



COLORADO
HEALTH
INSTITUTE

Informing Strategy. Advancing Health.

2021

ANNUAL REPORT

To our community,

The last year brought the Colorado Health Institute's second decade to a close. As CHI marks its 20th anniversary, we reflect on our past impact and our future goals.

Against the backdrop of the ongoing pandemic, a changing climate, and a behavioral health crisis, our challenges sometimes seem insurmountable. Yet CHI is making a difference through our research, insight, and expertise. We are advancing evidence-based health policy, providing communities with the data they need to improve health equity, and partnering to improve health outcomes.

We see evidence of our success in stories like these:

- Local and state public health organizations mitigated inequities in testing and vaccine distribution by using our analysis of the disparate impact of COVID-19 at the neighborhood level.
- More than 300 primary care practices added capacity to deliver vaccinations through our administration of Colorado's primary care vaccination program.
- County commissioners were able to plan and access new programs and projects by using funding maps developed by CHI.
- A nonprofit federally qualified health center used data from a CHI needs assessment to

apply for and open a new school-based health center in Fort Morgan.

- Mothers in the perinatal period are being routinely screened and referred for behavioral health services through an evaluation tool CHI developed with partner health systems.
- Regional public health agencies continue to respond collaboratively to the pandemic and develop programs targeting behavioral health, climate change, racial disparities in health outcomes, and other critical public health issues thanks to our facilitation of the Metro Denver Partnership for Health.
- CHI's partners were able to set priorities, make decisions, evaluate programs, perform needs assessments, write grants, and inform their advocacy work using data from 2021 Colorado Health Access Survey. The survey offered insight into ongoing health trends and the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on communities of color, essential workers, and others.

We are proud of the work we have done to advance health in Colorado, and we are grateful to the partners and supporters who have made our work possible.



A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Michele Lueck". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a dark blue background.

Michele Lueck
President and CEO



COLORADO HEALTH INSTITUTE

Building on the Past to Design our Future

As the Colorado Health Institute prepares to celebrate a milestone anniversary in 2022, we are reflecting on our impact over the past two decades and are grateful for the investments Colorado’s health policy community has made with us.

This report features a timeline of highlights from CHI’s history, starting with our founding by farsighted organizations that understood the need for an independent health research institute. Year by year, CHI has evolved from a small hub for data and analysis, to an incubator of important organizations such as Connect for Health Colorado, to a strategic consultant and convener for innovative efforts to improve health and health equity.

In 2021, CHI focused on responding to the impacts of the pandemic, addressing the social determinants of health, and providing research, analysis, and insight to drive health and health equity work across the state.

Moving forward, we are drawing from our lessons learned to achieve our mission of improving health for all Coloradans by integrating systems of care, supporting behavioral health, and adapting to a changing climate. We are invigorated by this work and the possibilities that our third decade holds.

We look forward to building on 20 years of expertise and our trusted partnership with Colorado’s health community as we design new ways of improving the health and lives of people in our state.

CHI THROUGH THE YEARS



2002-2011



colorado health
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2011-2016



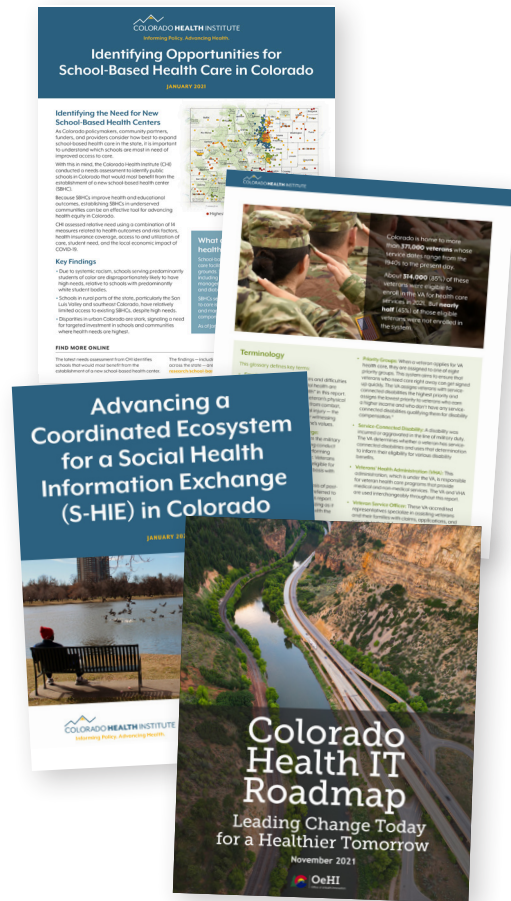
2016-Present

Moving Colorado Forward in 2021

In the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, CHI continued to identify and address health needs and disparities in Colorado.

Integrating Systems of Care

- CHI's [assessment of Colorado's school-based health centers](#) identified opportunities to improve access to care in rural and underserved urban regions of Colorado.
- Our analysis of Colorado's veteran communities identified opportunities to improve health and access to care for [veterans who are eligible but not enrolled for services](#) through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- CHI is working with the Metro Denver Partnership for Health on an [interoperable social health information exchange](#) (S-HIE) ecosystem to connect and strengthen coordination among health care, human services, and community groups to provide more customized, family-centered care for people in need.
- Through collaboration with the Office of eHealth Innovation and the eHealth Commission, CHI helped to update the [Colorado Health IT Roadmap](#), which will lead the state toward more equitable, affordable, and accessible health care for all Coloradans.



20 Years of Impact

The health care landscape has changed significantly, and CHI has been both a driver and an evaluator of that change.

2002

The Colorado Health Institute (CHI) is founded by The Colorado Trust, Rose Community Foundation, and Caring for Colorado Foundation.



2003

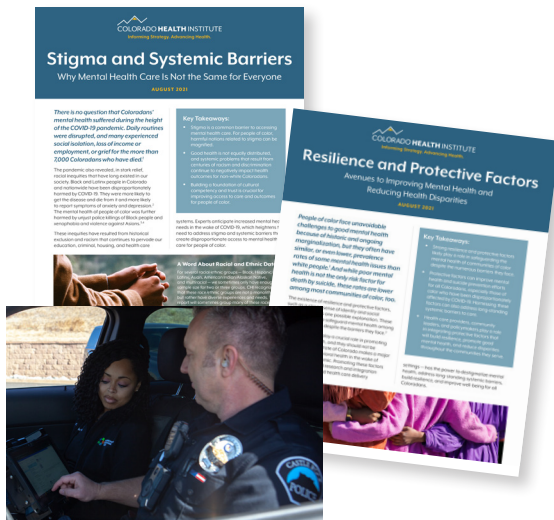
CHI facilitates the advisory committee on the federal waiver to expand Medicaid and Child Health Plan *Plus* coverage for children.

2004

CHI issues its first policy brief: *The Juror's Out: Monitoring the Shift from No-Fault to a Tort Auto Insurance System in Colorado.*

Behavioral Health

- Two new reports examined inequities in mental health care and avenues to mitigate those disparities: [Stigma and Systemic Barriers](#) and [Resilience and Protective Factors](#).
- For the state's Office of Behavioral Health, CHI [evaluated co-responder programs](#) that pair law enforcement with behavioral health professionals to better respond to mental health crises.
- CHI worked with two Colorado health systems to develop workflows to ensure that every new mother is screened for behavioral health issues.



Climate and Health

- CHI worked with Clear Creek County to train county staff and residents on flood preparedness.
- Our coverage of [Heat Waves and Homelessness](#) brought attention to the impacts of extreme heat on vulnerable populations.
- CHI's [Fire Years, Not Seasons](#) analysis explored drought patterns and wildfire policies in Colorado.
- [Climate Change Forces Local Leaders to Brace for Flooding](#) dealt with the health impacts of flooding and tips for staying safe

2005

CHI publishes about topics including the small group insurance market, Medicaid's prescription drugs list, and childhood immunization rates.

2006

CHI sponsors Colorado Health Care and the Promise of HIT: Making the Case for a Colorado RHIO (regional health information organization), a symposium about electronic health records exchange.

2007

CHI incubates the electronic health records exchange that becomes CORHIO.



2008

Blue Ribbon Commission on Healthcare Reform tackles health care affordability; Public Health Improvement Act takes effect.

CHI produces Faces of the Safety Net series, profiling clinics and organizations across the state.

Taking Stock

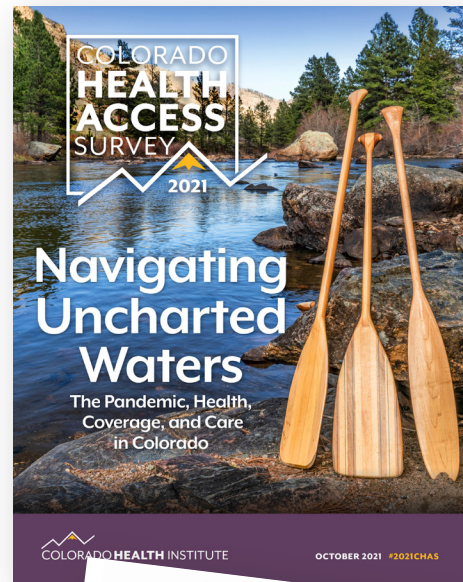
Findings from the 2021 Colorado Health Access Survey

The [2021 Colorado Health Access Survey](#) (CHAS) quantified the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and assessed other health trends across the state. The survey found that:

- The pandemic changed life for millions and worsened inequities.
- The social safety net kept rates of housing instability and food insecurity stable.
- Mental health became a secondary health crisis.
- Government programs kept Coloradans insured, but health care and prescription drugs were still not affordable.
- The use of health care dropped, but telemedicine options helped, making care more accessible for some.
- Discrimination persisted in the health care system.
- Dental pain was a widespread and serious problem.

These and other findings came to life in our report, [Navigating Uncharted Waters: The Pandemic, Health, Coverage, and Care in Colorado](#). In 2021, CHAS data also informed this work:

- A report about [access and use of oral health care](#) for the Delta Dental Foundation of Colorado.
- A blog post about the health needs of veterans: [Ten Hut: Military Service Members and Veterans Have Unique Health Needs](#).



2009

CHI introduces the [Colorado Household Survey](#), the precursor to today's Colorado Health Access Survey; launches the Center for the Study of the Safety Net at CHI.

2010

Affordable Care Act (ACA) signed into law. CHI facilitates the Colorado Alzheimer's Coordinating Council; analyzes the likely effects of the ACA on Colorado's health workforce.

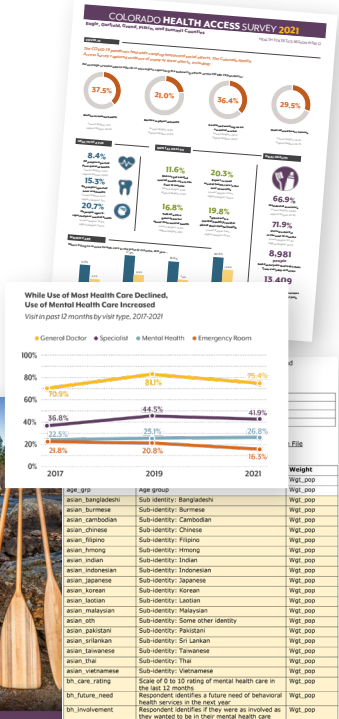
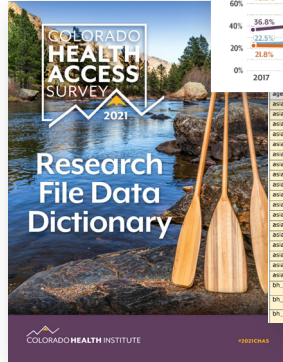
2011

Colorado legislature creates a health benefits exchange. The Colorado Trust releases the first [Colorado Health Access Survey](#), with analytical support from CHI; CHI publishes a landmark report about the ACA, [A Half Million Newly Insured: Is Colorado Ready](#); incubates the state's health benefits exchange (Connect for Health Colorado).



Survey Resources

CHAS data and resources are available on CHI's website for anyone to use. They include downloadable graphics, regional fact sheets, and the survey questionnaire. CHAS data can help organizations, researchers, and others who are interested in health and health access answer questions about specific populations, issues, or regions. CHI's team is available to field information requests and respond to questions as needed.



“The Colorado Health Access Survey is important because it’s a robust and representative source of information on health, health care, and social issues affecting Coloradans.”

CHAS Data User

The 2021 Colorado Health Access Survey was made possible by the Colorado Health Foundation, the Colorado Springs Health Foundation, Community First Foundation, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing, Colorado Office of Behavioral Health, Delta Dental, Latino Community Foundation of Colorado, Rocky Mountain Health Foundation, and the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

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ADDITIONAL SPONSORS



2012

Colorado voters legalize marijuana. CHI celebrates its 10th anniversary and publishes a book, *A Picture of Health*; launches Safety Net Advisory Committee (SNAC) labs to explore innovations in the state's safety net.



2013

Colorado legislature expands Medicaid eligibility. CHI releases the 2013 CHAS with funding from The Colorado Trust; the survey sets the baseline for assessing the effects of the ACA.

2014

Major provisions of the ACA take effect. First legal recreational marijuana sales. CHI's analysis, *Early Lessons From Legalized Marijuana*, gains national attention as other states consider following Colorado's lead.



2015

CHI begins facilitating the Colorado Health Observation Regional Data Service (CHORDS), expanding users and contributors; the 2015 CHAS documents historic gains in insurance coverage.

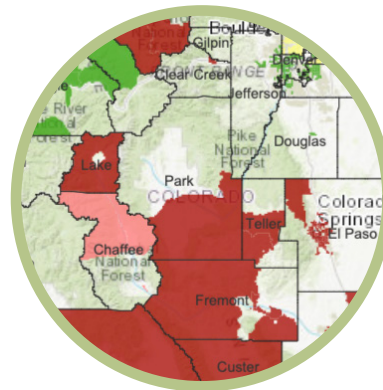




Addressing an Ongoing Pandemic

In 2021, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic shifted from masking and social distance guidance to vaccine distribution, health equity, and the distribution of recovery funds.

- As the administrator of Colorado's [COVID-19 Primary Care Vaccination Program](#), CHI helped distribute \$9,359,193 in initial payments to more than 300 primary care providers to expand access to vaccines in communities across the state.
- Our Colorado [Vaccine Equity Maps](#) tracked the percentage of the population in each census tract that had been vaccinated.



2016

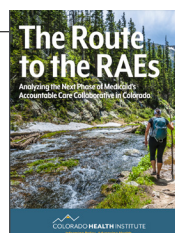
Colorado voters turn down a universal health coverage initiative.

CHI publishes a roadmap establishing the priorities of [Metro Denver Partnership for Health](#) (MDPH); [Regional Health Connectors](#) begin work, led by CHI and Trailhead Institute.



2017

CHI leads dozens of town halls to explore Colorado effects of a potential ACA repeal; publishes [The Route to the RAEs](#) (Regional Accountable Entities) highlighting new Medicaid structures.



2018

CHI conducts a statewide needs assessment for primary prevention, an analysis of buprenorphine provider availability, and an assessment of the state's early childhood mental health needs and resources.

- CHI used Colorado Health Observation Regional Data Service (CHORDS) data to show the disparate [impact of COVID-19 on metro Denver neighborhoods](#) and provided that interactive analysis in English and Spanish.
- We created the [American Rescue Plan Act Financial Map](#) to track \$9.7 billion in financial stimulus coming into Colorado and help decision-makers work together to amplify the effects of this historic investment.
- We used CHORDS data to quantify how much health care Coloradans [missed during the pandemic](#).
- On behalf of the [Metro Denver Partnership for Health](#), CHI published guidance to promote equity in vaccine distribution and launched an immunization ambassador program with community-based organizations.
- We wrote a series of blogs addressing everything from the [ethics of vaccine booster shots](#) and [adjusting to a long view of COVID-19](#) to the [harms of anti-Asian racism](#) and [why women are the key to economic recovery](#).

2019

CHI creates statewide strategic plans for primary prevention and substance use recovery and conducts a needs assessment of Colorado's early childhood system; leads the drafting of a blueprint for allocating opioid lawsuit settlements; publishes a climate and health index.

2020

CHI convenes [MDPH](#), which leads the metro area's public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic; analyzes the surge in telemedicine during the early pandemic; and ramps up work on social health information exchange.



2021

CHI updates the [Colorado Health IT Roadmap](#); continues facilitating MDPH's COVID-19 response; documents disparities worsened by the pandemic through the [2021 CHAS](#).

By the Numbers

In the News

CHI's work was cited **more than 220 times** by local and national media in 2021.



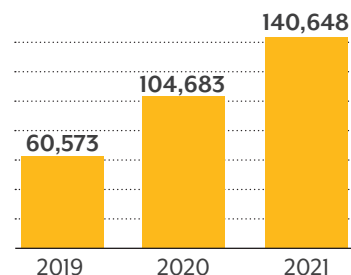
2021 Eggheads Webinars

During the pandemic, CHI started a monthly webinar series called Eggheads to share our research, analysis, and insight. All recordings are available on the Eggheads page of our website: colo.health/eggheads



- **COVID Vaccine Maps and Health Disparities in Older Adults** (May)
- **2021 Legislative Session Review** (June)
- **COVID-19 Rates by Census Tract; American Rescue Plan Financial Map** (July)
- **The Value of Partnership: Enhancing Access to Behavioral Health Care Through Co-responders** (August)
- **Missed Care During COVID-19** (September)
- **COVID Job Loss, COVID and Health, Plus Colorado Veterans: A Health Portrait** (November)
- **2022 Legislative Preview** (December)

Website Users



Most Read Reports

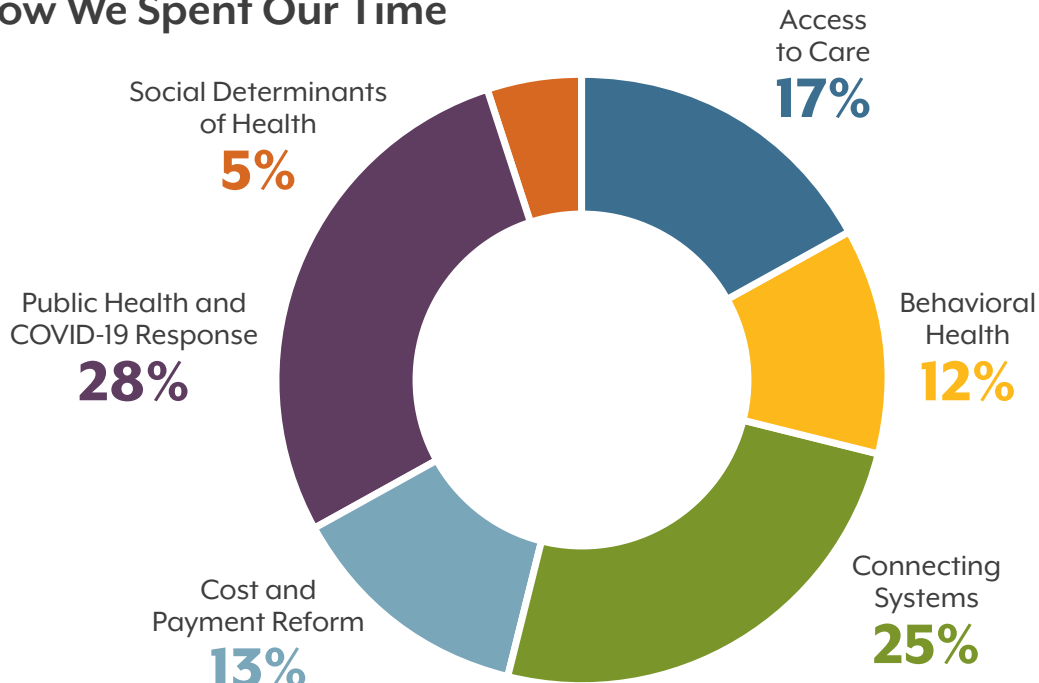
- [Measuring Vaccine Progress in Metro Denver](#)
- [Suicide in Colorado: Complex Issues in a Diverse State](#)
- [A Parallel Epidemic: More Overdose Deaths in 2020, Fentanyl Fatalities Spike](#)

Most Popular Blogs

- [Data Show Politics Has Become a Powerful Driver of Vaccine Hesitancy](#)
- [Moving the Needle on Vaccine Hesitancy](#)
- [Observing Gun Violence Awareness Day: Firearm Deaths, Policy, and Politics in Colorado](#)

Our Work

How We Spent Our Time



Read CHI's [2021 Financial Statement](#)

Our Skills

- Data, Research, and Analysis
- Strategic Planning
- Outcomes-Based Facilitation
- Financial Modeling and Mapping
- Program Management
- Needs Assessment
- Evaluation
- Communication and Visualization

Learn more about the services we provide on our website: coloradohealthinstitute.org/services/our-skills

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The Colorado Health Institute believes that good health policy leads to a healthier Colorado. Every day we bring research, insight, and expertise to leaders across the state because informed decisions lead to better health for all.