



COLORADO
COVERING
KIDS & FAMILIES

MONTHLY MEETING NOTES

February 19, 2021

COVID-19 Vaccine Equity

Gina Febraro, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), shared Colorado vaccination statistics and CDPHE's vaccine equity project. Colorado vaccination statistics are on the CDPHE website and include information such as the number of people who have received the first and second shot, demographics, and the phases of eligibility. Current statistics show that certain demographics, specifically people who are white and women, have received more vaccine than others. Some of the inequity might be by nature of who is in the first phases of distribution. For example, healthcare workers and educators, who are in the first phase, are predominantly woman. CDPHE is working toward assessing data based on hesitancy.

CDPHE outlined equity strategies for vaccine distribution. Communication and outreach strategies include rolling out a "Get the Facts" campaign. The campaign is focused on engaging and providing vaccine information to communities of color, individuals with disabilities, and low-income communities. The Champions for Vaccine Equity initiative is another project directed at addressing vaccine hesitancy within communities of color. CDPHE partners healthcare workers of color with community-based organizations to give educational webinars about the vaccine. The initiative has been well-received within communities. CKF is working with CDPHE to schedule a Champions for Vaccine Equity webinar for assisters.

CDPHE, the governor's office, local public health agencies, hospital communities, and others have worked with community-based organizations to hold pop-up vaccine clinics around the state. The goal is to reach people where they are, within their trusted community. These vaccine clinics are not broadly publicized, but rather shared directly to communities through the community-based partner organizations. Community partners get two to three weeks' notice when a clinic will be hosted at their site.

CDPHE is working to address barriers to accessing the vaccine. Identified barriers include language, access to information, cost, insurance status, data privacy, immigration status, and access to transportation.

CDPHE shared a few resources:

- [CDPHE Vaccine Information](#)
- [Vaccine education resources](#)
- Call center helps register people for sites near their home. They are available 24/7, in multiple languages.
 - 1-877-CO VAX CO (1-877-268-2926)
- For transportation assistance, call 211.

Connect for Health Colorado Updates

Bailey Dvorak, Connect for Health Colorado, shared that there were 178,431 enrollments during the open enrollment period, which is an increase from last year. 100,000 were

returning customers, and the rest were new. There are about 148,000 effectuations, which is about an 82 percent effectuation rate. Effectuation means that the client has paid their initial payment, or binder payment and their insurance is active.

Connect for Health Colorado's Uninsured Enrollment Period started on February 8, and will end on May 15. This enrollment period is only open to uninsured individuals. Connect for Health Colorado is also watching the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, which is expected to expand the advance premium tax credit (APTC) for customers.

HCPF Updates

Lisa Pera and Rebecca Ornelas, the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF), shared information about remote enrollment, estate recovery, a recent fraud memo, and an upcoming change to the reasonable opportunity period (ROP).

HCPF published [PM 21-001, Remote Application Assistance](#) allowing assisters at Medical Assistance, Eligibility Application Partner, Presumptive Eligibility, and Certified Application Assistance Sites to assist applicants in applying for Medical Assistance remotely, including by telephone and video conference. Assisters should collect verbal consent from the applicant by completing the [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Verbal Consent form](#) and submit this form with the client's application. This form designates the Assister as a limited Authorized Representative to sign the application on behalf of the applicant. Note that assisters will sign their *own name* on the application and authorization form. These flexibilities are only available during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program) members recently received letters about Estate Recovery. Many members were confused about what Estate Recovery is, and whether it applies to them. Estate Recovery is a program where the state may recover the money spent on a member's Long Term Care Benefits by selling the property the person owned after they pass away. Estate Recovery only happens for Health First Colorado members who are at least 55 years old *and* receiving Long-Term Care benefits through Health First Colorado when they pass away. Members can be in any program, including modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) and non-MAGI. There are a few exceptions to this rule

HCPF also released a [fraud memo](#). The memo describes that members who are locked-in to coverage during the PHE will not lose coverage, be considered fraudulent, or be responsible for overpayments if they are no longer eligible for benefits. HCPF is still pursuing fraud that occurred before the PHE. Members should still be reading and responding to notices.

The reasonable opportunity period for income verification is changing from 90 to 30 calendar days, starting March 2. HCPF is contracting with Equifax to create an interface with Colorado Benefits Management System that will allow HCPF to get real-time income verification for Medical Assistance cases only. This system will be available in June. HCPF is also working to improve income verification training.

CKF Updates

Shoshi Preuss, CKF, shared CKF's [Job Aid for Emergency Medicaid](#). It includes talking points with clients, overview of the program, who is eligible, tips for applying on paper and on PEAK, and a frequently asked questions section.

Shoshi presented on CKF's [2020 Year in Review Health First Colorado and CHP+ Enrollment Reports](#). Health First Colorado MAGI and Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+) enrollment increased by 175,137 or 16.1 percent over the year. Health First Colorado MAGI programs increased by 184,554, or 18.2 percent, while CHP+ decreased by 9,417, or 12.5 percent. Lock-in, as well as economic impacts from COVID-19, account for the large increase in enrollment during this year. More information is available in the report and accompanying [blog post](#).

Shoshi gave an overview of several health-related Executive Orders (EO) from President Biden. Biden issued an EO called [Restoring Faith in Our Legal Immigration Systems and Strengthening Integration and Inclusion Efforts for New Americans](#). This EO directs federal agencies to review actions related to the implementation of, and changes to, the public charge rule, review current immigration policies that create barriers to immigrating, and revoked President Trump's Presidential Memorandum called Enforcing the Legal Responsibilities of Sponsors of Aliens. This memorandum required that states pursue sponsors to pay for any federal means tested benefits that the sponsored immigrant has received. CKF will provide additional guidance on the removal of this memorandum when available.

President Biden also issued an [Executive Order to re-open enrollment](#) on healthcare.gov, the federal marketplace, in recognition of the COVID-19 pandemic. Colorado has matched this order by re-opening enrollment in Colorado's state-marketplace, [Connect for Health Colorado](#), from February 8 to May 15. Uninsured Coloradans can enroll in coverage at any point during this time, with coverage beginning on the first day of the month following enrollment.

Grace Trautman, CKF, gave a brief overview of the [CKF 2020 Annual Report](#). Read the report to learn more about the work completed and impact made by CKF in 2020.

Next meeting: March 19, 2021