

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Western Healthcare Alliance's Community Care Alliance Awarded \$100k HRSA Grant *Preserving Rural Healthcare Through Transformation*

Grand Junction, CO, August 29, 2024 – Western Healthcare Alliance's (WHA) Community Care Alliance (CCA) is excited to announce it has received a one-year, \$100k grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Rural Health Network Development Planning Program. These funds will be used to support the creation of The Partnering with Communities for a Lifetime of Health (PCLH) network through strategic partnerships and collaboration with community-based organizations, public health agencies, and community members.

The PCLH will serve as the foundation for a unified primary care messaging campaign that reaches all populations, speaks with a single, trusted voice, and emphasizes the importance and benefits of having a patient-centered medical home model to coordinate patient care. This includes access to mental and physical wellness, as well as preventive screening services.

Initially, the network will serve the western Colorado Roaring Fork Valley counties of Eagle, Pitkin, and Garfield. The PCLH was created in response to the expressed desire of employers, providers, and employees working within an existing value-based alliance, the Valley Health Alliance, to establish mechanisms outside the healthcare facility or doctor's office, to converse with patients and communities about the benefits of having a medical home and emphasize the importance of regular wellness and preventive care visits.

The network will serve as a mechanism for value-based, primary care-centered education and messaging campaigns. The PCLH will provide a community forum centered on value-based care delivery processes, ensuring patients and communities have ownership of their health and experience a mode of whole health, with a focus on what matters most to them, rather than simply treating a chronic or acute condition.

The CCA will oversee and convene the community assessment and planning activities associated with the formal establishment of the PCLH. Currently, the CCA has 24 member hospitals and healthcare organizations located in western Colorado and includes the project's tri-county area of Eagle, Pitkin, and Garfield counties. Within the project area, 10 CCA members provide primary care services for over 20 locations, including family medicine, pediatric services, women's health care, and internal medicine.

"The utilization of collaborative partnerships and the creation of small cooperative networks are vital for rural communities and their ability to provide for those who live there," said Marnell Bradfield, CCA's Executive Director. "The agility and knowledge that local health networks have regarding local populations make them best suited to respond to unique community needs, ultimately strengthening the entire healthcare system."

The CCA's work will alleviate a fragmented reliance on individual providers and organizations to educate patients about the importance of primary care, wellness, and preventive care services. This reliance often leads to inequities in access to care and unnecessary utilization of higher-cost services, like the emergency department. The PCLH will ensure that primary care messaging campaigns equitably target all populations regardless of socioeconomic status or other social determinants of health.

About Community Care Alliance

Community Care Alliance (CCA) is a Clinically Integrated Network (CIN) established in 2015 by members of Western Healthcare Alliance (WHA) to provide a population health infrastructure for rural hospitals and provider communities, meeting members wherever they are on the value-based care delivery spectrum. The CCA CIN has multiple value-based payment arrangements and single-signature authority to facilitate value-based reimbursement while aligning clinical processes and care coordination to improve patient outcomes and reduce the total cost of care. For more information, visit <https://www.wha1.org/community-care-alliance/>.

About Western Healthcare Alliance

Western Healthcare Alliance (WHA) began in 1989 when a small group of rural Colorado hospitals decided that there was power in numbers. Today, WHA celebrates over 30 years of collaboration with over 30 healthcare members in Colorado, Utah, and Michigan. A subset of WHA members own Healthcare Management, a sister company of WHA, which provides revenue cycle solutions to healthcare entities. Developing and managing a menu of member-owned and partner programs, WHA saves members money that helps them remain sustainable and viable in their communities. For more information, visit www.wha1.org.

About Valley Health Alliance

Valley Health Alliance (VHA) was founded in 2014 and works to improve the health of residents and businesses in Pitkin, Garfield, and western Eagle counties. The VHA has grown over the years and is now composed of self-funded employers, local Chambers of Commerce and healthcare providers who are working to find a sustainable solution with healthcare, one that improves outcomes and lowers costs for all involved. For more information, visit www.ourvha.org.

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