



# SEEING IS BELIEVING.

Healthier Colorado's 2018 Annual Report



# A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**F**ive years ago, I presented the concept of a newly launched organization called "Healthier Colorado" to a prominent leader in the health field. I said that while we would engage in a high-level of political activity, we would be genuinely bipartisan. I explained that we'd get masses of Coloradans to take action on a wide range of health issues. I claimed that we would improve public policy to make a real difference in people's lives.

"That's make believe, it'll never work," he said.

Coloradans have since turned the fantastical idea of Healthier Colorado into a reality, making us the state's largest health advocacy organization, with over 70,000 members, and supporting a string of victories that have improved health in Colorado. In 2018, we won all 12 of the local ballot measures we supported. At the state legislature, we passed policies that included making school lunch available for more low-income kids, expanding access to mental health care for youth, and offering incentives to bring health professionals to underserved areas with an emphasis on rural Colorado. We also publicly released a new state legislative scorecard to let voters know where legislators stood on the broad range of legislation on which Healthier Colorado took a position.

We used that scorecard to help inform another new activity in 2018: engaging in candidate elections. Healthier Colorado believes that regular Coloradans should have the same type of political resources deployed on their behalf in the interest of public health as the professional and corporate interests who

use money to influence the political process to further their agendas. That is why we used our financial resources to support candidates, including both Republicans and Democrats, who stand up for health. Fifty-one of the fifty-three state legislative candidates we supported were victorious. We also produced an online guide for voters outlining the positions of the candidates for Governor on health issues, and released statewide poll results showing strong majority support among voters for our policy priorities.

Last year, like every year, we toured the state to listen to the concerns of local communities, trained new activists, and plugged them into the action. In 2018, our members made over 52,000 contacts with public policy decision-makers to propel our campaigns. Our full-time canvass team also completed their first full year of knocking on doors and striking up conversations on street corners to get more Coloradans invested in our organization. The source of our magic lies in our connection to real Coloradans.

I can't really blame that naysayer from five years ago. An organization like ours had never been seen before. Our original vision of what's possible, however, has indeed become a reality. The results of our unique endeavor called "Healthier Colorado" for the year 2018 are contained in this report, and seeing is believing.



**Jake Williams**  
Executive Director  
Healthier Colorado

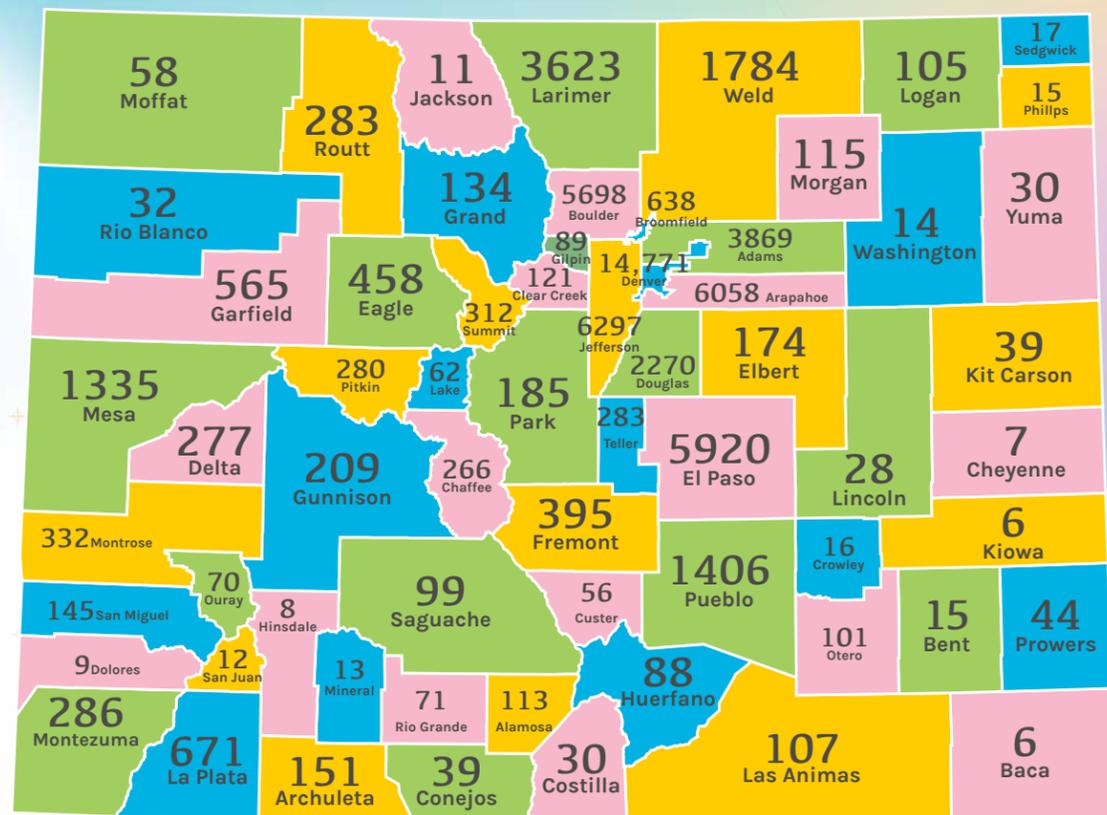


# OUR MISSION

Every Coloradan should have the opportunity to live a healthy life. One's location, income level, race, ethnicity, or gender should not determine their well-being—because, after all, basic levels of health are the first thing every person needs in order to lead a dignified and fulfilling life. Health is fundamental.

We're unique in our approach to moving the needle on public policy campaigns. We are the only health advocacy organization in the country that deploys the full range of political activity—from political giving, to grassroots organizing, to running an in-house canvass to further our mission. We believe in the power of public policy and in the power of voters being informed participants in their democracy. Mixing politics and health is uncommon work, but we're comfortable being a bit of a unicorn.

## Healthier Colorado Supporters



\*This map only includes members who have elected to share their county information.

# OUR FOCUS AREAS

The people of Colorado are our constituency, and we take this responsibility seriously. To determine where to direct our resources and advocacy, we conduct a thorough and inclusive analysis using health data, assessments from the field, conversations with statewide stakeholders, and strategic analysis from policy professionals. Given these evaluations, we have determined three focus areas for our work.



### Reduce obesity and related chronic disease:

Healthier Colorado seeks to reduce obesity and related chronic disease, and we place an emphasis on childhood obesity and population disparities within this issue area. Colorado's adults are famously among the nation's healthiest, but our children rank significantly lower.

Healthier Colorado fights for the communities that face the most inequitable barriers to their health. We focus on the twin components to the prevention and reduction of obesity: physical activity and nutrition.



### Improve mental & behavioral health:

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 (ACEs). We have made this category a priority for a number of reasons, including the fact that Colorado ranks poorly on several mental and behavioral health indicators.



### 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, their ethnicity, 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. These opportunities may include, but are not limited to, progress on oral health, tobacco use, and housing.



# LEGISLATIVE WINS

**S**ince 2014, Healthier Colorado has supported over 40 legislative campaigns. We mix ingredients to create our magic potion to pass bills through our legislature: grassroots activism, direct lobbying, and support from advocates from all parts of Colorado—from the Western Slope, to the Eastern Plains, to our major urban areas.

Each action taken by our 70,000 members has been crucial in educating decision-makers and helping to propel these campaigns over the finish line. Our campaigns are rarely easy. In fighting for health, we are often up against moneyed interests with superior financial resources. But we do not shy away from these challenges, because we have two things that our opposition does not possess: the voices of support from thousands of Coloradans, and campaigns rooted in the public's interest in creating a healthier Colorado.

Our members took over **52,000** actions with us in 2018 alone!

## HERE ARE A FEW HIGHLIGHTS:

### SB18-013

#### Expand Child Nutrition School Lunch Protection Act

Before this bill, many students who qualified for the federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program would have to pay a fee for each lunch. For many families, even that small fee was too much. Families often ended up in collections and students would choose not to eat when they couldn't afford that fee. Several years ago, Colorado passed a bill to remedy this by having the state cover the small fee for students in kindergarten through 5th grade. Senate Bill 18-013 increased the number of kids who receive a free lunch, expanding the program to students through their 8th grade year. This bill helps ensure that every hungry kid is getting to eat, providing the fuel they need to excel in school.



### HB18-1094

#### Children Youth Mental Health Treatment Act

Mental health services are often not covered by private insurance and children covered by Medicaid can have very few options for care. Prior to 2009, some parents who were unable to afford the expenses associated with treatment were faced with the difficult decision of giving up their parental rights so that their child could access residential mental health treatment through the state. In 2009, the Colorado legislature authorized the Child Mental Health Treatment Act. The bill sought to assist children and youth with mental health needs without splitting families apart. The program proved to be a success. In 2018, the legislature updated the program to make it more expansive and streamlined. Through increased funding and an updated application process, more children will now be covered.



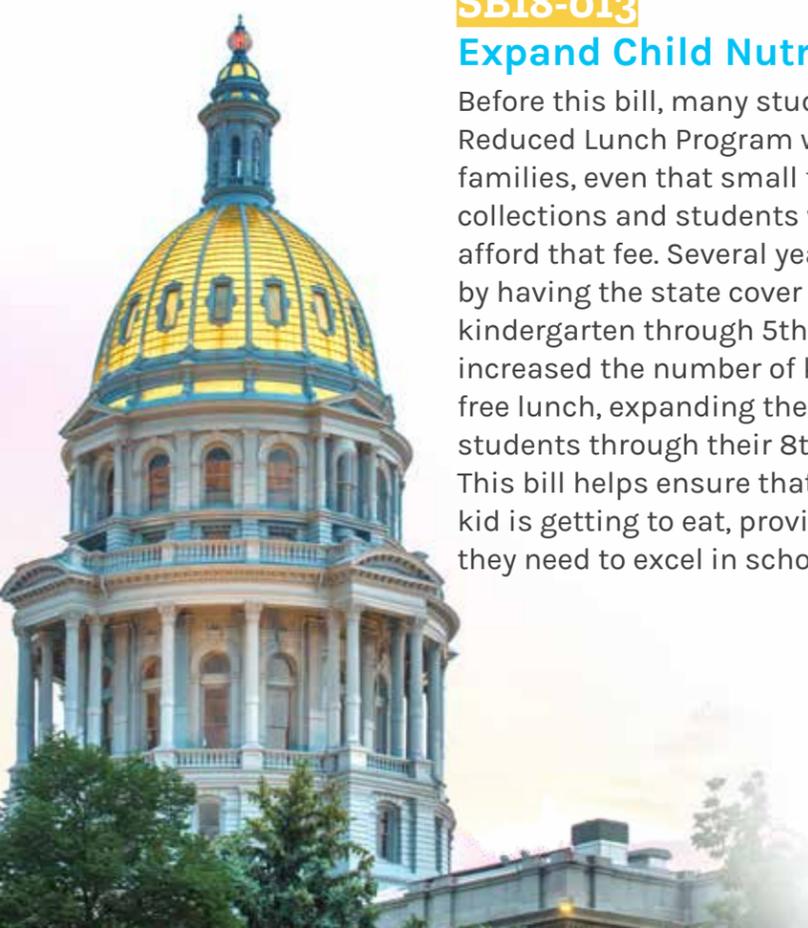
### SB18-085

#### Financial Incentives for Education in Rural Areas

Rural communities in Colorado face serious barriers in accessing local health care providers. This bill increases the number of stipends available to teachers in rural parts of the state as they seek national certification or other professional development. By maintaining additional options for employment, communities are more appealing for physicians to live and practice in, helping lift those communities on multiple economic fronts at once.



While we are proud of the legislation we campaigned for that did pass, there were also many bills we supported that failed. Making structural changes is a long game that takes diligence and patience. That's why our mission is a movement because we recognize that the nature of passing policy is one that requires perseverance. Some of the most important work we did in 2018 was slow work: building coalitions, talking to Coloradans all over the state about our goals, and setting the groundwork for big ideas in 2019. We had 25,000 actions from our activists during the 2018 legislative session, and saw massive growth in our membership. Despite the fact that some of our bills failed, we continue to fight for the issues that Coloradans care about most, and that's some of the work we're most proud of.



# PARTNERSHIPS IN LOCAL ADVOCACY (PiLA)

Our Partnerships in Local Advocacy program, or PiLA, is a unicorn in and of itself. Like Healthier Colorado, it approaches health advocacy in a unique way, and its results can produce quite a bit of magic. With PiLA, locally generated ideas are at the forefront; it's our way of giving communities the tools and resources they need to implement big policy ideas to improve the health of their residents.

We know Coloradans are the experts on what their community needs locally, so we act as a partner, not as an interloper, to help make these grassroots-driven campaigns successful. Our work in 2018 was multi-faceted: we facilitated traditional voter outreach activities, acted as strategic counsel, and provided financial support to our partners. We are proud to have had a **100 percent win rate in 2018**, with all 12 of the campaigns we supported passing at the ballot.

## Friends of South Park Ambulance District

In May, the people of the South Park Ambulance District voted to enact a small property tax increase to launch and fund a community paramedic program. The district spans over 1,500 miles and serves about 8,000 full-time residents. The new funds will cover additional staffing to ensure adequate ambulance crews are available for response and to update outdated medical technology.



## North Fork and Ute Pass Ambulance Districts

The way emergency services were funded in both North Fork and Ute Pass was unsustainable, with membership revenue no longer able to cover the expenses of operation. To pass a tax and mill levy, respectively, for the Ute Pass Ambulance District and the North Fork Ambulance District, Healthier Colorado sent a total of 15,982 pieces of mail, knocked on hundreds of doors, and facilitated hundreds of phone calls to ensure that residents and visitors have access to the emergency services they need, and to purchase a new ambulance.

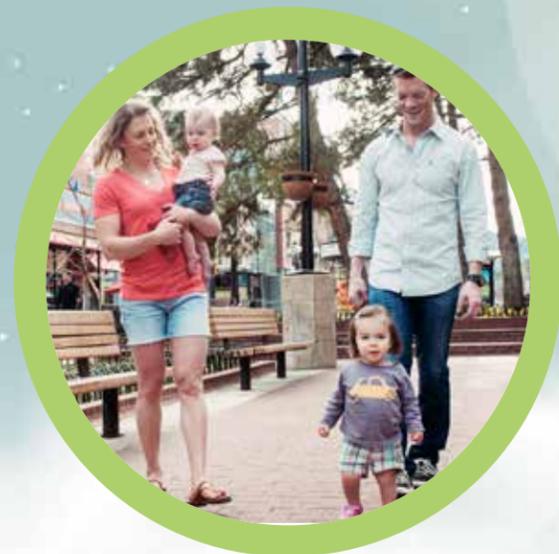


## Yes on 1A: Mental Health Matters

We helped pass a mill levy to fund mental health and addiction services in San Miguel County, which faces some of the starkest economic inequality in the state. The levy funds community-based mental health services and mental health counselors in schools, both of which are critical in an area where 1 in 6 high school students reported considering suicide within the last year. We were able to complement the campaign's voter outreach by sending over 6,000 pieces of direct mail.

## Healthy Kids, Healthy Boulder

In Boulder, we helped pass a measure that would allow the city of Boulder to keep all the revenue collected from the 2016 sugary drink tax. This revenue is used to ensure that all Boulder families have access to healthy foods and programs so they can live active lives. For round two in Boulder, we sent nearly 13,000 pieces of direct mail to voters and blanketed the town with digital ads.



## Yes on Avon Ballot 2B

Avon has been working to decrease tobacco use. Last fall, residents had the opportunity to raise the tobacco purchase age to 21 years old to prevent kids from starting smoking, and increase the tax on tobacco products—since taxing tobacco has been shown as one of the most effective ways to curb use. We spent \$7,500 on voter outreach, and helped the measure pass. The funds from the tax will be used for cessation and treatment programs in Avon.

We are proud to have had a **100 percent win rate in 2018**, with all 12 of our campaigns we supported passing at the ballot.



# LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD AND POLITICAL GIVING

**I**n 2018, we're especially proud to have produced Healthier Colorado's inaugural health-first legislative scorecard. It's the first and only in the country to cover all facets of health—from healthy eating and active living, to care in the doctor's office, and social determinants of health.

We tallied every vote, by every legislator, on every health-related bill on which we engaged—both for and against. We gave special credit to the lawmakers who stuck their neck out by sponsoring pro-health bills. We took credit away from the ones who planted a flag for legislation that would make it harder for Coloradans to live healthy lives.

We want our fellow Coloradans to know which legislators performed best on health issues. And we want our fellow Coloradans to consider this information when they cast their ballots and decide which lawmakers they'll send to the Capitol.

**Healthier Colorado spent over \$110,000 on legislative races and 51 of 53 candidates we supported won their races.**

## Political Giving

Special interests deploy resources to candidates to further their respective political agendas, sometimes to the detriment of public health. We believe that, at minimum, the public deserves to have resources expended on their behalf in the interest of their health as well. That's why we created an in-house canvass team that raises funds that we use to support pro-health political candidates, and we're the nation's only health-focused organization to do so.

Through our legislative scorecard, candidate questionnaires and more, we evaluated candidates to find the ones who were the most apt to act in the interest of the public's health. We then used those evaluations to strategically distribute resources to candidates in service of our mission. Healthier Colorado spent over \$110,000 on legislative races in 2018. We are proud to report that 51 of the 53 state legislative candidates we supported won their respective races.



*Pictured here Executive Director Jake Williams with Representative Chris Kennedy showing off his Care Access Award*



# HEALTHIER COLORADO'S SIGNATURE EVENTS

In 2018, we held three signature events that we will continue for years to come. We started off the year with our Legislative Reception to kick off session and remind decision-makers that health should be a priority. During the summer, we introduced the nation's first comprehensive health scorecard. Finally, we came together in November to celebrate our successes and enjoy a fantastic evening with our supporters and friends. It all added up to a year full of opportunities to engage with our members and supporters, where we could come together and feel inspired about the changes we are making for health.

## 2018 Legislative Reception

In January, we held our first-ever legislative reception. The event took place at the Governor's Mansion, and gave legislators and decision-makers the chance to convene to talk about the importance of passing pro-health policy. Our legislative reception is a bipartisan event, which was reflected in the impressive turnout from both Democratic and Republican members of the General Assembly who came to celebrate the exciting opportunities in the upcoming legislative session.



## 2018 Scorecard Reveal Event

In 2018, Healthier Colorado was proud to release our first Legislative Scorecard. This scorecard is the only one of its kind in the country; a unique way to analyze voting records on issues related to all facets of health. We released our scorecard at this event, and rewarded the 12 legislators who garnered perfect pro-health voting records with awards to recognize their achievements.



## 2018 Annual Event: Believe in Better

In November of 2018, we gathered 150 of our closest supporters for an evening of celebrating all the amazing things we accomplished throughout the year. In our most successful annual event to date, we raised money to further our fight in raising the voices of Coloradans and changing the policies to make those concerns a priority for decision-makers. Guests heard from New York Times best-selling author Baratunde Thurston, and his sister, health advocate Belinda Thurston during their hilarious on-stage conversation with our Executive Director Jake Williams.



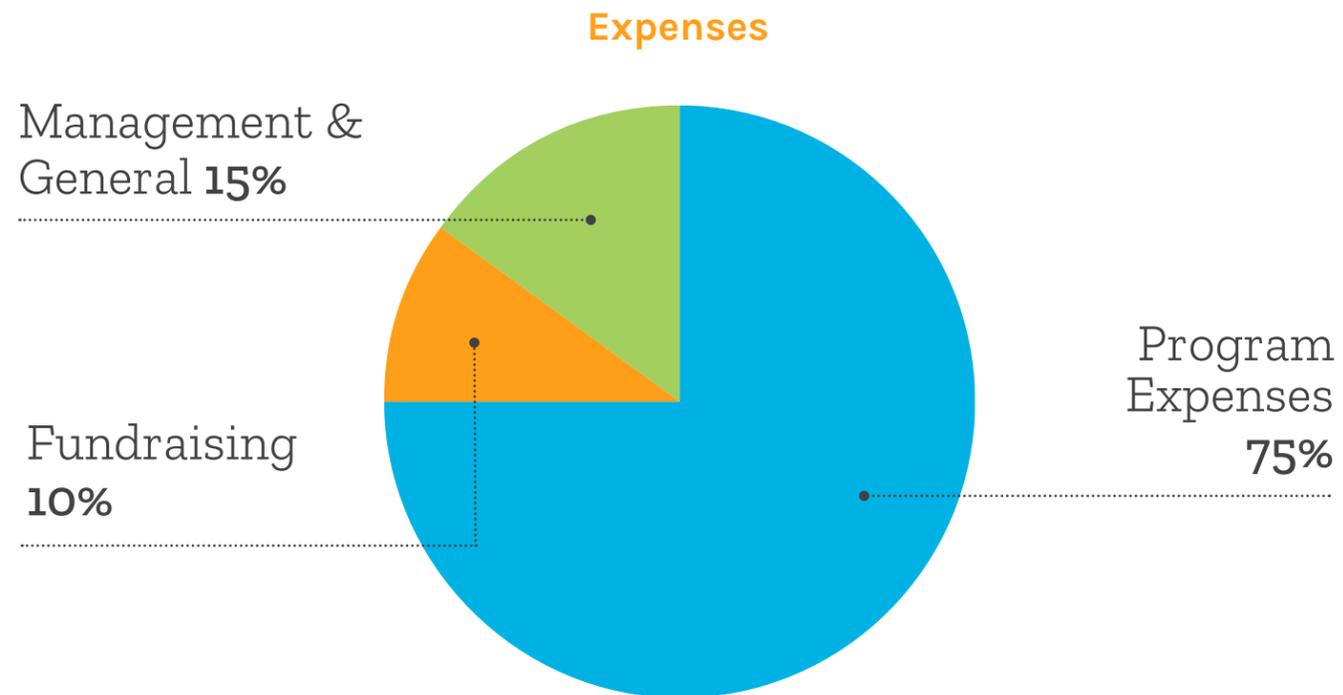
## We launched a podcast!

As Healthier Colorado has turned the fantastical into reality, we also launched a podcast that separates myth from fact. We named our podcast after an archetypal myth, that of George Washington's wooden teeth, as the project is focused on truth-telling about American health and politics.



In each episode, we shine a light on the American political process, and illuminate the misconceptions that cloud it. We debunk commonly-held beliefs, talk to the people making political and health change happen, and work to give listeners a connection to the politics, people, and laws changing our chance to live a healthy life. Oh, and did we mention Wooden Teeth broke into the top 25 of all nonprofit podcasts on Apple?

# 2018 FINANCIALS



\$ 000s	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restriction	Total
<b>Revenue</b>			
Donations & Grants	\$ 71		\$ 71
Investment Revenue	\$ 850	\$ (1,387)	\$ (537)
Service Income	\$ 323		\$ 323
Released from Restriction	\$ 2,813	\$ (2,813)	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$4,057</b>	<b>\$ (4,200)</b>	<b>\$ (143)</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Program	\$ 1,987		\$ 1,987
Management & General	\$ 405		\$ 405
Fundraising	\$ 258		\$ 258
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,650</b>		<b>\$ 2,650</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,407</b>	<b>\$ (4,200)</b>	<b>\$(2,793)</b>
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$ 28	\$ 15,405	\$ 15,433
Net Assets, End of Year	\$ 1,435	\$ 11,205	\$ 12,640



## STAFF

As of April 2019

From left to right:

**Alex Ray-Snyder**, *Canvass Team Member*  
**Chris Lessard**, *Canvass Director*  
**Julie Knowles**, *Executive Assistant*  
**Jake Williams**, *Executive Director*  
**Matt Pietrovito**, *Field Manager*  
**Alex Seminario**, *Canvass Team Member*  
**Emma Hennessey**, *Digital Strategy Manager*  
**Chelsea Stallings**, *Communications Manager*  
**Kate Stigberg**, *Senior Director of Activism*

**Susanna Mizer**, *Senior Director of Public Affairs*  
**Melanie Kesner**, *Community Organizer*  
**Jonah Harris**, *Canvass Team Member*  
**Jasmin Thibou**, *Organizing Fellow*  
**Hillary Jorgensen**, *Deputy Executive Director*  
**Paulina Castle**, *Canvass Team Member*  
**Andrea Stojsavljevic**, *Policy Manager*  
**Ashley Barrow**, *Development Director*  
**Reid Heard**, *Canvass Team Member*

## LEADERSHIP

### Board

As of May 2019

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

**Gwen Benevento**  
*Of Counsel*  
 Maven Law Group

**Courtney Cuff**  
*(Chair)*  
*Executive Director*  
 State Impact Project

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

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

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

**Pete Maysmith**  
*Senior Vice President of Campaigns*  
 League of Conservation Voters

**Crystal Potter Rivera**  
*(Vice Chair)*  
*Manager of Foundation Relations*  
 Denver Health Foundation

**Jayson Sime**  
*Founder*  
 Right to Shine, LLC

# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT: THE FUND FOR A HEALTHIER COLORADO

**T**he Fund for a Healthier Colorado was founded in 2015 as the sister 501(c)(3) organization to Healthier Colorado, which is a 501(c)(4) organization.

We believe that every Coloradan should have a fair chance at living a healthy life. We engage Coloradans to create a path forward to this goal and educate our state's decision-makers about action needed to improve our health.

## Advocacy Trainings

Healthier Colorado hosted its first ever training for our activists, Advocacy at the Capitol, on January 11. From there, we worked to train activists all over the state—from Steamboat, to Hotchkiss, to Gunnison, and more. Our advocacy trainings produced **180 newly-minted activists** prepared to fight for policy changes in their own communities and at a statewide level through methods such as in-person testimony, writing opinion pieces, and contacting legislators through phone calls, written communication, and lobbying.

## Listening and Base Building Tour

One of the centerpieces of our work last year was a tour across Colorado where we had the chance to meet with local officials, put on local advocacy trainings, and have town hall style events to listen to residents and hear the unique health issues they experience in rural communities.

Locations visited included:

- Gunnison-Gunnison County
- Cortez-Montezuma County
- Hotchkiss-Delta County
- Steamboat-Routt County
- Durango-La Plata County
- Grand Junction-Mesa County



## Routt County Panel

We organized and hosted a panel on the opioid epidemic in Routt County. We heard from State Representative Dylan Roberts, County Commissioner Doug Monger, and a number of other community leaders invested in saving their community from the devastating effects of the opioid crisis. At the event, panel members proposed action-oriented tactics to produce a solution.



## Heroes in Health Bike Rides

In 2018, we hosted two mental health awareness bike rides in both Grand Junction and Fort Collins. With a total of over 50 partner organizations at these events, we rode to destigmatize mental health with some of the most dedicated local advocates.

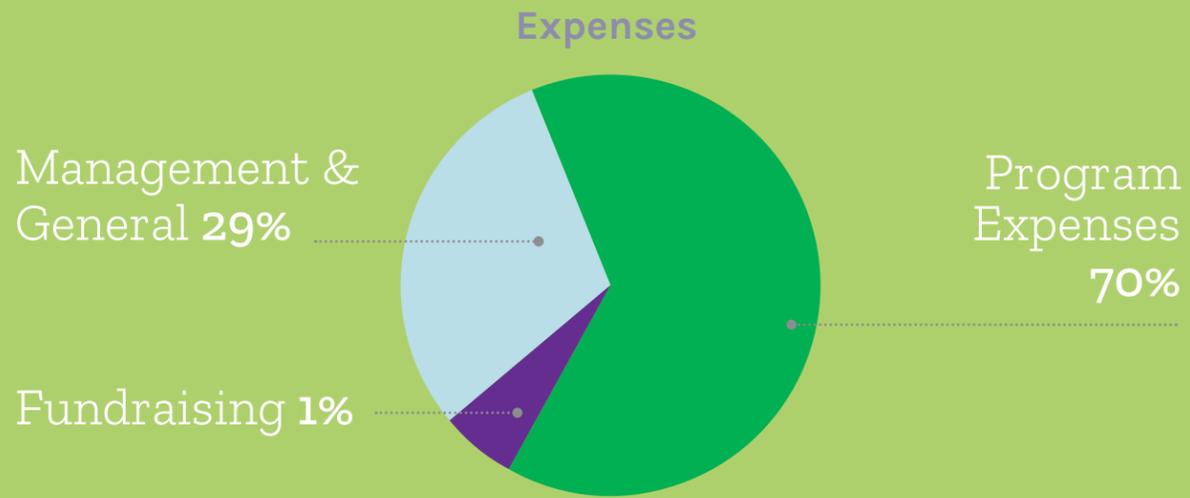


## Note from the Chair of the Board

The Fund for a Healthier Colorado had its biggest financial year yet, and we expect our growth to continue. Thank you to the funders and supporters who have helped further our mission to advance policy that improves the health of Coloradans. The best is yet to come.

Sincerely,  
Mike Dino  
Chair of the Board  
The Fund for a Healthier Colorado

# 2018 FINANCIALS



\$ 000s	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restriction	Total
<b>Revenue</b>			
Donations & Grants	\$ 586	\$ 113	\$ 699
Released from Restriction	\$ 129	\$ (129)	\$
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 715</b>	<b>\$ (16)</b>	<b>\$ 699</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Program	\$ 410		\$ 410
Management & General	\$ 168		\$ 168
Fundraising	\$ 1		\$ 1
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 579</b>		<b>\$ 579</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>			
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$ (90)	\$ 31	\$ (59)
Net Assets, End of Year	\$ 46	\$ 15	\$ 61



## LEADERSHIP BOARD

**Mike Dino (Chair)**  
Senior Policy Advisor  
Squire Patton Boggs, LLP

**Hollie Velasquez Horvath**  
Director of Community Affairs  
Xcel Energy

**Molly Pereira**  
Associate Executive Director  
The Colorado Dental Association



"I really think that we're building a movement here."

- Matt P.,  
Field Manager

"I can't begin to describe how much your support and efforts mean to me. This vote was a huge gamble as the stakes were so high. Without a successful vote I would be looking at making significant cutbacks to our services. Your support helped me through the times when I worried about success."

- Paul M., PiLA Partner

I Bike  
for better health

"One of the biggest things I've learned from Healthier Colorado is that they take the voices of the people in the community front and center and get them in front of the people who make the decisions that will affect their health."

- Caleb P., Member

"As a resident and a worker in the health care field in Park County, I can not express my gratitude to all of the time, money, and effort Healthier Colorado has invested in our community!!! We have gone from no primary care, to having a health service district and soon a paramedic at home program in six months thanks to you and the rest of the folks at Healthier Colorado!

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!!

- Barbie M., PiLA partner

I Bike  
for a Healthier Colorado!



1536 Wynkoop St. Suite 224, Denver, CO. 80202  
720.515.3206 | info@healthiercolorado.org

[healthiercolorado.org](http://healthiercolorado.org)

