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Local community mental health center named as ‘health care innovator’ by Gov. Hickenlooper

Denver – June 2018 – Southeast Health Group was accepted into the Colorado State Innovation Model (SIM), a federally funded, governor’s office initiative that helps health care providers deliver whole-person care. It is one of four community mental health centers participating in the initiative, which runs through July 2019.

“SIM providers must focus on the entire patient, which means addressing mind, body and mental wellness,” said Donna Lynne, Lieutenant Governor and Chief Operating Officer, who has many years of leadership experience in the health care sector. “That complete approach to health is what makes the SIM initiative is so valuable. Patients get the care they need when they need it, and providers learn how to succeed with new payment models. It’s a great example of meaningful reform in our state.”

Patients interviewed by SIM staff notice and appreciate the work done by practices. “It’s powerful for me, as a patient, to land somewhere I feel well taken care of,” said Mary Catherine Conger, a patient at Roaring Fork Family Practice, during a SIM podcast (<https://bit.ly/2nzuieO>).

Whole-person care

Colorado was the only state (out of 11 selected for a SIM model test award) to focus on integrated behavioral and physical health care supported by public and private payers as its primary goal. The initiative helps providers progress along an [integrated care path continuum](#) that might start with referrals and could lead to co-location of behavioral and physical health professionals in primary care settings. Integrated care improves patient outcomes, reduces health care costs and enhances provider morale. About 1,847 SIM providers in cohorts 1-2 deliver care during 3,342,018 annual patient visits.

The efforts also benefit providers. “It’s energizing to give the kind of care you envision instead of being frustrated every day,” said Gary Knaus, MD, Roaring Fork Family Practice, a SIM cohort-1 practice. “Somewhere in your gut you feel like, ‘God, I could do better.’”

SIM launched with 100 practice sites in 2016, added 155 practices in 2017 and will help about 25% of the state’s primary care sites and four community mental health centers deliver whole-person care.

Colorado will receive \$65 million from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to implement this model for health care innovation, which is expected to save or avoid \$126.6 million in health care costs for CMS with a 1.95 return on investment during its four-year time frame.

Learn more:

- SIM website: www.colorado.gov/healthinnovation
- Proof that integrated care improves health: www.colorado.gov/healthinnovation/sim-data-hub

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