



Fall 2024 Quarterly Newsletter

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2024 Fall Primary Care Conference Highlights

The [2024 CHAMPS/NWRPCA Fall Primary Care Conference](#) was held October 26-29 in Denver, CO, with over 300 members, partners, presenters, and exhibitors from across Region 18 (Regions VIII and X) and the nation in attendance. Featuring three pre-conference workshops, three plenaries, 46 educational sessions in eight tracks, six roundtables, two receptions, mobile unit tours, and numerous side meetings, the Fall Conference provided a multitude of opportunities for attendees to gain insights from a variety of peers and colleagues from health centers, Primary Care Associations, governmental offices, and related organizations from Regions VIII and X and beyond.

The Opening Plenary on October 26 featured Jim Macrae, Associate Administrator of the [Bureau of Primary Health Care](#) (BPHC), and Dr. Luis Padilla, Chief Health Officer of the [National Association of Community Health Centers](#) (NACHC). The Opening Plenary was followed by a Welcome Reception, where attendees engaged with friends and colleagues. During the Lunch Plenary on October 28, speaker Paul Huschilt addressed the challenges of stress in the workplace through a humorous and engaging presentation. Paul explored the nature of stress, its effects on the body and mind, and offered practical strategies for staying calm, working better together, and fostering personal well-being, even on the toughest days. On the closing day of the conference, attendees had the opportunity to tour two mobile medical units, speak with staff, and learn more about the value of mobile clinics in meeting patients where they are. CHAMPS is grateful to [Salud Family Health](#) and [Denver Health](#) for generously offering their mobile units for the tours. Overall, the 2024 CHAMPS/NWRPCA Fall Primary Care Conference was a great success! Thank you to all the participants, presenters, and planning committee members for making the event so special.



Opening Plenary speakers, Dr. Luis Padilla and Jim Macrae.

To review 2024 Fall Conference highlights, educational and networking sessions, and reimbursement opportunities, please visit the [CHAMPS Annual Primary Care Conference](#) webpage.

All 2024 Fall Conference registrants will have access to session recordings and handouts in the NWRPCA [Learning Vault](#) in the coming months.

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Celebrating CHAMPS 2024 Awardees

On October 27, CHAMPS was pleased to recognize our eight 2024 CHAMPS Awardees during a ceremony at the CHAMPS/NWRPCA Fall Primary Care Conference. These awardees were honored for their exceptional contributions and unwavering dedication to the health center community, exemplifying the essence of the Community Health Center Movement in Region VIII.

Melissa Myers, (pictured at right, top left) Director of Accounting at Health West (ID, UT, WY), received the new **Emerging Star Award** for her graceful leadership and meaningful contributions to Health West and the Community Health Center Movement.



Salud Family Health's Special Procedure Clinic, (pictured at right, top right) located in Colorado, was presented with the new **Excellence In Innovation Award** for demonstrating unwavering dedication to caring for their communities and ensuring access to affordable cancer screening.



Lander Cooney, (pictured at right, center) Executive Vice President at One Health (MT), received the **Exceptional Administrative Leadership Award** in recognition of her innovative, passionate, and resilient leadership.



Jeanne Galbraith, (pictured at right, bottom right) Board Member at Complete Health (SD), was honored with the **Exceptional Board Leadership Award** for her compassionate commitment to Complete Health and patient advocacy.



Rhina Rodriguez, PA-C, (pictured at right, center right) Physician Assistant at Salud Family Health (CO), was presented with the **Exceptional Clinical Leadership Award** for her inspiring service and dedication to providing quality health care for all.

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Janice Harris, RN, (pictured above, center left) Registered Nurse at Complete Health (SD), received the **Outstanding Advocate of the Underserved Award** for her exceptional contributions to improving health care access for underserved communities.

Maureen Maxwell, (pictured above, bottom left) Senior Manager of Federal Policy and Communications at Colorado Community Health Network (CO), was presented with the **Outstanding Legislative Leadership Award** for her exceptional expertise and dedication to advancing the Community Health Center Mission.

Annette Kowal, (pictured above, bottom center) Chief Executive Officer of Colorado Community Health Network (CO), was honored with the **Stanley J. Brasher Legacy Award** for her dedication to advancing the mission and recognition of Community Health Centers in Colorado and the Mountain/Plains states.

Congratulations to the 2024 CHAMPS Awardees!

To learn more about this year's awardees and view a photo journal of the ceremony, please visit the [CHAMPS Awards](#) webpage.

CHAMPS NEWS, *Continued*

The **2025 NWRPCA/CHAMPS Fall Primary Care Conference** will be held in Spokane, WA, from October 25-28, 2025. Visit the CHAMPS [Annual Primary Care Conference](#) webpage for more information coming in the spring of 2025.

2024 Virtual CHAMPS Board of Directors Meeting

The annual CHAMPS Board of Directors meeting will be held virtually on Monday, December 9, 2024, beginning at 10:00 AM MT / 11:00 AM CT. CHAMPS Board Members will be joined by Jim Macrae, Associate Administrator of the [Bureau of Primary Health Care](#) (BPHC), and Dr. Kyu Rhee, President and CEO of the [National Association of Community Health Centers](#) (NACHC). If you are a Board Member and unable to attend, please arrange for proxy representation.

Questions about the Board of Directors meeting? Contact the CHAMPS [Executive Director](#).

Apply Now: Community Environmental Justice Grants

CHAMPS, in partnership with [JSI](#), is excited to announce the opening of the [Mountain and Plains Environmental Justice \(MAP EJ\) Grants Hub](#), part of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) [Thriving Communities Grantmaking program](#). The MAP EJ Grants Hub is distributing \$40 million over the next three years to fund environmental-justice-related projects and programs in [EPA Region 8](#) (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY). Nonprofit organizations, including health centers, that serve communities negatively affected by environmental or climate impacts are encouraged to apply.



Grants range from \$150,000 to \$350,000, with a few grants of \$75,000 for organizations that are capacity constrained. Cycle 1 of applications is currently open and will close Thursday, December 12, 2024.

Projects eligible for funding include but are not limited to:

- ★ Air quality and asthma related projects
- ★ Education on illegal dumping and small-scale clean-ups
- ★ Emergency preparedness and disaster resiliency and relief programs
- ★ Healthy homes programs
- ★ Improving food access to reduce vehicle miles traveled
- ★ Solar microgrids

Free technical assistance (TA) for potential grantees is available from the [Mountain and Plains Thriving Communities Collaborative](#) (MaPTCC). Possible TA includes providing support with project scoping, budgeting, capacity building, and more.

For more application details and to view the recordings of two informational webinars, please visit the [MAP EJ](#) website.

Environmental Health Contact Request

Do you have a team member who leads your organization's environmental health work, formally or informally?

Please share their contact information with the CHAMPS [Programs Coordinator, Membership & Communications](#), so they can receive future environmental health and climate resiliency related information from CHAMPS.

Now Available: 2023 Region VIII UDS Summary & Fact Sheet

Region VIII Health Centers Served Almost 1,120,000 Patients in 2023.

Each year, the [Bureau of Primary Health Care](#) (BPHC) collects data from Health Center program awardees and Look-Alikes through the Uniform Data System (UDS). State and national UDS figures for 2023 were released in early August. To gain a more specific understanding of this data, CHAMPS compiles the information from across Region VIII to provide a regionalized summary that highlights trends over two, three, and five years, and offers breakdowns by state, region, and nation for the current year.

The full [2023 Region VIII BPHC UDS Summary](#) is now available, along with a two-page [2023 Region VIII Health Center Fact Sheet](#), which highlights key findings from the larger summary. CHAMPS will soon release an additional two-page UDS Workforce Metrics Infographic focusing on Health Professions Education and Training (HP-ET) in health centers for 2023.

Visit the CHAMPS [Region VIII BPHC UDS Summaries, Fact Sheets, and Infographics](#) webpage to view the current and previous Region VIII UDS-related resources.

CHAMPS/RMPHTC Leadership Essentials Series

CHAMPS and the [Rocky Mountain Public Health Training Center](#) (RMPHTC) are pleased to share that the application process for a new virtual leadership series, [Leadership Essentials: Systems-Thinking and Building Community Partnerships](#), is now open.

This free series is designed for health center and public health leaders in Region VIII who are looking to build effective, collaborative partnerships within and across organizations and communities. Participants will develop skills to bridge silos, foster teamwork, and engage stakeholders in collaborative decision-making and are encouraged to work through the material with a specific community collaborative project in mind.

The group will meet for four interactive virtual sessions over three months, held on the following Thursdays from 11:00 AM-12:30 PM MT / 12:00-1:30 PM CT:

- ★ January 16, 2025
- ★ January 30, 2025
- ★ February 27, 2025
- ★ March 27, 2025

In addition, two optional drop-in coaching sessions will provide personalized guidance on participants' projects and any challenges they may be encountering. These coaching sessions will be held online on the following Thursdays from 11:00 AM-12:00 PM MT / 12:00-1:00 PM CT:

- ★ February 13, 2025
- ★ March 13, 2025

CHAMPS and RMPHTC are trying to build a balanced cohort of Region VIII health center and public health leaders with strategic responsibilities within their organizations. There are limited spots available, and the cohort is nearing its capacity. However, interested participants are welcome to apply to help CHAMPS gauge interest for a potential future cohort.

For more information and to complete the application, please visit the CHAMPS [Leadership Learning Opportunities](#) webpage.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Encouraging successful careers and strong, cutting-edge organizations by providing live and archived continuing education, recruitment, and retention tools, and the latest information on current trends and statistics. Learn more [here](#).

Updated CHAMPS Webpage to Support Education Health Centers

The recently updated CHAMPS [Education Health Center Resources](#) webpage offers valuable tools for establishing and supporting Education Health Centers (EHCs), strengthening workforce partnerships, and improving care for underserved populations. This webpage includes an overview of EHC models, training opportunities, research resources, and practical workforce development insights. It also provides guidance on funding, governance, and operations, as well as helpful Q&As and case studies.

For additional related resources, visit the CHAMPS [Recruitment and Retention Resources](#) webpage.

Now Available: 2024 CHAMPS Region VIII Salary Survey Reports



Every two years, CHAMPS conducts a comprehensive [Salary, Benefits, Turnover, and Vacancy Survey](#) of all health centers across Region VIII. In 2024, 50 health centers from Region VIII participated, representing 79% of all health centers in the region and providing data on over 11,100 employees.

Using the results from this survey, CHAMPS has released the 2024 Region VIII Health Center Salary and Benefits Survey Report. The report provides detailed compensation data, including job descriptions, salary and benefits information, budget breakdowns, and year-to-year data comparisons. It also highlights additional pay, benefits packages, anticipated raises, and offers new insights into full-time equivalent (FTE) requirements and leave options.

In September 2024, an electronic version of the report was made available to all [CHAMPS Organizational Members](#) as well as non-member organizations that participated in the survey. Printed copies of this report were mailed to the same groups in early November 2024. Any nonprofits interested in ordering additional copies can download the [2024 Region VIII Health Center Salary and Benefits Report Order Form](#).

In October, CHAMPS released the 2024 Region VIII Health Center Workforce Metrics Report, a companion to the Health Center Salary and Benefits Survey Report. This report provides an analysis of turnover and vacancy rates, along with additional recruitment and retention metrics such as staff tenure, demographics, and positions with challenging recruitment.

An electronic copy of this report, along with all available reports from both the current and previous years, can be accessed in the [Members Only](#) section of the CHAMPS website (Organizational Membership credentials required). Interested nonprofits will be able to purchase a copy of the Workforce Metrics Report soon. Additional companion reports addressing clinical staffing ratios and provider productivity expectations will be released in the coming months.

For more information about the Salary Survey and related reports, please visit the [CHAMPS Publications](#) webpage.

Questions? Contact the CHAMPS [Workforce Development & Member Services Director](#).

Is your Region VIII health center or Primary Care Association (PCA) hiring?

Post your open positions on the free CHAMPS [Job Opportunities Bank \(JOB\)](#).

To post an opening or update a current position, please contact the CHAMPS [Programs Coordinator, Health Center Workforce](#).

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEWS, *Continued*

Save the Dates: 2025 CORE Competencies Training



CHAMPS is excited to announce the dates for the [2025 CORE Competencies for Health Center Supervisors and Managers Training](#). This virtual course will be held over five Wednesday mornings, from February 26 to March 26, 2025. Health center managers and supervisors play a critical role in organizational success by overseeing daily operations, coaching and retaining employees, and consistently delivering results in an often fast-paced environment. This training is ideal for both first-time managers with 18 months of experience or less and seasoned managers looking to refresh and hone their skills. It offers intensive, hands-on skill-building that is designed for immediate application. Registration is expected to open in early December 2024 and some scholarships will be available.

Visit the CHAMPS [Leadership Learning Opportunities](#) webpage for information.

MOUNTAIN/PLAINS CLINICAL NETWORK (MPCN) NEWS

Providing professional, administrative, and educational support to all clinicians who practice in Community, Migrant, and Homeless Health Centers in Region VIII to ensure the delivery of the highest possible quality of care to poor and underserved populations. Learn more [here](#).

Save the Dates: CHAMPS Spanish Language Trainings

CHAMPS invites you to save the dates for five courses offered as part of the CHAMPS [Spanish Language Trainings for Healthcare Providers](#), all to be held online throughout April 2025. Led by [Ríos Associates](#), these intensive and conversational trainings focus on mock patient dialogues, cross-cultural discussions, and daily practice. Designed for clinicians and clinical support staff at Region VIII health centers, the courses offer an immersive experience ideal for those with limited time who need to immediately apply their new skills with Spanish-speaking patients. Registration for all five courses will open in January 2025.

The traditional [Medical Spanish Language for Providers](#) course will be held over four half-days: Thursday, April 10; Friday, April 11; Thursday, April 17; and Friday, April 18, 2025. This course is intended for physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and other medical personnel with beginner to intermediate Spanish language skills.

CHAMPS will also host four courses that will be held over two half-days each:

[Spanish Language for Oral Health Providers](#) will take place on Monday, April 7 and Tuesday, April 8, 2025. This course is designed for dentists, orthodontists, dental hygienists, and other clinical dental personnel with beginner Spanish language skills.

[Spanish Language for Behavioral Health Providers](#) will be offered on Monday, April 14 and Tuesday, April 15, 2025. This course is intended for psychologists, psychiatrists, mental health counselors, social workers, addiction counselors, and other behavioral health personnel with intermediate to advanced Spanish language skills.

[Medical Spanish Language for Advanced Speakers](#) will take place on Monday, April 21 and Tuesday, April 22, 2025. This course is geared toward physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and other clinical personnel with advanced Spanish language skills.

NEW! [Medical Spanish Language for Medical Assistants](#) will be offered on Thursday, April 24 and Friday, April 25, 2025. This course is designed for Medical Assistants and other clinical support staff with beginner Spanish language skills. Medical Assistants with advanced Spanish language skills are invited to apply to attend the Medical Spanish Language for Advanced Speakers course.

For more details, please visit the CHAMPS [Spanish Language Trainings for Healthcare Providers](#) webpage.

Registration Open: CHAMPS/RMPHTC Speak My Culture Virtual Training

CHAMPS, in partnership with [Rocky Mountain Public Health Training Center](#) (RMPHTC), is co-hosting an upcoming virtual training, [Speak My Culture: Embracing Latino Culture in Maternal Health](#). This free webinar is designed for healthcare providers and clinical support staff to deepen their understanding of the unique challenges faced by perinatal Latina mothers and their families. Speaker Tamara Ríos, PhD, CEO of [Ríos Associates](#), will discuss culturally responsive strategies that honor key Latino values such as personalismo, respeto, simpatía, familismo, and fatalismo. This training will focus on helping attendees build trust and improve communication with Latino patients by incorporating these cultural concepts into care. Participants will also explore cultural issues pertinent to maternal health topics and learn how to present information in ways that resonate with Latino families, ultimately encouraging better health outcomes.

The virtual training will take place on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, from 12:00-1:30 PM MT / 1:00-2:30 PM CT. Speak My Culture is accredited for 1.5 *AMA PRA Category Credits*™ available at no cost to attendees. Pre-registration is required, but there is no fee to attend the live event.

To learn more and register for the training, please visit the CHAMPS [Upcoming Live Distance Learning Events](#) webpage.

HHS Food Is Medicine Initiative

Food Is Medicine (FIM) encompasses a broad range of approaches that promote health and reduce disease burden through nutritious food, education and policy changes. To accelerate actions that would foster advancement of FIM, the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) launched the *FIM Initiative to Unify and Advance Collective Action*. Managed by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, the initiative aims to develop a national strategy that reduces chronic diseases linked to poor nutrition and addresses food insecurity to improve health and racial equity. As part of this initiative, HHS has launched a [Food Is Medicine](#) website to house related resources and research, including tools for understanding FIM, promising practices, and continuing education resources for healthcare providers. By bringing together these resources, the initiative aims to drive meaningful changes in nutrition-related health outcomes and reduce health disparities.

Visit the [Food Is Medicine](#) website to learn more and explore available resources.

Don't Miss: CHAMPS [Social Determinants of Health Resources](#)

CHAMPS has compiled a collection of resources related to the various Social Determinants of Health, including food and nutrition, education and employment, and poverty and income.

Streamline: In-Print Clinical Publication Focused on Migrant Farmworker Health Needs

Submitted by Claire Hutkins Seda, Migrant Clinicians Network

[Migrant Clinicians Network](#) recently released the Fall 2024 issue of *Streamline*, its quarterly clinical publication, available in both print and digital formats. The latest edition features articles including how one community health worker (CHW) team is preparing their community for climate-related disasters, the impact of demographics shifts on health center care, and how informal communication and misinformation influences migration. Each issue of *Streamline* features emerging issues, case studies, and research findings, all paired with useful, updated resources focused on serving the health needs of migrant, immigrant, and farmworker communities. Editions of *Streamline* can be received by email or in print, delivered for free.

Access the latest issue, explore past editions, and sign up for your preferred delivery method on Migrant Clinicians Network's [Streamline](#) webpage.

Upcoming Training Opportunities from CAM Academy

Submitted by John Mills, Center for Addiction Medicine at Denver Health



The [Center for Addiction Medicine \(CAM\) Academy](#) at Denver Health, in partnership with [Denver Prevention Training Center](#), provides training and technical assistance on comprehensive trauma-responsive treatment of substance use disorders

(SUD). The CAM Academy serves Colorado and the surrounding region including all other Region VIII states (MT, ND, SD, UT, WY). The CAM Academy is currently offering two workshops: the Trauma-Responsive Care Workshop and Addiction Medicine 101, each designed to equip healthcare professionals with specialized knowledge and skills to better support individuals affected by SUD.

The [Trauma-Responsive Care Workshop](#) is offered both in-person and virtually and will increase participants' knowledge and skills in delivering compassionate and effective care that acknowledges and addresses the impact of trauma. The workshop will provide tools to create trauma-responsive environments to promote healing in individuals who have experienced trauma. Participants will leave this course with an in-depth understanding of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's six key principles of trauma informed care, understand how racism and weathering impact health disparities in people of color, and the impact an elevated stress response can have on our bodies over time.

The next session of this course will be offered in-person in Denver, CO, on Thursday, December 12, 2024, from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM MT / 10:00 AM-1:00 PM CT. There is a cost associated with attending, and 2.8 hours of both Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) and Continuing Medical Education (CME) will be offered.

[Addiction Medicine 101](#) is an introductory, instructor-led, virtual course designed to provide learners with fundamental knowledge and skills to understand, support, and advocate for individuals with substance use disorder (SUD). The course covers key topics such as the addiction cycle and the neuroscience of addiction, while also emphasizing the use of person-first language and the importance of an empathetic approach when working with individuals affected by SUD. Participants will become familiar with the range of treatment and recovery resources available within communities, enabling them to make appropriate recommendations based on individual needs.

The next session of this online course will take place on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM MT / 10:00 AM-1:00 PM CT. There is a cost associated with attending, and 2.5 hours of both CNE and CME will be offered.

For more information and to register, please visit Denver Prevention Training Center's [Upcoming Classes](#) webpage. To inquire about discount options for small healthcare agencies or to schedule a private training for your team, please contact CAMAcademy@dhha.org.

Call For Proposals: Collaborative for Equity in Cardiac Care

The [Merck Foundation](#) recently launched the *Collaborative for Equity in Cardiac Care*, a new initiative aimed at advancing equitable access to high-quality, culturally responsive cardiac care for individuals with heart conditions living in underserved communities.

With a commitment of \$17 million over five years (2025-2030), the Merck Foundation will support the development and implementation of innovative, comprehensive cardiac health programs nationwide.

The Foundation is now accepting Letters of Intent (LOIs) from eligible nonprofit organizations, including health centers, dedicated to improving cardiac care. LOIs are due by Tuesday, January 10, 2025. Applicants will be notified by Friday, March 7, 2025 whether they are invited to submit a full proposal.

Invited applicants must submit a full proposal by Thursday, April 17, 2025.

View this [document](#) for full details about the call for proposals.

HEALTH EQUITY NEWS

Assisting Region VIII health centers and Primary Care Associations in pursuing health equity and addressing health disparities by affecting the social determinants of health in their communities. Learn more [here](#).

Register Now: CHAMPS/CCHN Peer Learning Session

CHAMPS and [Colorado Community Health Network](#) (CCHN) are pleased to announce that registration is now open for a new [Peer Learning Session: Addressing Environmental Determinants of Health](#). This free, collaborative peer learning session is designed for Region VIII health center staff to discuss Environmental and Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), focusing on how factors like housing, pollution, education, and access to healthy food influence patient outcomes. Attendees are encouraged to share promising practices from their own organizations and engage with their peers through questions and discussion.

This virtual event will take place on Wednesday, January 8, 2025 from 11:00 AM-1:00 PM MT / 12:00-2:00 PM CT. Health center staff involved in environmental health, emergency preparedness, and operations, as well as others interested in the topic, are encouraged to join. Pre-registration is required to attend this free event.

For more information and to register, please visit the CHAMPS [Upcoming Live Distance Learning Events](#) webpage.

CHAMPS Health Care for the Homeless Collaborative Updates

CHAMPS is currently hosting the [Health Care for the Homeless Collaborative](#), a free, four-part virtual series designed for Region VIII health center staff who serve people experiencing homelessness, as well as key Primary Care Association contacts. This series offers an opportunity to hear from experts in the field, discuss challenges, and share promising practices.

The first two sessions of the series were held in September and November 2024. In the first session, April Krall, Community Outreach Nurse Manager, and Dr. Sarah Axelrath, Primary Care and Addiction Medicine Physician from [Colorado Coalition for the Homeless](#) (CCH), shared insights on CCH's innovative street medicine program. The second session featured Cindy Manginelli, Director of Community Engagement at the [National Health Care for the Homeless Council](#) (NHCHC), who gave a presentation on safety and security considerations for those providing services to people experiencing homelessness. For those unable to attend, recordings of the first two sessions are available on the [Online Archived CHAMPS Distance Learning Events](#) webpage.

The next session of the collaborative is scheduled for Thursday, January 9, 2025, at 1:00 PM MT / 2:00 PM CT. This session will focus on respite care programs, and presenters will include Rhonda Hauff, CEO of [Yakima Neighborhood Health Services](#); Lisa Sirois, Director of Programs at the [Poverello Center](#); and Breanna West, Registered Nurse at [Partnership Health Center](#).

The final session of the series will be held on Thursday, March 6, 2025, at 1:00 PM MT / 2:00 PM CT. This session will feature a panel discussion on navigating emerging challenges for Health Care for the Homeless programs.

Registration for the collaborative remains open, and participants are welcome to join as many sessions as they are able.

Visit the CHAMPS [Upcoming Live Distance Learning Events](#) webpage to learn more and register.

HEALTH EQUITY NEWS, *Continued*

2025 Health Insurance Open Enrollment Begins

The Open Enrollment Period for 2025 began on November 1, 2024 and runs through January 15, 2025. Individuals in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming can use the [Affordable Care Act \(ACA\) Marketplace](#) to enroll in coverage, while those in Colorado can use the state based [Connect for Health Colorado](#) marketplace. Consumers who experience certain qualifying life events may be able to obtain Marketplace coverage outside of Open Enrollment through a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) between January 16 and October 31, 2025. Individuals can apply for free or low-cost coverage through [Medicaid](#) or the [Children's Health Insurance Program](#) (CHIP) at any time.

Federal Marketplace Dates (MT, ND, SD, UT, WY)

[Affordable Care Act \(ACA\) Marketplace](#)

- ★ **November 1:** Open Enrollment begins for health coverage for the next plan year.
- ★ **December 15:** Last day to enroll or change plans for coverage to start January 1, 2025.
- ★ **January 1:** Coverage starts for those who enrolled or changed plans by December 15, 2024 and paid their first premium.
- ★ **January 15:** Open Enrollment ends – last day to enroll or change health plans.
- ★ **February 1:** Coverage starts for those who enrolled or changed plans between December 16, 2024 – January 15, 2025, and paid their first premium.

State-Based Marketplace Dates (CO)

[Connect for Health Colorado](#)

Open Enrollment began on **November 1, 2024** and will close **January 15, 2025**.

There is no income cap to qualify for financial help.

Coloradans of most income ranges are eligible for reduced premiums.

REGIONAL & NATIONAL NEWS

Health Centers Can Use Federal Funding to Reduce Operating Costs & Improve Resilience

Submitted by Jenny Keroack, Department of Health and Human Services

The Inflation Reduction Act offers billions of dollars that can support health centers by improving emergency preparedness and lowering operating expenses. Crucially, tax credits for on-site renewable energy, electric vehicle fleets and ambulances, and charging stations are eligible for "elective pay," meaning that non-profits can receive a payment equal to the full value of the credits. Many grant and loan programs created by the Inflation Reduction Act can be used for the same projects as the tax credits, subject to certain requirements and limitations. For example, Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund loans can support small-scale power generation and zero-emissions transportation.

Learn more about these opportunities through resources and webinars from the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Climate Change and Health Equity](#).

The Department welcomes outreach from organizations interested in being featured in a case study, as well as any questions, which can be directed to OCCHE@HHS.gov.

REGIONAL & NATIONAL NEWS, *Continued*

New Accessibility Requirements for Health Center Grantees

In May 2024, the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) updated the regulation implementing the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, the primary federal law protecting the rights of people with disabilities, marking the first revisions to the regulation since 1977. The new rule includes three accessibility requirements that apply to all health center grantees, but not Look-Alikes:

- ★ **Kiosks:** Health centers who ask patients to use self-service kiosks must either ensure that the kiosks are accessible to people with disabilities or provide these individuals with another means of completing the task usually handled via the kiosk, such as allowing them to work directly with staff. The effective date for this policy remains unclear at this time.
- ★ **Web Content and Mobile Apps:** Health centers must ensure that their web content and mobile apps comply with specific technical standards of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 levels A and AA (WCAG 2.1 AA) or qualifies as an exception. The effective date for this requirement is May 11, 2026 for health centers with 15 or more employees, and May 10, 2027 for health centers with less than 15 employees.
- ★ **Equipment:** This requirement applies to exam tables, exam chairs (including chairs for both dental and eye services), weight scales, mammography equipment, and x-ray machines. For each type of equipment, health centers are expected to progress towards the goal of having at least 10% of its total units, but no fewer than one unit, meeting the [Standards for Accessible Medical Diagnostic Equipment](#). If a health center has yet to meet the target type of equipment, then the next time it purchases, leases, or acquires new equipment of that type, it must get units that meet the accessibility requirements. Health centers have until July 8, 2026 to have at least 10% of its tables and weight scales, but no less than one of each, meeting the accessibility standards. There are no deadlines for meeting the target for other types of equipment.

View this [two-page document](#) for more information about the accessibility requirements.

Revised Grants Policy Statement Released by HHS

The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) has revised its Grants Policy Statement (GPS), updating the guidelines for how it administers federal grants for the first time since 2007. The new GPS aligns with broader changes to federal grant regulations, introduces a simpler formatting style, and updates financial thresholds for various costs. The revised GPS will apply to new grants as well as to existing grants that receive additional funding on or after October 1, 2024. It will affect grants awarded by 16 HHS agencies, including the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). However, it will not apply to grants awarded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which has its own separate GPS. The new GPS aims to clarify ambiguous areas of grant administration and reduce the administrative burden for organizations receiving and managing HHS grants.

For more information, please view this [Feldesman press release](#).

Don't Miss: New Workforce Webpage from HHS

The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) has launched a new website, [Join the Health Care Workforce: A Career with Endless Possibilities](#), which features HHS support for individuals interested in building or advancing careers in the health sector.

Discover career development opportunities, access training resources, and explore scholarships and financial assistance options to support individuals throughout their healthcare journey.

REGIONAL & NATIONAL NEWS, *Continued*

HRSA Seeking Nominations for National Advisory Council Members

The [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) (HRSA) is currently seeking nominations for qualified candidates to fill vacancies on two National Advisory Councils. The National Advisory Council on the National Health Service Corps (NACNHSC) is looking for new members to help address health care delivery needs in underserved areas. Clinicians and health officials with backgrounds in primary care, oral health, or behavioral health are invited to apply. NACNHSC meets up to four times a year, and members serve three-year terms. Nominations, including self-nominations, are being accepted through Friday, December 6, 2024. Nominations should be emailed to nhscadvisorycouncil@hrsa.gov.

Additionally, the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice (NACNEP) is looking to fill 11 open positions. NACNEP provides advice and recommendations to Congress and the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) Secretary on policy, program development, and other matters related to the nurse workforce, education, and practice improvement. The council meets at least twice a year, and individuals serve four-year terms on a rotating basis.

For more information, please visit the respective HRSA webpages for [NACNHSC](#) and [NACNEP](#).

New Resource: HRSA Health Center Performance Improvement Toolkit

In October 2024, the [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) (HRSA) launched the [Health Center Performance Improvement Toolkit](#) to help health centers in the continuous improvement of their operations and care delivery. This new toolkit replaces the Advancing Health Center Excellence Framework, offering a more flexible approach to performance improvement and recognizing that each health center defines success in its own way, shaped by its unique challenges and strengths. The toolkit enables health center leaders to conduct self-assessments to identify key focus areas and determine the activities needed to achieve their performance improvement goals. It includes a Guide to Self-Assessment and a set of Self-Assessment Tools, which aim to help health centers in evaluating their current performance in several domains, setting future goals, and creating strategies to reach and sustain improved outcomes. By empowering health centers with the resources and guidance to assess and improve their performance, the toolkit aims to foster sustained growth, innovation, and better health outcomes for underserved populations.

To learn more and access the toolkit, visit HRSA's [Health Center Performance Improvement Toolkit](#) webpage.

HRSA Health Center Funding Update: Supporting Behavioral Health in Region VIII

In September 2024, the [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) (HRSA) granted \$240 million to more than 400 health centers nationally through the Behavioral Health Service Expansion (BHSE) award. Twenty health centers operating in Region VIII received a total of \$11,683,660. This funding is intended to assist health centers in launching and expanding mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) services, including treatment with medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD), to increase the number of patients receiving these services. HRSA hosted a technical assistance (TA) webinar for awardees in October 2024, and a recording of this webinar is available for viewing.

Visit HRSA's [BHSE](#) webpage to access the webinar recording and view a list of awardees.

Stay Up to Date on All Things Region VIII – Sign Up for CHAMPS Communications
[Health Equity Digest](#) [Monthly JOB Email](#) [MPCN Minute](#) [Quarterly Newsletter](#) [Workforce Focus](#)

REGIONAL & NATIONAL NEWS, *Continued*

Region VIII Dental Leaders Recognized with NNOHA Awards

In September 2024, two members of the Region VIII health center community were honored with leadership awards by the [National Network for Oral Health Access](#) (NNOHA) during their annual conference.

Duane Mata, DDS, Chair of Dentistry at [Denver Health Community Health Services](#), was awarded the 2024 John McFarland Leadership Award in recognition of his visionary leadership and unwavering dedication to community health. Dr. Mata has been with Denver Health for over seven years, and under his guidance, the organization has seen a remarkable 51% increase in patient visits. His forward-thinking leadership has driven significant improvements, including expanded clinic hours, integrated medical-dental services, and a considerable increase in staffing, with a focus on diversity and inclusion. Dr. Mata's efforts have also secured nearly \$5.5 million in funding to enhance dental care and support initiatives aimed at strengthening patient relationships and trust.



Ethan Kerns, DDS, Chief Dental Officer at [Salud Family Health](#), received the 2024 President's Commendation Award in honor of his exemplary commitment to NNOHA. After completing his term as NNOHA President, Dr. Kerns took on the crucial responsibility of leading the search for NNOHA's new Executive Director. Despite managing one of the country's largest health center dental programs, Dr. Kerns devoted considerable time and effort to the search process, ensuring the NNOHA's core values were central to the selection. His leadership, dedication, and intentional approach to this important task reflect his unwavering commitment to NNOHA and its mission.

Congratulations, Dr. Mata and Dr. Kerns!

Visit the [NNOHA Annual Award Winners](#) webpage to learn more about this year's awardees and explore past recipients.

Region VIII in the News

- ★ Alluvion Health: [Former Roosevelt School building will be used for early childhood care](#) (*KRTV, October 2024*)
- ★ Colorado Coalition for the Homeless: [Supportive housing development celebrates grand opening](#) (*Mile High CRE, August 2024*)
- ★ Family HealthCare: [Health center welcomes array of refugees](#) (*Bureau of Primary Health Care, September 2024*)
- ★ Helena Indian Alliance: [Helena Indian Alliance provides free dental care for tribal members](#) (*KTVH, October 2024*)
- ★ MarillacHealth: [Outpatient addiction recovery to expand through MarillacHealth](#) (*The Daily Sentinel, September 2024*)
- ★ Northland Health Centers: [Northland Health Centers and other organizations promote substance abuse awareness](#) (*KFYR-TV, September 2024*)
- ★ Northwest Colorado Health: [Free Grief Resource Center now open in Steamboat Springs](#) (*Steamboat Pilot & Today, October 2024*)
- ★ Partnership Health Center: ['Street Medicine' in Missoula creates access to health care](#) (*Seeley Swan Pathfinder, October 2024*)
- ★ Utah Navajo Health System, Inc.: [The Iina Bihoo'aah Program in Montezuma Creek helps youth transition to young adults](#) (*KSL-TV, October 2024*)

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2024

[NCFH Fall 2024 Agricultural Worker Health Symposium](#)

December 3-5; Tampa, FL

[CCHN Cybersecurity Training with CISA](#)

December 4

[Today with Macrae: Health Center Program Updates](#)

December 5

[CHAMPS Annual Board Meeting](#)

December 9

[CCHN Triannual Meeting](#)

December 12

[CHAD Empowering Diabetes Prevention Webinar](#)

December 17

[MPCA UDS+ Updates Webinar](#)

December 19

January 2025

[CHAMPS Health Care for the Homeless Collaborative, Session Three](#)

January 9

[CHAMPS Leadership Essentials Series, Session One](#)

January 16

[CHAMPS/RMPHTC Speak My Culture: Embracing Latino Culture in Maternal Health](#)

January 22

[CHAMPS Leadership Essentials Series, Session Two](#)

January 30

[MPCA UDS+ Updates Webinar](#)

January 30

February 2025

[NACHC Policy & Issues Forum](#)

February 5-8; Washington, DC

[CHAMPS Leadership Essentials Series, Session Three](#)

February 27

Looking Ahead

[CHAMPS CORE Competencies for Health Center Supervisors & Managers Training](#)

February 26; March 5, 12, 19, 26, 2025

[CHAMPS Health Care for the Homeless Collaborative, Session Four](#)

March 6, 2025

[CHAMPS Leadership Essentials Series, Session Four](#)

March 27, 2025

[CHAMPS Two-Day Spanish Language for Oral Health Providers](#)

April 7-8, 2025

[CHAMPS Four-Day Medical Spanish Language for Beginner and Intermediate Speakers](#)

April 10-11 & April 17-18, 2025

[CHAMPS Two-Day Spanish Language for Behavioral Health Providers](#)

April 14-15, 2025

[CHAMPS Two-Day Medical Spanish Language for Advanced Speakers](#)

April 21-22, 2025

[CHAMPS Two-Day Medical Spanish Language for Medical Assistants](#)

April 24-25, 2025

[National Health Care for the Homeless Conference & Policy Symposium](#)

May 12-15, 2025; Baltimore, MD

Please contact Haleigh@CHAMPSonline.org with questions or comments, to sign up to receive the newsletter, change your subscription email, or submit articles.

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