

January 28, 2011

President:

Frank Alexander,
Boulder County

Executive Director Sue Birch
Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing
1570 Grant Street
Denver, CO 80203

Vice President:

Donna Rohde,
Otero County

2nd Vice President:

Lezlie Mayer,
La Plata County

Executive Director Reggie Bicha
Colorado Department of Human Services
1575 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203

Treasurer:

Larry Henderson,
Alamosa County

Dear Executive Director Birch and Executive Director Bicha:

Secretary:

Cindy Dicken,
Clear Creek County

On behalf of all of the members of the Colorado Human Services Directors Association (CHSDA), welcome to your new leadership positions in Colorado's health and human services system. CHSDA looks forward to developing a strong and meaningful partnership with you both, and with your teams, as we move forward together in 2011. CHSDA shares your belief that an integrated system of health and human service delivery is critical to meet the needs of Colorado's most vulnerable citizens. Integrated systems of care provide untold benefits to families and communities and focus resources in front-end prevention activities that promote better outcomes, reduce overall costs, and limit the need for high-cost intensive intervention.

Past President:

Cheryl Ternes,
Arapahoe County

Largest County:

Pat Wilson Pheanious,
County and County of Denver

In alignment with this belief, we formally request that all applications from the Colorado Program Eligibility and Application Kit (PEAK) online benefit application be sent to local county eligibility offices where they can be screened for the entirety of their needs. We do not support the bifurcation of health and human service benefits that would occur if select applications are sent to a private for-profit vendor rather than to the local county office. Counties would continue to be able to voluntarily refer cases to an overflow processing unit, as has been done in the past.

Northwest Region:

Marie Peer,
Moffat County

Northeast Region:

Cathy Robinson,
Elbert County

Metro Region:

Lynn Johnson,
Jefferson County

Southeast Region:

Jose Mondragon,
Pueblo County

Southwest Region:

Tracey Garchar,
Mesa County

Colorado PEAK was designed with the intention of providing online access to integrated health and human service delivery in Colorado. PEAK offers a single entry point where Coloradans can screen themselves and apply for *both* the health and human service benefits they need to stabilize their lives and families. Contrary to the intended purpose of PEAK, the current plan for implementation requires that applications for medical only programs submitted via PEAK not be sent to county eligibility offices where they can be screened for the entirety of their needs, but instead, applications will be diverted to MAXIMUS, a private vendor, for eligibility determination and ongoing case management.

San Luis Valley Region:

Jeannie Norris,
Saguache County

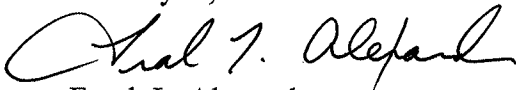
The plan does not support integrated services nor does it build upon Colorado's strong system of local service delivery. In fact, subcontracting eligibility determination would hurt Colorado families in multiple ways:

- Benefits would be bifurcated and instead of receiving complete wrap-around services designed to complement health coverage, including screening for all public health, nutrition and financial assistance benefits, clients would be exclusively screened for Medicaid and/or CHP+.
- Clients would receive medical coverage in a vacuum, void of the wider system of support county offices provide including referrals to local, community based services such as Head Start, housing assistance, workforce development, mental health and substance abuse treatment programs.
- Families enrolled in multiple benefit programs would be forced to navigate two systems, creating confusion and doubling the effort for clients to obtain and maintain their enrollment in multiple health and human service programs.
- Colorado's county-based system of integrated health and human service delivery would be weakened as scarce public dollars would instead be diverted from the existing system to a separate private for-profit company.

Moreover, splintering the delivery of health and human service programs would forfeit the strong position Colorado currently stands with regard to the implementation of federal health reform. Section 1561 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Affordable Care Act) specifies the creation of modern electronic systems and processes that allow a consumer to seamlessly obtain and maintain the full range of available health coverage and other human services benefits, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).¹ Counties have been on the forefront of integrated health and human services. Health reform and CO PEAK are extensions of this philosophy of integrated service deliver in Colorado.

The spirit of **Executive Order D 2011-005** promotes collaboration between state and county entities to ensure that the actions we take with Colorado's limited resources continually improve and build upon our existing system of exceptional integrated health and human service delivery. **By choosing to direct all PEAK applications to local county offices and screening them for all health and human service benefits, we will strengthen our existing integrated delivery system thereby ensuring Coloradans receive the health, nutrition and financial self-sufficiency benefits they need to thrive while simultaneously positioning Colorado well for the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.**

Thank you,



Frank L. Alexander
President, CHSDA

CC: Leah Lewis, Acting State CIO, Governor's Office of Information Technology
Steve Fowler, CBMS Director, Governor's Office of Information Technology

¹ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Retrieved on October 4, 2010, from <http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt?open=512&mode=2&objID=3161>