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Colorado Coalition for the Homeless Launches Two Initiatives to Bring Healthcare to People Experiencing Homelessness

The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH), a longtime advocate of integrated healthcare and housing services, is launching two innovative efforts to further extend satellite healthcare services to people experiencing homelessness. The new 48th Avenue East Health Center (48th Ave) and updated Health Outreach Program (HOP) provide access to healthcare for individuals experiencing homelessness at shelter sites, Safe Outdoor Spaces, and other locations where community partners have requested assistance.

The 48th Avenue East Health Center soft-launched on Monday February 7th onsite at the Denver shelter at 4600 E. 48th street operated by the Denver Rescue Mission. The space includes a lobby, two dedicated exam rooms, two behavioral health rooms, a point-of-care room, and a procedure room, with plans for continued expansion over the coming months. Services are currently being provided to approximately 15 clients per day, including individuals from the Denver Rescue Mission and soon the Samaritan House, a nearby facility that serves women experiencing homelessness. This on-site clinic serves new patients, individuals who haven't accessed health services since the closure of the National Western Complex and Coliseum, and individuals who normally visit Stout Street Health Center but have transportation barriers that prevent them from being able to go regularly, particularly during inclement weather.

In addition to the 48th Ave launch, The Health Outreach Program (or HOP) will relaunch in March with a fully customized state-of-the-art RV vehicle that features two exam rooms, restroom, and a wheelchair lift to ensure accessibility for 10-15 clients per day. The HOP replaces a deteriorating unit that had been in service since 2007. The new-and-improved HOP will travel with a driver, medical assistant, and primary care provider, ensuring the same level of professional and compassionate medical care as the brick-and-mortar Stout Street Health Center including services such as vaccinations, wound care, labs, and more.

Sean Kiley, Director of Client Access added “One of the most frequently cited barriers to care from our clients is transportation to get to our central Denver campus. Through the HOP we are able to work with partner organizations to meet established and new clients where they are and bring our services to them.”

CCH President and CEO John Parvensky acknowledged that the emergency response plans to combat COVID-19 over the past two years helped those working in community to see the benefit of combining 24/7 shelters with integrated healthcare. The National Western Complex and Coliseum emergency shelters were both opened in 2020 as a response to COVID-19 but have since closed.

“Having the access to medical and behavioral health permanently onsite is just a game-changer. It’s unfortunate we have to keep expanding shelter and there are still so many people on the streets, but this is what’s needed to best serve our community and continue to work towards ending homelessness.” -- CCH President and CEO John Parvensky

Funding for upgrades to the HOP was provided by two grants from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Funding for 48th Ave was provided by Emergency Solutions Grant (COVID) funds, also known as ESG-CV, part of the Federal CARES Act. This ESG-CV funding was granted to the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless by Denver’s Department of Housing Stability (HOST) to address homelessness and housing. HOST has worked hand-in-hand with CCH to ready 48th Ave for launch.

“The new 48th Avenue East Health Center clearly underscores the Department of Housing Stability’s mission of building a healthy, housed and connected Denver,” said HOST Executive Director Britta Fisher. “The integration of healthcare within the shelter setting is an innovation that allows us to better connect people to the services and supports they need to get back on their feet and ultimately into housing. Thanks to CCH and our many other providers, we’re greatly expanding 24/7 shelter services to make a lasting impact for persons experiencing homelessness.”

48th Avenue East Health Center is open from 7am-4pm on M/Tu/Th/Fr and 9am-6pm on We. The HOP schedule will be hosted on the Coalition website once the schedule has been established.

[Link to Photos and Video content](#)

About Colorado Coalition for the Homeless:

The mission of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless is to work collaboratively toward the prevention of homelessness and the creation of lasting solutions for people experiencing and at-risk of homelessness throughout Colorado. The Coalition advocates for and provides a continuum of housing and a variety of services to improve the health, well-being and stability of those it serves. Since its founding more than 30 years ago, the organization has earned state and national recognition for its integrated healthcare, housing and service programs. The Coalition’s comprehensive approach addresses the causes of homelessness, as well as the consequences, offering critical assistance to over 20,000 individuals and families each year. Learn more at www.coloradocoalition.org.

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