

## ***From the Director's Desk***



*Kathleen McInnis*  
*Executive Director, SWCAHEC*



Hi....

### **Director's Letter:**

Over the past year, I've commuted to work, riding my bike to the office most days. I love getting outside, taking in the great views and fresh air, and getting some exercise before work.

While on my bike, I have time to think through issues, enjoy the quiet, reduce my stress, and prepare for the day. Through observation of my surroundings, I've learned a few things about leadership.

Anyone can be a leader- from the front office receptionist to the CEO of a large corporation; student, Mom, Dad, or entrepreneur; we can all learn these lessons and grow our leadership skills.

## **What I've learned:**

### **1. Slow Down; be careful and acutely aware.**

While out on the roads, I have to be acutely aware of the traffic. People seem to inherently drive too fast! The other day, I saw an SUV barreling down the road much too fast and completely drive over a small, spotted fawn. He never put on his brakes, and I assume he never saw the cute little thing. Bewildered, the fawn ran up the road looking for Mama.

***Leadership Lesson:** Slow down! When we make rash decisions, try to get work done too quickly, or snap at a co-worker trying to race out the door, we become careless and lose sight of our purpose. Take a breath; go for a walk. Slow down to make better decisions!*

### **2. Our mission is important; but we won't reach it overnight.**

I'm frequently dismayed as I ride on back county roads and see a multitude of beer and hard liquor bottles and cans strewn on the side of the road and in the ditches. Despite the many years of hard work by policy makers and concerned citizens to put an end to drinking and driving, it is, unfortunately, alive and well.

***Leadership Lesson:** Our mission IS important, but we can't fix the whole world today, this month, this year, or longer. Regardless of our work, we can and must continue to hope and strive to make a difference in our small corner of the world.*

### **3. Listen to those around you**

While riding my bike, I do not have the needed coordination to talk on the phone or listen to music with earbuds and therefore have learned to tune into the music around me- chirping birds, the wind, the silence. I find that it is in these quiet moments, while also getting my heart pumping, that I can solve my biggest challenges.

***Leadership Lesson:** We have two ears and one mouth for a reason. When we take the time to be more intentional and listen, we learn new things, build trust with colleagues, and gain the clear understanding needed to make better decisions.*

### **4. Take care of yourself so you can care for others**

Experts say we should exercise 30-60 minutes most days for good health. Riding my bike to work is good for me physically, mentally, and spiritually. My heart rate is elevated, the wind is blowing on my face, and I'm building muscles and lowering my stress!

***Leadership Lesson:** Nonprofit work can be messy and is really hard! We try to do so much with so little. Each of us should find time for self-care. By taking care of ourselves, we have more capacity to take care of others.*

### **5. Be willing to take an alternate path or course correct**

Sometimes, we set our path, our goals and realize we need to course correct, midstream. Last week, I got on my bike, eager to get out in the fresh air. It was a Friday, and I didn't have to be in a hurry. Suddenly, my bike broke down, right in the middle of a short, but steep hill and I came to an abrupt stop! I realized I needed to get into town by a different route. Fortunately, I was close to home and able to drive my car to work.

***Leadership Lesson:** I could have let the mishap ruin my day. Instead, I took a deep breath, stopped to look at the beautiful sunrise and was grateful that I had a second option for my commute to town. Sometimes, when we think things are going smoothly,*

*we get blindsided and realize we need to change our path, go a different direction. When this happens we should evaluate the issue, discover what went wrong, plan a new route, and try again.*

## **6. Never stop learning and improving- keep riding and pushing yourself.**

When I am on my bike, I set small goals- perhaps to ride as fast as I can to the next tree; or see how long I can push myself going uphill. These small goals help me get to my bigger goal of a stronger, healthier self.

**Leadership Lesson:** *We should continue to push ourselves to be life-long learners, setting short term goals and see the bigger picture to get to the end result.*

At SW Colorado AHEC, we are all leaders. Each team member has a unique work role and we come together as individuals to share our expertise, listen to each other's challenges, support each other's work, offer suggestions, and together are an amazing team!

## **Summer Highlights**

It's been an action packed summer so we wanted to highlight what's been happening at SWCAHEC.

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University of Colorado  
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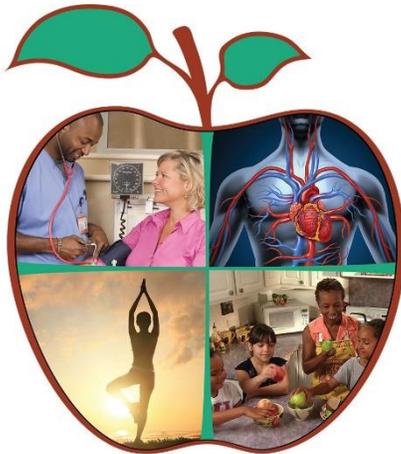


**New AHC Screening  
Project Launches Soon!**

## 9 Students Have Enrolled in our BSN Dual Enrollment Program

This year The University of Colorado College of Nursing (CU) and Pueblo Community College (PCC) have introduced two exciting opportunities for SW Colorado residents who want to get their **Bachelor's degree in Nursing (BSN)**. Students can join a dual-enrollment program and get their ADN in 2 years, or they can take CU's online option and get their BSN in 1-2 semesters. Thus far, we have 9 first year RN students enrolled at Pueblo Community College / CU program and 6 additional students will begin in January. The first cohort of 4 students (now second-year RN students) are currently working towards their BSN.

SWCAHEC staff is currently enrolling clinics to participate in the Accountable Health Communities (AHC) program. The ACH Program, which is funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is a health screening tool that systemically identifies health-related social needs and addresses social determinants of health such as adequate food, housing, utilities, safety, and transportation. If a person meets the criteria, then they are connected with a community navigator to assist with their core issues. As much research suggests, addressing social determinants of health (SDoH) for complex Medicaid patients is paramount in reducing costs and improving health outcomes, especially as we continue to move toward value-based care system.



## Discover Health Exhibit (Descubre Salud)

SWCAHEC brought a free interactive bilingual traveling exhibit called Discover Health (Descubre Salud) to the Cortez Public Library over the summer. The exhibit featured nutritional workshops, anatomy lessons, health screenings among other science topics while introducing health topics to kids using a fun, hands-on approach. The Discover Health Exhibit introduced the benefits of a healthy living to rural residents and reached over 500 local patrons.



**Mary Dengler-Frey, MLA**  
**Regional Health Connector**

In the Regional Health Connector role, Mary focuses on building alliances between primary care, public health, and

## AHEC Scholars Program

Southwestern Colorado Area Health Education Center (SWCAHEC) has collaborated with Fort Lewis College, Pueblo Community College Southwest Nursing Program and University of Denver Four Corners MSW Program to offer a FREE AHEC Scholars enhancement program. The AHEC Scholars is a program for health profession students interested in supplementing their education by gaining additional knowledge and experience in rural and/or underserved urban settings. The program is set to launch in October 2018.

[Read More](#)



## Regional Health Connectors

Mary Frey-Dengler who is in charge of the RHC program has been building awareness around opioid use and suicide prevention. As part of the RHC opioid abuse prevention project, a free educational event is being offered for

community organizations. She works with State Innovation Model-funded primary care practices, helping them reach their practice transformation goals around the social determinants of health.



SWCAHEC in the News!

providers on October 11th. "From What to How" is a series of talks given by the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention with 2.5-3 CME's. In conjunction, she is working to establish prescription drug drop boxes in all five counties in Region 9 for better safe disposal.

In the Fall, Mary will be traveling to Denver with the Pinon Project to meet with the Colorado National Coalition to discuss funding for suicide prevention work in Montezuma County.

[Learn More About the RHC](#)



## Health Careers Camp

This year's Health Careers Camp had an excellent turnout. The weeklong camp held on the campus of Fort Lewis College, June 10th-16th drew twenty-eight 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students from five of our eight counties: Archuleta, La Plata, Montezuma, San Juan and San Miguel. With support from The Colorado AHEC Program, the Daniels Fund, and the Enterprise Foundation, among other sponsors, 36%

## **Campers up for the challenge!**

*"For any high school student pondering their future in the workforce, SWCAHEC's Health Careers Camp presents the unique and valuable opportunity to explore and pinpoint appealing careers in healthcare while having fun along the way."*

*~ Jake Genualdi*

of students were able to attend the camp with a scholarship.

This year's event was expanded from half a week to one week (7 days and 6 nights at Fort Lewis College) and included over 100 volunteers and 18 organizations. We want to thank everyone who participated in the event making it a huge success.



## **The week-long Health Careers Camp featured fun and interactive activities focused on health.**

Students had the opportunity to explore various fields within the healthcare industry from learning hands-on medical techniques such as application of sutures, checking for vital signs, CPR and being an emergency responder from the Mercy Regional Flight for Life helicopter team, to cooking healthy meals, water testing and shadowing professionals in their medical facilities.

### **Camp Highlights...**

- Half-day of rafting and learning about high-siding, swift water rescue, foot entrapment and emergency response techniques from Flexible Flyers Rafting
- Flight for Life – Helicopter demo including a question and answer session with the crew
- Water testing on Animas river with the SJBPH staff
- Tour of the Discover Health Exhibit in Cortez
- Hands-on learning - 14 health stations were set up, introducing the students to medical techniques and procedures. 16 volunteers helped facilitate the event.
- Students performed one-on-one speed interviews with health professionals allowing them an inside look into each profession.
- 13 health facilities participated in the "health shadowing day". Students worked side by-side with a health professional who mentored the student in their own office setting.

### ***Exciting News!***

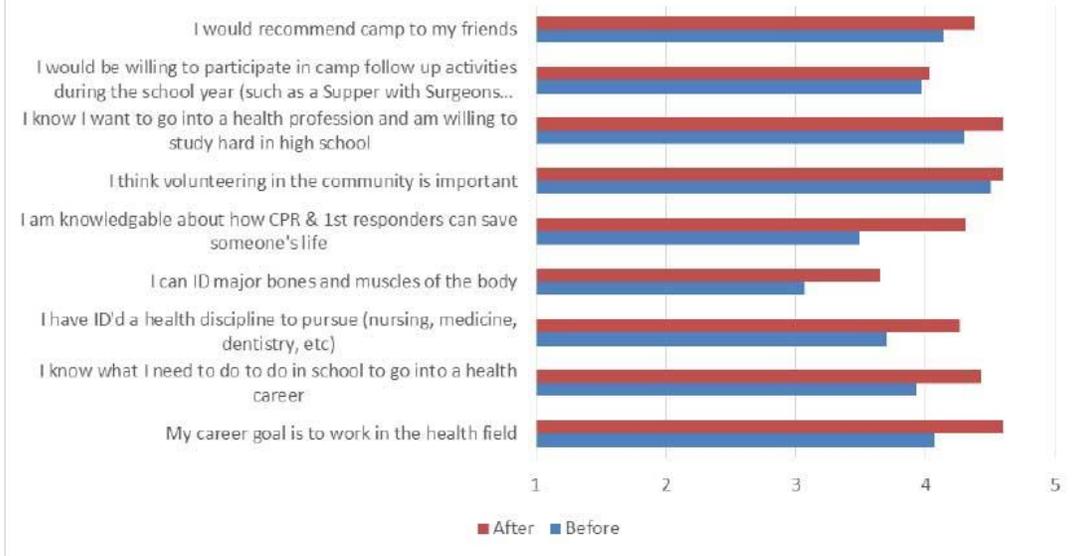
*Our goal is always to educate and inspire! Every year, at the end of camp, we have our campers complete a survey. This year's survey revealed that the students received additional knowledge concerning their career options and an increased desire to pursue a health career in the future. If we can inspire our young people to get into a health profession, pursue their dreams, and return to their rural community, then all the work*

that we pour into this event is well worth it. Thank you to everyone for your support and participation!

## Health Careers Camp Gallery



Change in Beliefs Pre and Post Camp



**"The Opioid Memorial Wall" will be on display at the Durango Public Library on October 15th.**



**Let's Reduce the Stigma of Addiction!**  
**[liftthelabel.org](http://liftthelabel.org)**

On Monday, October 15th from 10am-6pm, the Opioid Memorial Wall will be on display at the Durango Public Library as part of the Lift the Label Campaign. The Wall is 34 feet long and is constructed of 4,200 pill bottles; each pill bottle represents 10 Americans lost to heroin and prescription opioid overdoses in 2016.

Jessica Eaddy from the Consortium will be offering a free Naloxone training to the community and there will be powerful stories from survivors describing their journey of recovery. The event is proudly sponsored by Southwestern Colorado Area Health Education Center, The Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Behavioral Health, the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention, Colorado Regional Health Connectors and the City of Durango.

**We invite you to come out to this free event.**

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Health Education Center

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