy for recruiting specialty care physicians.





Supporting High Needs Patients

The working group will analyze the results of the data pilot in order to better understand the needs of these patients and serve them better. Because high utilizers typically aren't regularly connected to medical or other services, we are developing a pilot program to screen people at food pantries to identify and refer them to appropriate care and services.

Responding to Emerging Health Issues



Assessing Immigrant Health Access

Our survey of MHHA members led us to convene groups of people from the immigrant and refugee communities to test our theory about the chilling effect of federal policy and public rhetoric on access to care, to understand in more detail the barriers to care and to develop strategies to better serve people from these communities. Our goal is to provide MHHA members with tools they can use to mitigate the decline in access to care.



Medical-Legal Partnership

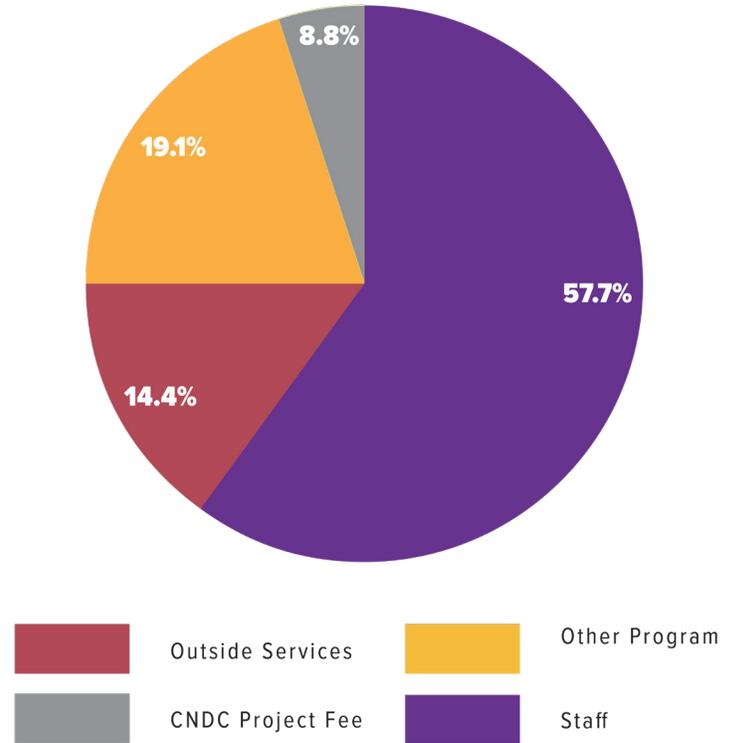
Through the pilot, 160 patients have been screened for unsafe and insecure housing in the first three months, and 12 referrals have been made to legal services to address identified problems. With support from the Colorado Trust strengthening network partnerships grant, we will analyze the data and develop future plans.

2017 Financial Review

Year End Staff



2017 Expenses



2017 by the Numbers

\$356k
in net assets

\$209k
in temporarily restricted funds

\$147K
in unrestricted funds

Staff

Dede de Percin

Executive Director

Danni Lederman

Director, Specialty Care Network

Stephanie Salazar-Rodríguez

Regional Health Connector

Vicente Cardona

Specialty Care Network Coordinator

Connie Morgan

Office Manager

Gaby Berhe

AmeriCorps VISTA Program Assistant

Karen Trautman

AmeriCorps VISTA Program Assistant

2017-2018 Executive Committee

Bill Burman, Chair

Denver Health and Hospital Authority –
Executive Director, Denver Public Health

Rob Bremer, Vice Chair

Colorado Access –
Executive Director, Access Behavioral Care

Elizabeth Baskett, Secretary-Treasurer

Colorado Community Health Alliance –
Executive Director

Carl Clark, At-Large

Mental Health Center of Denver –
CEO and Medical Director

Jessica Dunbar, At-Large

Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics –
Executive Director

Jim Garcia, At-Large

Clinica Tepeyac –
Executive Director and Founder

Fernando Piñeda-Reyes, At-Large

CREA Results –
CEO

Funders

Caring for Colorado

The Colorado Health Foundation

Rose Community Foundation

Kaiser Permanente of Colorado

The Anschutz Foundation

Colorado Health Institute

Trailhead Institute

Denver Post - Season to Share/DaVita

With the expansion of Medicaid for working families and adults, one-in-three Denver residents are now covered through Medicaid, but there aren't anywhere near enough physician specialists who will accept these patients. In twelve months, one MHHA organizational member alone came up short 50,000 specialty care referrals – patients who didn't get the care they urgently needed, even though they had insurance.

The Mile High Health Alliance recognized this critical gap and is seeking specialty care physicians to partner with us to address the unmet needs of patients. For example, ICON Eyecare is a Mile High Specialty Care Network partner, providing ophthalmology care for those insured through Medicaid. They are part of the solution to gaps in accessing to care, making the system more effective and efficient.

ICON Eyecare views MHHA as an asset in this work because the Network:

- Provides an opportunity to contribute to improving overall health in Denver
- Balances demand/track and assign appointments in real time
- Increases overall capacity/availability of appointments



If every specialist saw only two Medicaid patients per month, we could solve the problem of Denver residents going without care, and the address the impact this has on individuals, families, and communities.

MHHA Members



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The Center for
African American Health



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ACCESS
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DENVER
HUMAN SERVICES



DENVER INDIAN HEALTH
& FAMILY SERVICES



DENVER
PUBLIC HEALTH &
ENVIRONMENT



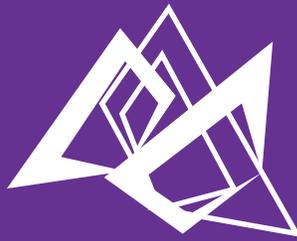
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