

## our services by the numbers

5,317

Patient visits to our Family Dental Clinic (1,913 patients served; clinic saw only emergency patients March 17 – June 9)

266

Improving Blood Pressure counseling sessions held to help 54 people monitor and manage their blood pressure

924

Quit Tobacco counseling sessions held (for 208 clients)

17,474

Client contacts for mental health or substance use help provided by Connections, CAYAC, and our Integrated Primary Care/Mental Health Program

1,937

Households in 4,556 encounters that received help finding new, reduced-cost health insurance options from Larimer Health Connect

25,216

Temperatures taken of unsheltered shelter guests, 135 of whom received COVID-19 isolation, recovery, or quarantine services by staff and partners

1,512

Households that responded to a Health District survey on the local impact of COVID-19

\$1,132,984

Value of grants received for dental and mental health services, health insurance enrollment support, community assessment, and COVID-19 response

10,337

Total number of individuals who received dental or health care, or connections to care from Health District staff

## board of directors

The Health District is governed by a publicly elected board of directors.

**Michael D. Liggett**  
President

**Molly Gutilla**  
Vice President

**Faraz Naqvi, M.D.**  
Liaison to PVH Board

**Celeste Kling**  
Secretary

**Joseph W. Prows, M.D.**  
Treasurer

# Health District

OF NORTHERN LARIMER COUNTY

## 2020 Annual Report

2020:

*A Year Like  
No Other*

A whirlwind of  
changes to protect  
community health



**N**o other word describes the Health District's experience in 2020 quite as well as *whirlwind*. From the moment COVID-19 was first discovered in Colorado on March 5, like so many other organizations, our staff sprang into action to create new ways to help protect our community's health.

We have assisted in many disasters before, but *never* had any of us experienced a threat so serious—one that could, if immediate action wasn't taken, spread major illness and death like the wildfires we also experienced last year—and one that impacted the entire community, and lasted so long.

As the reality set in that in order to save lives, people would have to distance from one another, that individual's incomes would be impacted, that this was no time for people to be without health insurance, and that anxiety would grow, we recognized that our services would be critical. Yet we would have to provide them in entirely new ways. And we soon learned that things would change constantly—requiring constant flexibility.

Almost immediately it became apparent that COVID was even more of a risk to some—calling for us to help develop new services. It is impossible to 'shelter at home' if you *have* no home. While consulting with the amazing organizations moving at lightning speed to set up a temporary, safer shelter for people experiencing homelessness—helping to create health and hygiene practices—we suddenly discovered a critically important gap.

There was no place for those who were unhoused and experiencing COVID-like symptoms to isolate (or to quarantine due to exposure). It was not safe or humane for the individual, nor was it safe for the community. By mid-March, our employees were pouring themselves into creating and staffing safe locations for Isolation/Recovery and Quarantine for those experiencing homelessness. Like other health-care providers, they risked their lives working directly with people who had COVID. Their incredible efforts helped prevent the spread of the virus and saved lives.

Equally important was our work to swiftly expand the availability of our Connections Program—connecting people to mental health and substance use services—into the community's COVID emotional support line. And we expanded outreach to those who now needed health insurance more than ever so Larimer Health Connect could help them find affordable options. Our Family Dental Clinic services also adapted to a whole new model of safely providing care.

Never have I been so grateful—for the rapid action, flexibility, self-sacrifice, dedication, and truly colossal heart that our staff has shown in helping to protect our community's health from COVID and its impacts. The gratitude extends to the multitude of other individuals and community organizations also responding to the pandemic.

As I write this, it is truly tragic that COVID has killed 250 people in Larimer County. Yet the efforts of *every* person in our community who worked to help others and to slow down the spread of the virus prevented a tragedy of far greater scope. To each of you, I offer my most heartfelt thanks.



*Carol Plock*  
Executive Director

## Staff switch hats to combat COVID-19



**S**ome Health District staff began 2020 doing the jobs they were trained for only to end up serving the community in ways they never could have imagined as they helped respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among those were staff from several different programs who helped make sure that one of the community's most vulnerable populations was not forgotten in the midst of the pandemic.

The Health District team joined partners from Homeward Alliance and other community groups in the day-to-day operation of a temporary shelter for people experiencing homelessness that was established at Northside Aztlan Community Center. They oversaw separate areas where visitors could

isolate, recover, or quarantine (IRQ), depending on their COVID-19 status. Plans and tasks changed frequently as needs evolved, covering everything from screening for symptoms to organizing hand-washing stations.

"There were no manuals for this. There was no chapter in a textbook that any of us got during our education that told us how to do what we were doing," says Health District Medical Director James Stewart, who, along with Community Impact Team Director Brian Ferrans, oversaw medical operations at the shelter and subsequent IRQ locations.

Isolation, recovery, and quarantine care later moved to a residential facility where up to 25 people could be accommodated at one time. As COVID cases surged in December, efforts shifted yet again, this time to a Loveland hotel that provided greater capacity. Each change in venue brought new challenges, but staff never lost sight of how important their work was for the people in their care.

"The alternative was that they could be sick with COVID out on the street," Ferrans says.

Another group of Health District staff redeployed to help the community in different ways after the pandemic put a sudden halt to their in-person services. Nurses from Heart Health Promotion joined with staff from Research and Evaluation to assist the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment with COVID-19 contact tracing.

Finally, the Research and Evaluation team seized an opportunity to help the community better understand local impacts of the pandemic. Staff contacted respondents from its recently completed Community Health Survey and asked how COVID-19 had affected them. More than 1,500 county residents responded, offering insights into how the pandemic was affecting their work, income, emotional health, substance use, and other factors. (See results at [healthdistrict.org/2020-covid-19-supplemental-survey](https://healthdistrict.org/2020-covid-19-supplemental-survey).)

## Connections: Driven to serve mental health needs

**W**hen Larimer County shut down in response to COVID, the Health District's Connections team went into overdrive. Staff offered telehealth for the first time, added an online anxiety support group, worked with local partners to provide the county's emotional support line, and increased hours to help as many people as possible during the stress of a global pandemic.



Connections offers answers, options, and support to help individuals take the next step—the right step—toward mental health and freedom from substance misuse. Connections includes a team called Child, Adolescent, and Young Adult Connections (CAYAC) that works specifically with ages 0-24 and their families. Connections served over 4,500 individuals in 2020, many with more severe symptoms than seen in previous years—and staff reported an increase in whole families needing support.

Shifting to telehealth and working remotely meant a new process for delivering therapy and other services that was secure, HIPAA-compliant, and confidential. The last piece was probably the toughest since two-thirds of the team are parents with kids doing remote schooling, so finding a quiet spot with no disruptions wasn't always easy, says Michelle Clark, Connections clinical supervisor and a mom.

Connections also expanded its hours from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays to 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., 7 days a week, with callers connected to SummitStone Health Partners' crisis line at night.

As the pandemic dragged on, immediate emotional support was seen as critical to those struggling with fears of getting sick, social isolation, loss of employment, juggling online schooling, concerns about increased substance use, and more. So Connections worked with local partners to create, market, and fund a 'warm line' available 24/7 for callers throughout Larimer County who needed someone to listen and offer emotional support.

"The team rallied and did whatever was required at any given time to meet the community's needs," Clark says.

## Family Dental Clinic team adapts to emergency care, telehealth

Dental professionals know to expect the unexpected, but the global pandemic brought constantly changing regulations and safety protocols that pushed the Family Dental Clinic staff to make almost daily adjustments. Committed to ensuring the community had access to dental care and advice, the clinic first shifted to emergency care while also giving patients the option to talk to dentists over the phone for guidance and avoid an unnecessary trip.

The clinic provides quality free and low-cost dental care to people in northern Larimer County who do not have dental insurance, and accepts Health First Colorado (Medicaid) and CHP+. Sliding fees are also available to those who qualify. In 2020, over 1,900 individuals visited the clinic for in-person care.

“We had patients that were very grateful that we offered them the chance to speak directly to a dentist, to ease their concerns without having to risk their health if the issue didn’t require immediate care,” says Dana Turner, dental services director for the Family Dental Clinic. The phone guidance also helped some people to stabilize their situation and manage without going to the ER when COVID-19 community spread was high.

A new filtration system was installed in the clinic and staff quickly adapted to the extra cleaning and disinfecting, screening, PPE, and physical distancing required to help keep patients and staff safe. Additionally, employee shifts were scheduled to allow for back-up staffing in case someone couldn’t come to work, which required flexibility from everyone. Strict precautions continued as the clinic opened up to serve more people, Turner says.

Once the clinic re-opened for comprehensive care, many patients told the dental team that they were happy to finally get their overdue dental work done. That’s a good thing because the condition of teeth or oral issues can change dramatically in a year or more, and small problems can become big ones. The Family Dental Clinic’s Dr. Rob



Gartland says,

“Cavities don’t go away on their own. Gingivitis doesn’t magically disappear. One of the biggest risks with untreated dental disease is infections that can cause pain, yes, but if it progresses far enough can enter your bloodstream and affect your overall health.”

People who have put off dental care should feel confident to return and not wait any longer, concludes Dr. Justyna Aspiazu of the Family Dental Clinic. “Sometimes we can’t help missing an appointment, especially with the pandemic, but with updated infection control and vaccines it’s important to resume these exams and cleanings because they exist to keep patients healthy and happy.”

## Larimer Health Connect: Critical insurance help in a pandemic

In a year filled with layoffs and fears about the spread of COVID, having health insurance coverage became an urgent need for many people in Larimer County. The Larimer Health Connect team rose to the challenge, using virtual appointments to help hundreds of people enroll in an affordable plan and ease their minds.

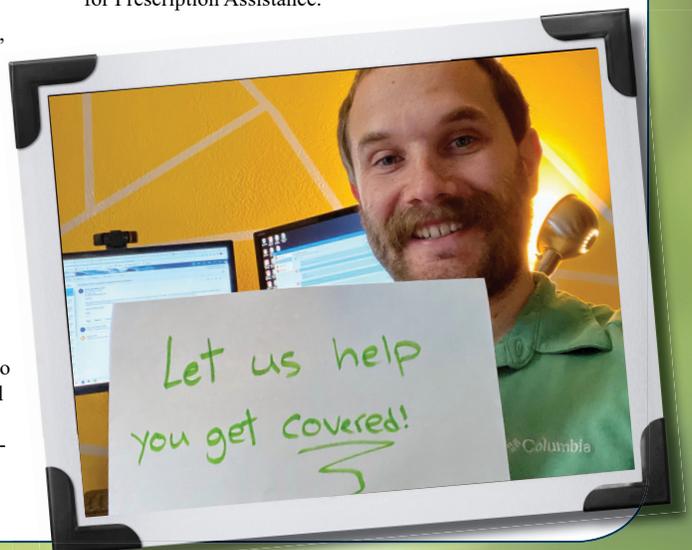
Larimer Health Connect is a free service that helps people find the best options for health insurance to meet their family’s needs and budget. Trained staff provide impartial assistance with new, free, and lower-cost health insurance plans—including plans from the Connect for Health Marketplace, Health First Colorado (Medicaid), and CHP+.

While staff met remotely with most customers over video, individuals without a computer or internet access were offered in-person appointments, following proper protocols to ensure safety.

The team saw a big increase in people who had experienced a job loss or loss of income due to shut downs and were looking for budget-friendly insurance plans that would still provide the health-care coverage they needed during uncertain times. The program served 1,937 households in 4,556 encounters in 2020, including many repeat customers during Open Enrollment.

The rapid spread of the virus also led some who were without insurance to seek assistance. “We had several calls from people who said their motivation to apply for health insurance was the potential need for COVID-19 testing and treatment and that close friends or family had tested positive,” says Rosie Duran, Larimer Health Connect program coordinator.

Adding to the crisis for some was the inability to pay for their prescriptions. Prescription Assistance is an arm of Larimer Health Connect that helps those with limited incomes fill their prescriptions through vouchers, manufacturer assistance programs, and navigating lower-cost sources. More people reached out with immediate needs compared to past years, and many of them were between coverage plans and experiencing homelessness, says Ann Martin, program lead for Prescription Assistance.



# Health District

OF NORTHERN LARIMER COUNTY

120 Bristlecone Drive • Fort Collins, CO 80524  
970-224-5209 • fax 970-221-7165 • healthdistrict.org



Our services are open to those who live within the Health District, including Fort Collins, Laporte, Wellington, Livermore, Red Feather Lakes, and Timnath. The Health District serves residents of ALL INCOMES, though some services are specifically for families who have low incomes and no health insurance. Most services have a fee, but sliding fees are available to make good health affordable for all.

## with thanks

Throughout 2020, improving the health of our community required fortitude and perseverance, as well as strengthened existing and new partnerships centered on a commitment to helping others. It's with profound gratitude that we recognize our donors and partners who advanced our mission and those that supported services to address increased and unforeseen community health needs due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, we touched the lives of over 10,337 individuals by:

- Ensuring that those experiencing homelessness in our community had a safe place to isolate, quarantine, and recover from COVID-19
- Providing children, adolescents, families, and adults with emotional support when they needed it most, helping them to find answers, options, and resources for mental health and substance use challenges
- Supporting individuals and families to enroll in health insurance programs at a time when so many people in our community faced employment challenges
- Ensuring safe access to dental care services for individuals living on low incomes and/or living with disabilities
- Helping people to find affordable prescription options
- Helping individuals to understand, complete, and share their advance care directives, specifying medical treatment and health-care decision-makers if they were to become seriously ill or injured
- Helping people to quit tobacco and control their blood pressure, both risk factors for severe COVID complications

### Business, Government, and Foundations

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Colorado COVID Relief Fund  
Colorado Health Foundation  
Connect for Health Colorado  
Coronavirus Relief Fund  
Del Corazon Family Fund  
Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation  
Denver Foundation  
Farmers Bank  
Kempe Foundation  
Larimer County Behavioral Health Services  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
State of Colorado Senior Dental Program

### Ongoing Project Partners

Associates in Family Medicine  
Banner Health Emergency Departments  
Berthoud Community Life Center  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Chilson Senior Center  
City of Fort Collins  
City of Loveland  
Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention  
Colorado Dept. of Health Care Policy and Financing  
Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment  
Colorado Health Institute  
Colorado Health Medical Group  
Colorado Health Network  
Colorado Opioid Synergy Larimer & Weld  
Colorado School of Public Health  
Colorado State University (CSU)  
CSU Dept. of Health and Exercise Science  
CSU Franklin A. Graybill Statistics and Data Science Laboratory Services  
CSU Health Network  
CSU Kendall Reagan Nutrition Center  
DentaQuest  
Estes Park Library  
The Family Center/La Familia

FootHills Gateway, Inc.  
Fort Collins Police Services  
Fort Collins Police Services (Co-responder Program)  
Fort Collins Senior Center  
Front Range Clinic  
Front Range Community College  
Homeward 2020  
Homeward Alliance  
Housing Catalyst  
Larimer County Dept. of Health and Environment  
Larimer County Dept. of Human Services  
Larimer County District Attorney's Office  
Larimer County Division of Criminal Justice Services  
Larimer County Office on Aging  
Larimer County Sheriff's Office  
LEAP Coalition  
Loveland Community Life Center  
Mental Health and Substance Use Alliance of Larimer County  
Mosaic  
NoCoNet  
North Colorado Health Alliance  
North Range Behavioral Health

Northern Colorado Collaborative for Addiction and Recovery Support (NOCO-CARES)  
Northern Colorado Health Network  
Otero Corporation  
Poudre River Public Library District  
Poudre School District  
Rocky Mountain Family Physicians  
Rocky Mountain Health Plans  
Salud Family Health and Dental Centers  
Sharing the Care Campaign of Northern Colorado  
Spirit of Joy Church  
SummitStone Health Partners  
Thompson School District  
UCHealth  
UCHealth Aspen Club  
UCHealth Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Retail and Outpatient Pharmacy Services  
UCHealth Healthy Hearts Program  
UCHealth Medical Group  
UCHealth Mountain Crest Behavioral Health Center  
UCHealth Palliative Care  
University of Colorado Denver School of Public Affairs  
Weld County Dept. of Public Health and Environment

### Individuals

Addie Cutler  
Randy and Jean Hediger  
Sarah Lambome  
Sam Mallouf  
Claudia Parker  
Deanna Richardson  
Gary Schroeder  
Janet Sealey  
Lucy Stroud  
James Webster  
Anonymous (6)

## programs

### Connections

Answers, options, and support for adult mental health and substance use.  
425 W. Mulberry, #101 • 970-221-5551

### Child, Adolescent, and Young Adult Connections (CAYAC) Team

A service of the Connections program that focuses on answers, options, and support for youth and families. Early identification of areas of concern, assessment, and guidance for counseling, or other treatment of mental health and substance use for youth and families.  
425 W. Mulberry, #112 • 970-221-3308

### Community Impact Team

Organizes community efforts to make long-term, systemic changes that will significantly improve the health of the community, with a focus on mental health. • 970-224-5209

### Family Dental Clinic

Dental services for adults and children.  
202 Bristlecone • 970-416-5331

### HealthInfoSource.com

Your source for mental health and substance use resources and information in Larimer County.

### Heart Health Promotion

Nurse screening and consultation for cholesterol, blood pressure, and glucose. The Improving Blood Pressure Program offers sessions with an RN to learn self-monitoring techniques and how to discuss results with a medical provider. • 970-224-5209

### Integrated Primary Care/Mental Health Program

Providing behavioral health care in safety net clinics.  
970-224-5209

### Larimer Advance Care Planning Team

Free assistance and support to help people complete and share their advance care directives.  
120 Bristlecone • 970-482-1909

### Larimer Health Connect

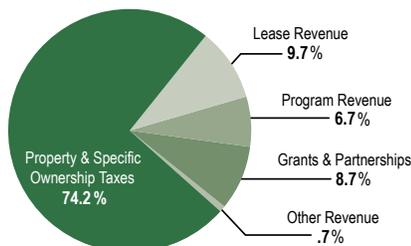
Helping people find the best options for health insurance to meet their family's health needs and budget; prescription assistance.  
144 N. Mason, Unit 7 • 970-472-0444

### Quit Tobacco Program

Support and resources to quit smoking, vaping, and/or chewing with the help of certified Tobacco Treatment Specialists.  
120 Bristlecone • 970-224-5209

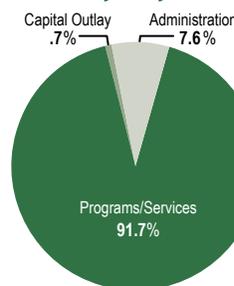
### 2020 revenues, total

\$11,872,642



### 2020 expenditures, total

\$11,401,882



### 2020 expenditures, by program

\$10,454,694

