

HEALTHIER™  
COLORADO

# BOLDLY FORWARD



2016 ANNUAL REPORT

# A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**S**o much of what needs to be changed in health public policy remains the same because there are powerful interests propping up the status quo. Being true advocates for the health of Coloradans requires taking on industries and actors that have more money and fewer scruples than we do. We relish this responsibility, and it showed in 2016.

We took on the soda industry in passing the nation's second ever voter-approved sugary drinks tax. The tobacco industry had to spend nine times what our side did in fending off a statewide tobacco tax that would have improved and saved lives. We took on the pharmaceutical industry at the state legislature in an effort to tame the rising cost of prescription drugs.

Sometimes changing the status quo requires blaring a light on problems that aren't given the attention they need. Mental health and addiction are challenges affecting our entire state, but there are many communities for whom help is especially too far out of reach, particularly rural ones. That's why we spent 2 days walking the 156 mile distance from three of these communities to the nearest place where local residents can receive mental health services.

The second year of our journey as an organization was bold. We forged this path on function, not fashion. Realizing positive change in population health necessitates demanding the consideration that public health deserves in public policy. In 2016, we moved the health interests of regular Coloradans even closer to front and center.



**Jake Williams**  
*Executive Director*  
Healthier Colorado



## Our Mission

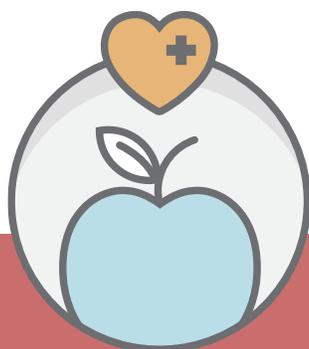
Healthier Colorado is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to raising the voices of Coloradans in the public policy process to improve the health of our state's residents. We believe that every Coloradan should have a fair chance at living a healthy life. The people of Colorado are our constituency, and Healthier Colorado aims to make meaningful improvements throughout our state's diverse communities.

# OUR FOCUS AREAS

Launched in 2014, Healthier Colorado was founded with a policy scope that spans all of health. We do not represent a particular stakeholder or narrow interest. The people of Colorado are our constituency. To best serve the interest of Coloradans, in 2015, we decided to pick three priorities within the vast field of health toward which we deploy our finite resources. Our process to pick our newfound issue priorities included health data analysis, opinion research, statewide conversations, and an analysis of where our resources compliment, rather than duplicate, those of our health advocacy partners to make a decisive impact.

## 1

### Reduce obesity and related chronic disease



Healthier Colorado seeks to reduce obesity and related chronic disease. Colorado's adults are famously the nation's least obese, but our children rank significantly lower. Residents with lower socioeconomic status, non-white populations (especially Latinos and African Americans), and certain geographic areas (especially rural ones) have higher rates obesity and related disease. We focus on the twin components to the prevention and reduction of obesity: physical activity and nutrition.

## 2

### Improve mental & behavioral health



1 in 5 Coloradans needs mental or behavioral health services, yet less than one-third of them receive care. Colorado's mental and behavioral health outcomes are, in many cases, alarmingly poor. Therefore, Healthier Colorado aims to improve mental and behavioral health in Colorado. We believe that every Coloradan should have access to quality mental and behavioral health services that are affordable and integrated on equal footing with physical health within our health system. We pursue policy change on mental and behavioral health that improves Coloradans' quality of life, avoids premature death, and prevents adverse childhood experiences.

## 3

### Address population-level health disparities



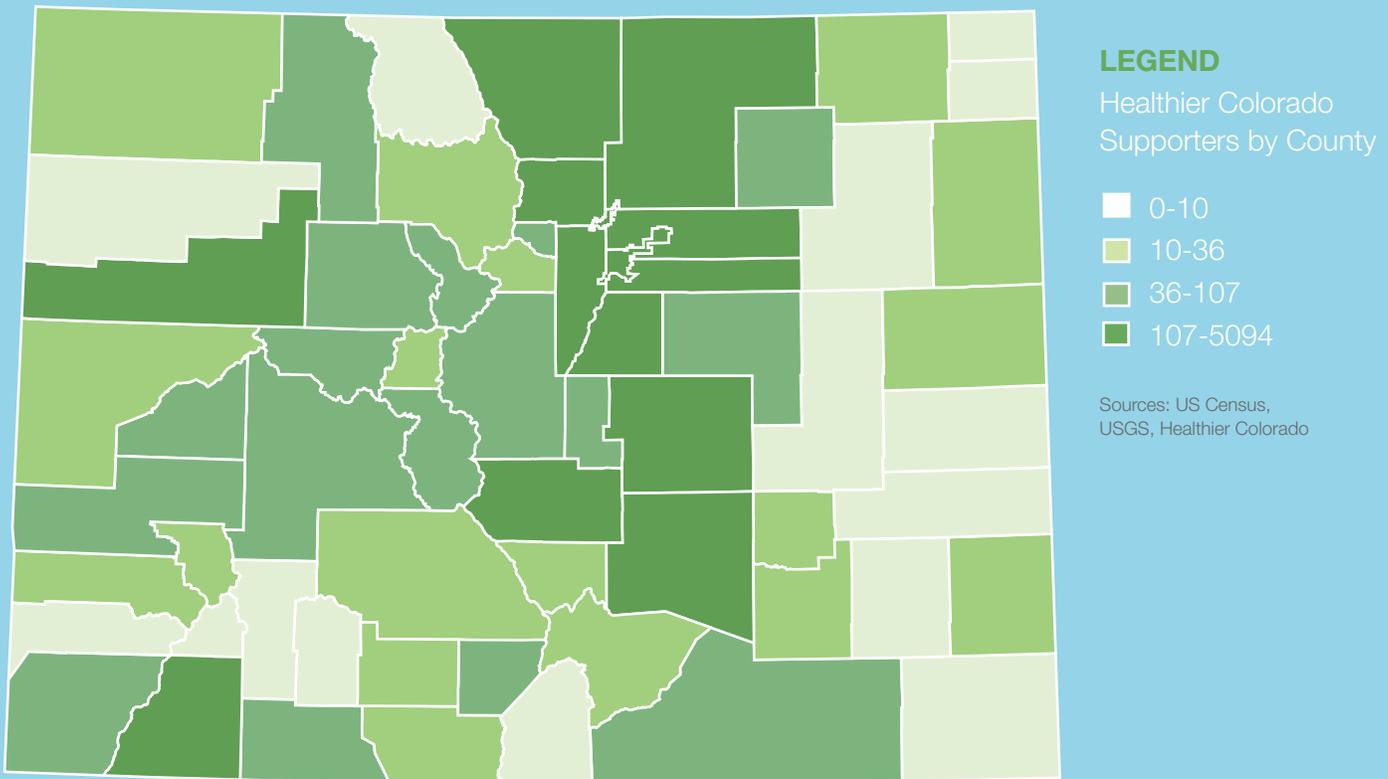
Healthier Colorado seeks to reduce health disparities on the basis of socioeconomic status, race and geography. We believe that a person's health status should not be dictated by how much money they make, the color of their skin or where they live. Unfortunately, there are pronounced health differences between Coloradans on these bases. We focus on disparities within the areas outlined above, in addition to emerging opportunities to make a meaningful difference in other areas.



# GIVING A VOICE TO ALL COLORADANS

**E**very Coloradan should have the opportunity to lead a healthy life, where you live, your income level and the color of your skin should not determine what opportunities are available. We believe that getting a statewide perspective is critical to the success of ensuring healthy outcomes for all individuals. Weighing in on the decisions made by elected officials is one of the best ways to ensure each individual can impact this opportunity. In order to successfully move the needle on public health campaigns against powerful and well-funded industries, we must utilize the one resource the opposition does not have—we must give a voice to all our supporters in every part of the state. In 2016, Healthier Colorado engaged 60,000 people to ensure every person had the opportunity to lend their voice to the legislative process.

## Healthier Colorado Supporters in Colorado



# 2016 CAMPAIGNS

**F**rom our inception through 2016, Healthier Colorado supported over 25 campaigns. We have mobilized more than 60,000 Coloradans to take an action in support of at least one of the priority campaigns listed below. In 2016 alone, nearly 40,000 individuals took action supporting the mental and physical health of the citizens of Colorado. These actions have helped educate decision makers and in many cases aided in propelling campaigns across the finish line, resulting in a positive impact on the daily lives of all Coloradans. These campaigns are never easy, as our opposition typically has deep pockets and powerful lobbyists. We do not shy away from these challenges, because we know that we have two things they do not: the voices of support of Coloradans and campaigns rooted in the important mission of creating a healthier Colorado.

## Legislative Campaigns

### Prescription Drug Price Transparency

To address the rising cost of prescription drugs, we supported legislation that would have required pharmaceutical companies who produce drugs costing more than \$50,000 a year or per treatment cycle to submit basic information about the costs involved with developing the drug. This bill would not have required pharmaceutical companies to provide any proprietary information, but would have increased transparency around industry pricing practices. Protecting consumers and ensuring lifesaving medication is affordable was our goal. Unfortunately, fierce opposition from the pharmaceutical lobby kept the bill from becoming law, but the bold campaign shed light on the importance of transparency, making this an ongoing topic of consideration leading into 2017.



### Tobacco Registry Bill

Healthier Colorado worked with our tobacco control partners to kill a harmful registry bill that would have created huge loopholes for damaging tobacco industry practices. The bill would have created a statewide tobacco registry for retailers of cigarettes. The retail industry claimed the self-regulation was meant to increase compliance and decrease the number of bad actors willing to sell to minors. While on its surface this seemed like a good idea, past experience showed that the proposal would actually lead to an increase in children accessing tobacco by putting in place a policy with no teeth or enforcement mechanism. Besides making it easier for bad actors to sell to children, the bill would have taken money from the prevention fund, which is a proven way to educate children on the harms of smoking, thus reducing consumption. It would have also tied the hands of local governments keeping them from licensing tobacco products other than cigarettes. Putting the health and safety of our children first was a top priority of ours during this fight and ultimately we were successful at keeping this harmful policy from becoming law in Colorado.

## Ballot Campaigns



### Tobacco Tax

Healthier Colorado, along with tobacco control advocates, banded together to reduce tobacco consumption among low income populations and children by asking the voters to approve a tax increase of \$1.75 per pack of cigarettes and a tax of 22% on other tobacco products. From the start of the campaign, the tobacco industry made it clear that they were willing to invest whatever was needed to influence voters to vote against the measure. Undeterred by this threat, we charged forward, knowing that fighting for this life-saving policy was the right thing to do. The No campaign, was funded primarily by Altria—the makers of Marlboro—at over \$17 million. While ultimately we did not

successfully pass the measure in 2016, advocates took pride knowing the industry had to invest 9 times the amount of money we did to keep the measure from passing. Additionally, by not being deterred by the industry from the start, we were able to lay ground work educating voters and building a strong coalition that will set us up for future success against the tobacco industry.

### Sugary Drink Tax

Sugary drinks are a leading contributor to the obesity epidemic, and taxing these products is a proven way to reduce their consumption. That's why we responded to the call of community members in Boulder to support a tax on sugary drinks. Healthier Colorado worked with the local Boulder community to increase the cost of sugary drinks and using the generated revenue to invest in programs increasing physical activity and increasing access to nutritious food and beverages for children.

Alongside Boulder's community residents, Healthier Colorado took on the beverage industry's multiple attempts at fighting this through legal attempts and were victorious. We won this campaign with perseverance, strategic use of resources, collaboration with the Boulder community and the tried and true tactics of a successful campaign—one-on-one voter contact. We maintained a positive message throughout, not resorting to attacks on the 'No' campaign despite their tendency to use that tactic on us. We ran a strong, bold campaign. In November of 2016 this work paid off when the city of Boulder Residents passed the highest sugary drink tax in the nation, by an 8 point margin.



## Additional Policy Campaigns



### Compact Bill

Healthier Colorado supported legislation that authorized Colorado to join a medical licensure interstate compact. As a result, the licensing process has been streamlined for physicians who are currently licensed in one of the compact member states and who wish to practice in Colorado. Joining the compact will help draw medical talent to our state and is a small step toward alleviating some of the provider shortages in underserved rural communities.

### Hospital Provider Fee

Healthier Colorado supported enterprising the Hospital Provider fee, which would have given the fee enterprise fund status. This would free both money collected from the fee paid by the hospitals, and the federal match, from counting against the cap imposed by the Tax Payers Bill of Rights (TABOR). In turn, this would have opened up more general fund money to spend on things like education and transportation. Despite robust coalition efforts, the bill failed to pass in 2016.

### Tax Credit for Rural Doctors

Research shows that doctors who receive training in rural areas are more likely to practice in rural areas. To increase the number of doctors practicing in rural Colorado, we supported a bill that made a small contribution towards easing this shortage by creating a tax credit for doctors in rural areas who take on the mentorship of a medical student. In order to qualify, doctors have to be providing primary care in a county with 20,000 or less permanent residents. This bill was signed into law.

### LARC

Along with many of our partners, Healthier Colorado supported a line item in the state budget that extended the state's long acting reversible contraception (LARC) program for another year. This important program has been extremely successful and is credited with lowering the state's teen pregnancy rate by 51%. The funding of this program for another year is a significant public health victory.



### SNAP fix

We once again worked with our healthy eating, active living partners to support the successful passage of legislation which improves the overall administration of food assistance programs in Colorado. Food assistance programs are one important component of ensuring that Colorado's families have access to nutritious food. The bill requires that federal program measures for the administration of SNAP are met and requires the Colorado Department of Health and Human Services to create a quality improvement program to help improve administration of food assistance programs. The bill also creates a study to look at best practices and opportunities for efficiencies in counties across the state.



### Larimer County Ballot Initiative

As part of our Partnerships in Local Advocacy (PiLA) program, Healthier Colorado provided financial support for a ballot initiative in Larimer County that would have created a dedicated source of revenue for a local mental health center. Larimer County is lacking in adequate behavioral health supports and infrastructure to provide treatment and care for their residents. The measure was a bold and innovative solution to a problem they were facing. Unfortunately, this ballot initiative did not pass, even though it had strong support from many local elected officials and those in the health community.

## PILA

The state legislature and Washington, D.C. are not the only places where we can make impactful change to health policy. Often solutions to the problems we are facing begin with local solutions, being adopted by local governments and eventually being replicated in other localities or as a statewide law. This year Healthier Colorado launched our Partnerships in Local Advocacy program (PiLA). PiLA is Healthier Colorado's effort to partner with local communities in order to enact health policy change at the county, city, special district, or school district level.

The call went out and anyone from a community—whether they were a concerned resident, an organization, or an elected official—could apply with a campaign idea. Our first call for applications garnered eleven applicants and we were able to move forward with three campaigns. We supported a sugary drink tax campaign in Boulder, a ballot initiative that would have increased Larimer County sales tax to pay for a local mental health center, and a Denver campaign to improve the city's sidewalks. We successfully passed the ballot initiative in Boulder, the Larimer ballot initiative was defeated, and the Denver sidewalks work is ongoing.



## Launch of the Fellowship



In 2016 we launched a new program—an Advocacy Fellowship focused on developing the next generation of public policy leaders by giving individuals hands-on experience and professional development. This is a program that we hadn't yet seen in the health public policy realm. In June, the inaugural class hit the ground running collecting signatures in Boulder to put the sugary drink tax on the ballot. Their contribution to the Healthy Boulder Kids campaign continued throughout the summer and fall and played a huge role in our victory. They hosted Healthier Colorado's first ever station at Bike to Work Day—serving the commuters breakfast and getting signatures for the statewide tobacco tax ballot measure. And for their final project,

they took the lead in organizing our In Our Shoes action. The measure of the success of the program can be seen in what the fellows do after the fellowship. One has solidified her desire to continue a path forward to medical school while others have chosen to run for public office and advocate for public policy change in Denver and in rural Colorado.



Increasing access to mental and behavioral health services is one of our top priorities. This is a complicated and heavy lift and one of the first steps to improving access is creating awareness. This year we did just that. For our “In Our Shoes” action, the Healthier Colorado staff ventured on a two-day journey, walking a total of 156 miles from three rural communities to the nearest mental health treatment center to symbolize what it would be like to experience a mental health crisis in a town with no treatment center nearby. We walked from Parachute to Grand Junction, Cortez to Durango, and Cañon City to Pueblo.



Not surprisingly, while walking along these rural highways, we received the attention of curious bikers and other passersby. Every person we talked to along our route knew someone who was affected by mental illness and encouraged us to keep trekking. This innovative action earned attention in the media—nine hits including the Spanish-speaking market. We will continue to draw attention to this issue and take the bold steps necessary to ensure that all Coloradans have access to mental and behavioral health care.



“Every person we talked to along our route knew someone who was affected by mental illness and encouraged us to keep trekking.”

# LEADERSHIP

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## Staff

As of May 2017

**Jake Williams**, *Executive Director*  
**Cheryl Fellows**, *Contract CFO*  
**Hillary Jorgensen**, *Director of Policy Change*  
**Kate Stigberg**, *Director of Activism*  
**Susanna Mizer**, *Director of Public Affairs*  
**Flora Welsh**, *Communications Manager*  
**Kyle Helton**, *Spring 2017 Fellow*  
**Natasha Dickson**, *Spring 2017 Fellow*  
**Jordan Anthony**, *Spring 2017 Fellow*  
**Angelina Sierra-Sandaval**, *Fall 2016 Fellow*  
**Dante Velez**, *Fall 2016 Fellow*  
**Claire Oschsner**, *Fall 2016 Fellow*  
**Crystal Murillo**, *Fall 2016 Fellow*



Angelina Sierra-Sandaval, Hillary Jorgensen, Dante Velez, Kate Stigberg, Claire Oschsner, Flora Welsh, Jake Williams, Crystal Murillo

## Board

As of May 2017

**Jacqueline Brown, RN, MSN**  
*Integrated Care Director*  
Southeast Health Group

**Jim García, MPA**  
*Executive Director*  
Clínica Tepeyac

**Shepard Nevel**  
*President and CEO*  
LiveWell Colorado

**Courtney Cuff**  
*President and CEO*  
The Gill Foundation

**John Marshall**  
*VP for Student Services*  
Colorado Mesa University

**Crystal Potter Rivera**  
*Manager of Foundation Relations*  
Denver Health Foundation

**Mike Dino**  
*Senior Policy Advisor*  
Squire Patton Boggs, LLP

**Pete Maysmith**  
*Executive Director*  
Colorado Conservation Voters

**Chris Watney**  
*President*  
Colorado Children's Campaign

# FINANCIALS

\$ 000s	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
<b>Revenue</b>			
Donations & Grants	\$ 640	\$ 0	\$ 640
Investment Revenue	\$ 399	\$ 387	\$ 786
Service income	\$ 155	\$ 0	\$ 155
Released from Restriction	\$ 726	\$ (726)	\$ 0
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,919</b>	<b>\$ (339)</b>	<b>\$ 1,580</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Program	\$ 1,482		\$ 1,482
Management & General	\$ 341		\$ 341
Fundraising	\$ 96		\$ 96
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,919</b>		<b>\$ 1,919</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ (339)</b>	<b>\$ (339)</b>
<i>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</i>	\$ 1	\$ 14,589	\$ 14,589
<i>Net Assets, End of Year</i>	\$ 1	\$ 14,250	\$ 14,250

## Expenses

Fundraising 5%

Management & General 18%

Program 77%





THE FUND FOR A  
**HEALTHIER**  
COLORADO

In July of 2015, the IRS certified the tax status of a new 501(c)(3) organization, The Fund for a Healthier Colorado. This new sister organization has a mission that parallels Healthier Colorado's and its Board of Directors are appointed by the board of Healthier Colorado. The Fund's first endeavor was a partnership with Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation, to build a robust statewide network of fluoride supporters and spokespeople. Community water fluoridation has been hailed as one of the ten most important public health achievements in the last century, but many communities across the state continue to face attempts to eliminate their water fluoridation programs.

Healthier Colorado's goal for the network is to show strong, statewide support for the practice of fluoridation as well as provide our partners working on the issue with messaging training and useful communication materials. As part of this work, we also developed a Colorado specific fluoride facts website [www.coloradowaterfluoridation.org](http://www.coloradowaterfluoridation.org), which serves as an important resource for the average Coloradan searching for more information about community water fluoridation. We will continue to build the network in 2017 and also continue to make all of our messaging resources available to other organizations and individuals who wish to support community water fluoridation.



## Board

As of May 2017

### **Mike Dino**

*Senior Policy Advisor*  
Squire Patton Boggs, LLP

### **Hollie Velasquez Horvath**

*Director of Community Affairs*  
Xcel Energy

### **Theresa Trujillo**

*Community Partner*  
The Colorado Trust

# FINANCIALS

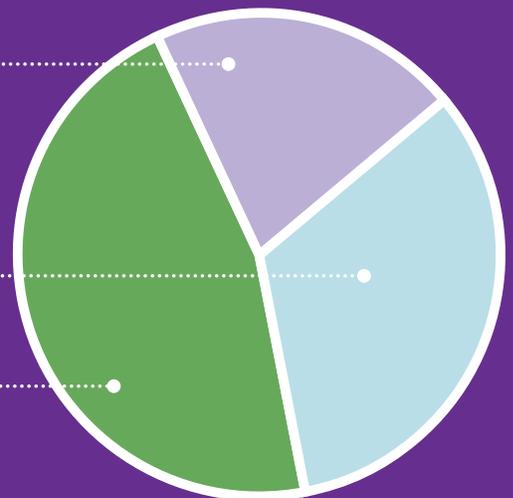
\$ 000s	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
<b>Revenue</b>			
Donations & Grants	\$ 34	\$ 0	\$ 34
Released from Restriction	\$ 135	\$ 135	\$ 0
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 169</b>	<b>\$ (135)</b>	<b>\$ 34</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Program	\$ 66		\$ 66
Management & General	\$ 47		\$ 47
Fundraising	\$ 31		\$ 31
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 144</b>		<b>\$ (144)</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 25</b>	<b>\$ (135)</b>	<b>\$ (110)</b>
<i>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</i>	\$ (34)	\$ 135	\$ 101
<i>Net Assets, End of Year</i>	\$ (9)	\$ 0	\$ (9)

## Expenses

Fundraising 21%

Management & General 33%

Program 46%





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