WORLDS OF OPPORTUNITY

2021 ANNUAL REPORT
Letter from the CEO for a healthier Colorado
This year is the 60th anniversary of President John F. Kennedy’s speech declaring that we would put Americans on the moon. You’ve no doubt come across excerpts, especially the soaring rhetoric like this:

“We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win ...”

I have to admit, I was inspired all over again when I read it, but I was also struck by the lesser known sections of the speech. President Kennedy lays out a practical case for the boldest of goals. He, for example, points out that the newly expanded space budget totals less than what Americans were spending on cigarettes at the time. Kennedy goes on to frame the goal not as an unusual departure, but as a natural and necessary next step.

I believe that fulfilling our mission at Healthier Colorado requires bold exploration—not for the attention, not for the bragging rights, but rather to keep faith with the opportunity we’ve been given. It might be easier to play it safe, but it’s sincere to do what’s hard. In 2021, we took calculated risks and ran with new ideas to see if we could reach new frontiers to benefit our organization and the Coloradans we serve.

• In the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic, as everybody was fleeing the office, we launched a new, collaborative workspace for mission-aligned nonprofits in Colorado’s Health Capitol. By year’s end, we had 23 organizations signed up and moved in as tenants.

• We converted our expertise and capacity typically used to turn people out to vote to instead turn them out to vaccinate. We placed tens of thousands of calls and texts and provided technical assistance to a variety of community partner organizations to persuade and connect Coloradans with COVID-19 vaccines, especially in communities of color and underserved communities.

• We launched a new venture called Open Answer, a non-profit organization that provides canvassing and other outreach services to mission driven endeavors.

• We achieved several policy wins at the local and state level, but perhaps none bolder than passing the “Colorado Option” —a new, nation-leading, affordable health insurance choice for Coloradans. We won this battle at the state legislature despite the opposition spending more lobbying dollars against it than on any bill in the state’s history.

Thanks for taking the time to read about our journey in 2021, and I’m excited to see what worlds of opportunity our team explores next.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jake Williams
CEO, Healthier Colorado
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 intent is to do more than educate and advocate — we want to drive action, real change, and impact.
We believe that every Coloradan should have the opportunity to live a healthy life, regardless of race, income, geography, disability status, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Health is a state of physical, mental, and social well-being of people. We focus on these components in our work across the state. These are the three interconnected areas in which we seek to improve the health and wellbeing of all Coloradans.

**Physical Health**
Physical health is the wellbeing of an individual’s body. This looks different for every Coloradan, and the ideal physical health for one person may not be the same for another. To maintain physical health, we seek to ensure that everybody has access to quality, affordable health care, as well the other resources required for physical health, including access to nutritious food, oral health services, and safe spaces for physical activity.

**Mental Health**
Mental health is the condition of someone’s psychological or emotional wellbeing. An essential part of living a healthy life, mental health affects how we think, feel and act. To positively advance mental health, we seek to ensure that everybody has access to quality, affordable mental health services, such as counseling and treatment for addiction. We also seek to create environments in communities, including in schools, that support mental health.

**Social Health**
Social health refers to the ability of everybody in a community having an equal opportunity to attain wellbeing. Factors including racism, income, geography, disability, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation can be barriers to this opportunity. These factors can block access to essential elements of health and wellbeing, including safe and affordable housing, a quality education, legal justice, and access to healthcare. We seek to break down these barriers in order to give everybody a chance at living a healthy life.
STATEWIDE LEGISLATIVE WORK

The 2021 Legislative Session was a session marked by equity, historic health care reform, climate action, and meaningful pandemic recovery. With the input of our members and Coloradans across the state, we explored new galaxies and tackled the issues that are most important to them.

Our members showed up and showed out for health in the 2021 session. Collectively, they completed more than 50,000 actions that led to the passage of bills that can only be described as truly transformational. That is 50,000 times someone met with a legislator, testified in committee, called into a lawmakers’ office, sent a tweet, or emailed about an important bill.

We could not be more proud of the wins we achieved for Coloradan’s health in the 2021 legislative session. We sought to go big and address foundational elements of health and wellbeing that have the power to change trajectories over the lifespan of individuals, and for our communities facing historical health disparities. We’re thrilled to report that all of our priorities passed and are on their way to making Colorado healthier. A few highlights of the bills we worked on are listed below.

**HB21-1232—COLORADO HEALTH INSURANCE OPTION**

The rising cost of health care is a crisis facing many of Colorado’s families and small businesses, and many cannot afford to pay their medical bills even with insurance. Even before the pandemic, 1 in 5 Coloradans struggled to afford their health care costs or went without care altogether. Many small businesses can no longer afford to provide their employees insurance. The Colorado Option is expanding access to health care and making it more affordable for Coloradans, with health insurers being required to reduce premiums by 15% over three years, reduce out-of-pocket costs, and offer a standardized health plan in every Colorado county on the individual and small group market.

**HB21-1097—BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION CREATION**

Too many Coloradans struggle to navigate and access critical behavioral health services in our state. This bill created the Behavioral Health Administration to ensure that every Coloradan experiencing behavioral health needs has access to timely, high-quality services in their communities that they can afford. It tasked the Department of Human Services with creating a plan for a single state entity that is now responsible for administering and overseeing behavioral health programs in Colorado.
**SB21-153—State Issued IDs Upon Release**

People exiting the criminal justice system should have the opportunity to lead a just, healthy, and meaningful life. The most critical period for preventing recidivism is immediately after release, and state issued IDs are essential in accessing some of the most needed resources like housing, public benefits, transportation, and employment. This bill codifies the Colorado Offender Identification Program and the partnership between Department of Corrections and Department of Revenue to ensure every eligible and participating offender in the program will leave with a state-issued ID card.

**HB21-1005—Colorado’s Health Care Services Reserve Corps**

The COVID-19 pandemic and unprecedented wildfires have demonstrated Colorado’s vulnerabilities to health emergencies and crises. The Colorado Health Care Services Reserve Corps will help to ensure that Colorado has a prepared and cross trained medical workforce ready to save lives and respond to emergencies in the future. HB21-1005 will convene a state-level task force to make informed decisions and lay out the blueprint for a Health Care Services Reserve Corp.

**HB21-1117—Local Solutions for Affordable Housing**

Too many Coloradans struggle to afford the bedrock of their wellbeing — their home. Families paying excessive amounts of their income often have insufficient resources remaining for other essential needs including food, medical insurance, and health care. The affordable housing crisis is a multifaceted issue, but a key piece in beginning to solve it is ensuring that local governments have the tools available to provide their communities with affordable housing options. HB21-1117 removes the prohibition on municipalities that prevents them from requiring affordable housing options in new development and redevelopment projects.

**HB21-1304—Unified Early Childhood System**

The early years of a child’s life are some of the most critical to positively affect their academic, health, and life outcomes. Yet this is often a time when many families do not have the support they need and the trajectory of a child’s life can be severely impacted. By establishing a Department of Early Childhood, HB21-1304 will promote alignment and quality in our early childhood systems, improve access to high-quality early childhood experiences, and thoughtfully implement Proposition EE—voluntary universal pre-school.

**HB21-1317—Regulating Marijuana Concentrates**

HB21-1317 takes several important steps in prioritizing the health and safety of Colorado kids and their developing brains. While medical marijuana has been legal in Colorado for decades, research and thoughtful evaluation of the effects of high potency THC products on developing brains has lagged behind the need. HB21-1317 requires research to be conducted by the Colorado School of Public Health that analyzes the health and mental health effects of high potency THC, creates new regulatory measures to protect public health, ensures more robust tracking systems of high potency medical THC, bolsters the patient/provider relationship, expands education about high potency THC, and closes loopholes that will help keep these products out of the hands of our kids.
Legislative Scorecard

The mission of Healthier Colorado is to ensure all people have the opportunity to live a healthy life. We cannot reach his goal without pro-health policies at the Capitol and elected officials who put the health of Coloradans first. Throughout our scorecard, we recognize several elected officials for their leadership and hard work in a number of categories.

This scorecard also helps to inform the way in which we engage in candidate elections. We aim to be a force for good by deploying political resources like candidate checks on behalf of our state’s residents. Other (often predatory) industries use money to influence the political process and further their own interests and we believe that Coloradans should have these same types of resources deployed on behalf of their health.

Dr. Kristen Nordenholz first learned of Healthier Colorado from our street canvass after learning about our work on mental health. She then became a lead advocate who helped pass The Colorado Public Health Insurance Option.

“I am Kristen Nordenholz, and as an emergency room physician, I treat patients who can’t afford the cost of health insurance, can’t access the preventative care they need, don’t have a safe place to call home, or struggle with mental health and substance abuse challenges. These issues can’t be fixed in the ER, they require systemic change, the kind of change Healthier Colorado is working for.

Healthier Colorado knows how to elevate the voices of Coloradans, like you and me, in the policy process. They supported me every step of the way in helping to pass the Colorado Health Insurance Option. I had the opportunity to share my perspective with the media, interact with our state legislators, and elevate the stories of my patients.

Of course, constituents are not the only voice at the State Capitol. Lobbyists, corporations, and special interest groups are a constant presence in the hallways and committee rooms during the legislative session. It takes significant resources for nonprofit organizations, like Healthier Colorado, to get the attention of lawmakers.”
In December 2021, we launched a new venture called Open Answer, a non-profit organization that provides canvassing and other outreach services to mission driven endeavors. After recognizing the need for quality field work that wasn’t able to be executed by partner organizations, and experiencing extreme prices and unsavory practices by vendors, we came to the conclusion that there had to be a better way.

Open Answer is a nonprofit enterprise that connects with people at their doorsteps, on the street, and via phone, text and digital. We provide canvassing services for mission-driven efforts in communities across Colorado. Our projects range from get-out-the-vote efforts, to grassroots fundraising, to qualitative and quantitative research.

Sylvie Lerner serves as Open Answer’s Managing Director. She previously worked as the Operations Manager for the California Donor Table where she developed and managed member communications and internal/external finances and systems. Before that, she served as the Canvass Director for United for a New Economy (UNE), as a part of the Center for Popular Democracy’s State Power Project.
Healthy Air and Water Colorado Action is Healthier Colorado's sister organization that focuses exclusively on public policy that addresses the growing public health threats posed by climate change. We know that worsening air quality, rising temperatures and threats to water availability and quality – all products of climate change – have profound impacts on human health, particularly for our most vulnerable community members like those with existing health issues and children. While our Healthier Colorado work focuses on broadly mobilizing grassroots Coloradans, our charge with this project is to engage health care professionals, including frontline health care providers who see and treat the real health issues caused by our changing environment.

HAWC MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Sheela Mahnke, MD is a pediatrician practicing in Thornton, CO. Since connecting with HAWC in July 2020, Dr. Mahnke has become an increasingly active advocate and has engaged in a variety of HAWC activities and legislative issues. She has attended three legislative advocacy training sessions and touted that HAWC “is an amazing organization to work with” at the training in February, 2022. She has also participated in filming climate and health advocacy videos for HAWC and presented at media events, most recently speaking at a press conference at the Colorado State Capitol on the health impacts of air toxics and the importance of legislation to monitor and regulate toxic emissions. Dr. Mahnke is also a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter (AAP-CO) and serves as a key climate advocate of the group; she coordinates with HAWC to determine key climate and health issues to bring to the AAP-CO. And, through her involvement with AAP-CO, she has recruited additional spokespeople to advocate on climate issues with HAWC as well as organized meetings to help bridge the two organizations.

The 2021 wildfire season in Colorado was the worst year on record, witnessing the three largest fires in state history.

A recent study done of a single year in Colorado concluded that 174 deaths, 256 hospitalizations, and 1,432 emergency room visits were directly attributable to wildfire smoke inhalation.
**KEY LEGISLATION**

### HB21-1189 - REGULATE AIR TOXINS

Dangerous emissions of toxics like benzene, hydrogen cyanide, and hydrogen sulfide cause a range of negative health effects for communities that live near the polluters – increased rates of asthma and chronic lung disease, heart disease, seizures, and increased mortalities. A lack of adequate monitoring and publicly available pollution emission data has made it difficult to protect the health of these communities that are predominantly black, indigenous, low-income, and communities of color. Fenceline and community monitoring provisions in this law will allow communities to know what’s in their air and demand action to further protect the public health of their families, neighbors, and community.

### HB21-1266 - ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

Climate change is making our wildfire season longer and more intense. 2020 saw the three largest fires in state history, and 7 of the largest 10 wildfires in recorded history have occurred since 2010. In addition to the immediate health impacts of wildfires such as burns, Coloradans are also experiencing the long-term effects of smoke inhalation which leads to increased asthma and COPD, respiratory illness, and lung cancer from particulate matter release. Sixty-two percent of Coloradans agree that wildfire mitigation in tandem with policies that address climate change are the best approach in dealing with worsening wildfire seasons. This bill funds critical programs that will allow the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) to ramp up mitigation efforts across the state and deter the worst symptoms of ravenous wildfires.

### SB21-054 - TRANSFERS FOR WILDFIRE MITIGATION AND RESPONSE

Climate change is making our wildfire season longer and more intense. 2020 saw the three largest fires in state history, and 7 of the largest 10 wildfires in recorded history have occurred since 2010. In addition to the immediate health impacts of wildfires such as burns, Coloradans are also experiencing the long-term effects of smoke inhalation which leads to increased asthma and COPD, respiratory illness, and lung cancer from particulate matter release. Sixty-two percent of Coloradans agree that wildfire mitigation in tandem with policies that address climate change are the best approach in dealing with worsening wildfire seasons. This bill funds critical programs that will allow the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) to ramp up mitigation efforts across the state and deter the worst symptoms of ravenous wildfires.

### SB21-246 - ELECTRIC UTILITY PROMOTE BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION

According to Colorado’s Pollution Reduction Roadmap, our built environment - residential, commercial, and industrial buildings - are a leading cause of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the state. Our furnaces, stoves, water heaters, and other fossil-fuel powered appliances release methane into the atmosphere. In addition, our appliances reduce the air quality inside of our homes. Gas powered appliances release nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide, the same chemicals that come out of our car’s tailpipes, in our homes, potentially causing increased rates of asthma, impaired brain function, and respiratory illness. This law ensured that our investor-owned utilities begin to create programs that make it easier for customers to purchase cleaner appliances, like heat pumps, that reduce methane emissions into the atmosphere and promote healthier indoor air quality.
PARTNERSHIPS IN LOCAL ADVOCACY (PiLA)

PiLA (Partnerships in Local Advocacy) is our commitment to local communities. We believe in the power of local solutions and community to solve local problems. And, to us, this means supporting policy changes that come from the communities themselves. PiLA is our way of supporting local campaigns – policy change at the city, county, or special district level.

In partnership with local health advocates and community members, we support local campaigns with resources in various forms, including direct financial campaign contributions, in-kind support, or strategic input. Beyond financial support, our assistance can include:

- Guidance on communications, field and political strategy.
- Execution of direct voter contact, such as mail, canvassing, phone outreach, and training for volunteers.
- Technical assistance on maintaining legal compliance

Our work across the state has ranged from mental health initiatives, revenue increases to sustain critical EMS services in rural areas, working with partners to increase affordable housing options and reduce homelessness, to strengthening environmental protections.

PiLA PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

“Healthier Colorado’s Partnerships in Local Advocacy program is a truly innovative tool for local officials and leaders. Their expertise in communications, field strategy, voter contact, policy, legal compliance, and more have led to dozens of successful health campaigns across Colorado, including 1A here in Summit County. Healthier Colorado can partner to help secure pro-health campaign wins for your community!”

– Tamara Pogue, Summit County Commissioner
KEY LEGISLATION

YES ON 6A, 6B, AND 6C, FRIENDS OF MOFFAT COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES DISTRICT

We supported residents in Moffat County on a ballot measure to establish and fund a Health Services District (HSD) to operate and manage emergency medical services (EMS) in the county. Over the last few decades EMS has been in the hands of the City of Craig, Moffat County, Craig Fire Department, and currently Memorial Regional Hospital. The independent district would have provided the needed resources and public oversight for coordinated and timely emergency response services to all Moffat County residents. The Health Service District was a solution to the patchwork system of emergency care residents receive depending on where you live in the county. Unfortunately, these efforts were unsuccessful.

YES ON 2A

Voters in Leadville passed this accommodations tax on short-term rentals & short-term commercial public accommodations to fund affordable housing. Measure 2A increased Leadville’s lodging tax - paid by visitors who stay in hotels, motels, and short-term rentals like Airbnb - in order to create a dedicated housing fund to expand local affordable housing options. This innovative measure is a prime example of a local community finding their own affordable housing solutions.

NO ON 2F, KEEP DENVER HOUSED

If passed, this measure would have limited affordable housing in Denver, a city that already is in the midst of a housing and homelessness crisis. 2F would have repealed Denver’s Group Living Ordinance which passed overwhelmingly by City Council and expanded housing options for Denverites. Specifically, 2F would have prohibited individuals from having more than one roommate; take away shared housing options for working people like nurses, teachers, and grocery store clerks; and would undo progress in expanding support given to elderly people, individuals with physical or developmental disabilities, and individuals experiencing homelessness. Denver voters turned out and defeated this measure.

NO ON 304, KEEP DENVER STRONG

Ballot measure 304 was a deceptive measure that would have reduced funding for critical programs in Denver that impact our most vulnerable populations. These include Denver’s preschool program, financial aid for college applicants who need the most help, and mental health funding that serves our most at-risk Denverites. Additionally, this cut in sales revenue would have impacted the city’s ability to continue to provide public services including road repair, parks and recreation, fire protection, and public safety. Denver voters understand the need for public services and defeated this measure.
2021 FINANCIALS

Expenses

- Management & General: 18%
- Program: 74%
- Fundraising: 8%

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STAFF

March, 2022

Ashley Barrow
Development Director

Hillary Jorgensen
Deputy Executive Director

Alexis Altop
Research and Logistics
Coordinator

Jake Williams
CEO

Kate Stigberg
Senior Director of Activism

Susanna Mizer
Senior Director of Public Affairs
(not pictured)

Kyle Piccola
Senior Director of
Communications

Micha Stone
Community Director,
Colorado’s Health Capitol

Sabrina Pacha
HAWC Director

Stuart Jenkins
Advocacy Manager

Michael Ruddock
Policy Manager

Blair Monson
HAWC Communications
Manager

Leo Yáñez
Digital Communications
Manager

Megan Kemp
HAWC Advocacy Manager

Rebakah Hernandez
Advocacy Manager

Sylvie Lerner
Managing Director
Open Answer

LEADERSHIP

Board as of March, 2022

Gwen Benevento
Of Counsel
Maven Law Group

Courtney Cuff
Executive Director
State Impact Project

Mike Dino
Senior Policy Advisor
Squire Patton Boggs, LLP

Jim Garcia, MPA
Executive Director
Clinica Tepeyac

Meg Lafave
Chief People and Culture Officer
Envision Healthcare

John Marshall (Chair)
President
Colorado Mesa University

Pete Maysmith
Senior Vice President of Campaigns
League of Conservation Voters

Brigette McClellan
PsyD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist
Denver Health

Crystal Potter Rivera (Vice Chair)
Executive Director
Denver Health Foundation

Jayson Sime
Director of Organizing
The Wilderness Society

Karl Nieschburg
Compliance Officer
Prowers Medical Center
The Fund for a Healthier Colorado (THFC) is a 501(c)(3) sister organization that was founded in 2015 and uniquely works across a wide range of health and wellbeing issues. We educate decision-makers and raise the voices of everyday folks across the state to meaningfully move the needle on health equity. We have built a membership of over 200,000 people and have members from all 64 counties who have taken action with us. TFHC makes a difference through the following activities:

- Research and Policy Development
- Voter Contact and Education
- Education and Outreach to all
- Leadership Development Trainings
- Decision Maker Education

COVID-19 VACCINE OUTREACH

In a year where mistrust in science and misinformation was rampant, we converted our expertise and capacity typically used to turn people out to vote to instead turn them out to vaccinate. We placed tens of thousands of calls and texts and provided technical assistance to a variety of community partner organizations to persuade and connect Coloradans with COVID-19 vaccines, especially in communities of color and underserved communities.

36,218 calls made
28,432 individuals texted
18 community partner organizations assisted with vaccine outreach
In 2021, we officially launched our new home and mothership Colorado’s Health Capitol. After three years of exploratory work, planning, and covid related construction delays, we were finally able to move into the space that more than 20 organizations would call home. Tenants began moving into the space in early spring of 2021 and we got right to work launching our inaugural rounds of programming. Our current list of tenants includes:

- Healthier Colorado
- Bell Policy Center
- Better Balance
- COLOR
- ONE Colorado
- Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
- Colorado Association of Family Medicine Residencies
- CCoAHEC (THEARI)
- Connect for Health Colorado
- Chronic Care Collaborative
- Keystone Policy Center
- LEAD Colorado
- Second Wind Fund
- Mile High Health Alliance
- Colorado Academy of Family Physicians
- Prime Health
- Colorado Providers Association
- Center for Health Progress
- Voces Unidas
- Front Range Area Health Education Center
- COPIC
- Mental Health Colorado

Our first year in action has been filled with exciting new successes as we embark on our journey to become the center for health policy in Colorado. On August 19th, 2021 we hosted the official public launch and ribbon cutting ceremony alongside Governor Jared Polis.
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

These advisors collectively represent diverse communities across Colorado informed, inclusive, ground level perspectives in line with our mission scope. The input of these advisors is folded into an iterative process with our staff and our boards of directors to help determine the best policy path forward to fulfill our mission.

The introduction of these new advisors is a manifestation of our mission statement, which declares that the “people of Colorado are our constituency, and Healthier Colorado aims to make meaningful improvements throughout our state’s diverse communities.” We have reached a point of organizational maturation that requires a more considered and inclusive approach to our agenda development. As our capacity and influence has expanded, we need to make sure that we have an intentional system that dedicates the time and attention necessary to making the highest and best use of our resources to respond to the needs of Coloradans.

“I JOINED THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE BECAUSE THE PATIENTS I SERVE, MANY OF WHOM ARE LOW-INCOME OR FROM COMMUNITIES OF COLOR, NEED A VOICE IN THE POLICY THAT PROFOUNDLY INFLUENCES THEIR WELLBEING.”

– Dr. Tamaan Osbourne-Roberts, Community Advisor

TFHC BOARD
as of March, 2022

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

Rachel Kaygi
Political Advisor

Meg Lafave
Chief of Staff
Kent Thiry

Orlando Padilla Jr., MA., LPC
Executive Regional Director
Samaritan House at Catholic Charities

Molly Pereira
Associate Executive Director
The Colorado Dental Association
# 2021 Financials

## Expenses

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