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Connect for Health Colorado® Mission, Governance and Stakeholders

Connect for Health Colorado® is dedicated **to increasing access, affordability, and choice for individuals and small employers purchasing health insurance in Colorado**. We provide the only place where people who buy their own health insurance can compare their health insurance choices side by side.

We are designated by law as the only place to obtain **financial help buying private health insurance**. We also assist Coloradans enrolling in **Health First Colorado (Medicaid) and CHP+ programs**.

We assist enrollments and provide ongoing customer support through a state-wide network of:

- 21 enrollment centers staffed by Brokers and Assistors
- 19 organizations staffing assistance sites in 52 locations
- 27 organizations supporting 83 Certified Application Counselor sites
- 685 certified brokers throughout Colorado
- 296 Customer Service Center Representatives

Our work is overseen by the **Colorado Health Insurance Exchange Oversight Committee** and a 12-member board of directors appointed by legislative leadership and the governor.

The Connect for Health Colorado Board receives regular input from a **Board Advisory Group** whose 17-members include health insurance Brokers, Assistors, consumer advocates and industry representatives from the health insurance, technology and healthcare provider sectors.

We partner with **civic and business groups throughout the state**, including: the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce, Club 20, Action 22, Progressive 15, the Colorado Black Health Collaborative, the Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce, Colorado Rural Health Centers, the Colorado Association of School Boards, the Colorado Association of Health Underwriters, Colorado Covering Kids and Families, the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, the Southwest Colorado Small Business Development Center, the Western Reserve Association of Health Underwriters, 9Health Fair, the Piton Foundation, the Small Business Majority and the Western Colorado Latino Chamber of Commerce.

Connect for Health Colorado *does not* set, negotiate or approve rates for health insurance or for care providers. We do not regulate or manage health insurance companies.

Connect for Health Colorado® Leadership

Chief Executive Officer Kevin Patterson has led Connect for Health Colorado since April, 2015. He previously served as chief administrative officer and interim chief of staff to Gov. John Hickenlooper and has an extensive history of public service. Kevin has served as the interim executive director of three state agencies during leadership transitions, the Governor’s Office of Information Technology, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and the Governor’s Energy Office.

Connect for Health Colorado® History

Colorado’s path to building a health insurance marketplace started years before the passage of the Affordable Care Act. The history dates to 2006, when the General Assembly and Republican Governor Bill Owens established the non-partisan **Blue Ribbon Commission for Health Care Reform**, and charged it with “studying and establishing healthcare reform models to expand health care coverage and to decrease health care costs for Colorado residents.”

In 2008, under Democratic Governor Bill Ritter Jr., the Commission released its report with 32 recommendations, including the concept of a health insurance marketplace to create a “Connector” to assist individuals and small employers to understand and choose among insurance options.

Immediately after Congress passed the Affordable Care Act in March, 2010, Gov. Ritter issued an Executive Order establishing a state implementation committee. The report that came out of that group’s work was titled Implementing Health Care Reform: A Roadmap for Colorado. There was consensus in 10 community meetings around Colorado for building a health insurance marketplace. Participants recommended that the marketplace be established as a quasi-public entity – not a state agency – with a board of directors and a high level of public accountability and transparency.

After gaining critical support from consumer advocates, business organizations and other stakeholder groups, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 11-200 in **May 2011**, in bipartisan votes. It created the Colorado Health Benefit Exchange (COHBE) as a public, nonprofit entity and set the direction for governance and an open, competitive marketplace model.

Doing business as Connect for Health Colorado, COHBE concluded its sixth Open Enrollment on **Jan. 15, 2019**, with more than 170,000 people choosing coverage through the seven participating health insurance companies. Seventy-seven percent of those customers qualified for financial help.

The Colorado Health Institute (CHI) reported in **September 2015** that since Connect for Health Colorado opened for business in 2013 and the state expanded Medicaid, the state had pushed its rate of insured to an historic 93.3 percent, highest in state history and one of the highest levels in the country. When CHI repeated the study in 2017, it confirmed a slightly higher rate of coverage and concluded that the state had achieved a “new normal.”

Connect for Health Colorado remains committed to driving that rate further upward by working to expand access, affordability and choice in healthcare coverage for every corner of Colorado.