

Southwestern Colorado



AHEC

Area Health Education Center

pathways to health

Contact: Kathleen McInnis, Executive Director

Tel: (970) 403-6848

Email: kathleen.mcinnis@swcahec.org

November 21, 2016

COMMUNITY & HEALTH NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SW Colorado Healthcare Sector Partnership Think Tank Formed

Industry Leaders Identify Healthcare Growth Opportunities

DURANGO, CO – On November 3rd, The SW Colorado Healthcare Sector Partnership gathered regional healthcare leaders and community partners for an industry led effort to strengthen the competitiveness of healthcare in the Southwestern Colorado four corners region. The sector partnership connects healthcare related businesses with workforce, education, and economic development partners. In a collaborative effort, the Southwestern Colorado Area Health Education Center, The Colorado Workforce Development Council and Region 9 Economic Development District, assembled healthcare industry leaders in a round table discussion to identify growth opportunities and seek innovative solutions to improve the economic viability of healthcare in the region.

Healthcare employers discussed potential opportunities for working with local partners, such as Southwest Colorado Community College, Fort Lewis College, La Plata County Human Services and Senior Center, Durango High School, Colorado Workforce Center, La Plata Family Centers Coalition, and Archuleta County Social Services in solving challenges that impact the future of the healthcare sector.

Key opportunities include:

- Attracting clinical staff (primary care providers, MA's and nurses) with adequate training, certification, and expand the clinical job opportunities
- Enhancing changes in payment structures
- Addressing social determinants of health: housing, transportation, patient transition of care, and health literacy
- Improving continuing education for care providers

“This “Single Table, Multiple Issue” approach will address issues that greatly affect the future of our healthcare in the Southwestern region,” said Kathleen McInnis, Executive Director of the Southwestern Colorado Area Health Education Center. “Our hope is that we can engage industry leaders, cultivate a think tank, and attract high quality healthcare professionals who enjoy living and working in the area.”

Industry leaders in attendance at the Durango meeting included:

Bern Heath, CEO Axis Health Systems; Bobbi Lock, Director of Montezuma County Public Health; Dr. Rhonda Webb, Chief Medical Officer, Pagosa Springs Medical Center; Cathy Roberts, Vice President of Mission Integration, Mercy Regional Medical Center; Flannery O’Neil, Deputy Director, San Juan Basin Health Department; Haley Leonard, Marketing & Public Relations Director & Public Information Officer, Southwest Health System; Lesley Reeder, RN, representing Patrick Gordon, Rocky Mountain Health Plans RCCO-1.

About Colorado’s Sector Partnership:

Colorado has been modeling sector partnerships for over eleven years as a framework for industry-driven alignment across economic development, workforce development, and education. The state has invested in regional, public-private partnerships targeting key industries that are vital to our regional economies.

About SW CO Area Health Education Center:

SWCAHEC is a regional non-profit organization in Southwestern Colorado that broadly focuses on improving access to quality healthcare in eight counties; Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Montezuma, Ouray, San Juan and San Miguel. SWCAHEC provides support and coordinates programs for the community, health professionals and students interested in advancing health.

###