CONGRESS MUST APPROVE FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Mountain Family Health Centers

We are one month away from the Health Center Funding Cliff becoming a reality. If Congress fails to act to fix the cliff before September 30th, Mountain Family Health Centers will face a 100% reduction in funding, because there aren’t any other funding bills in Congress for Federally Qualified Health Centers. “In Garfield, Eagle, Pitkin, and Rio Blanco counties, more than 6,200 Mountain Family patients, who are uninsured, are at risk of losing access to high quality, affordable care at Mountain Family,” stated Mountain Family’s CEO Ross Brooks this week.

Despite ongoing efforts by Health Center advocates to press for clear plans to fix the cliff, as well as quick action so that health centers can continue operations without fear of severe funding reductions, Congress
has given little public indication as to its plans to pass a timely and long-term extension of funding by the September 30th deadline.

As of Thursday, September 7th, there are only 10 working legislative days in the House, and 15 in the Senate. Time is running out. Without sufficient pressure from advocates here in Colorado and across the country, Mountain Family Health Centers is concerned that Congress will not address the cliff by the end of the Fiscal Year, or that Congress will undertake a very short-term extension of funding until December. Both scenarios have major negative implications for the stability of the nationwide Health Center network, which today cares for more than 27 million patients. Our ask to Congress is simple: act immediately to fix the health center funding cliff and preserve funding at current levels. In addition, we are strongly advocating that Congress extend this crucial funding for at least five years, providing - at a minimum - current funding levels to maintain services and stability of care.

You can ask Congress for action today by clicking on this link: http://p2a.co/QeTSMmP

Unfortunately, this is not an advocacy drill. The US Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has estimated that, if left unaddressed, the funding cliff could mean closure of 2,800 Health Center sites, cost more than 51,000 jobs, and lead to the loss of access to care for more than 9 million patients.

With one month to go, Congress has waited long enough. We cannot allow access to care to be put at risk. It's time for Congress to do its job and fix the health center funding cliff and it's time for Health Center advocates to take action and send a message to Congress that can't be ignored.

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ROSS BROOKS HONORED FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY CENTER FOR HEALTH PROGRESS COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARD

Mountain Family Health Centers

At their annual HEALTHtalks luncheon in September, the Center for Health Progress (formerly Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved) honored Brooks, Mountain Family’s Chief Executive Officer, with their Community Champion Award for Community Leadership and Advocacy.

Ross is driven by the simple principle that access to affordable health care is a human right, not a privilege, and he is a tireless community champion for health equity and access to high quality, patient-centered integrated medical, behavioral and dental health care for all.

Each year, Center for Health Progress honors four community members for “their outstanding contributions to improve health care systems and provide care for Coloradans, especially those who have faced unjust health outcomes.”

Other Mountain Family community leaders nominated for Center for Health Progress awards were:

- Dr. Kent Petrie - Lifetime Achievement Community Achievement Award. Dr. Petrie is a family physician and obstetric provider at Mountain Family’s Edwards Center. He has spent this long career
ensuring the medically underserved in the Vail Valley have access to high quality health care.

- Dr. Anneliese Heckert - Physician Community Achievement Award. Dr. Heckert is a family physician and site medical director at Mountain Family's Basalt Center. She is a champion for the underserved, directing the Basalt team as together they provide patient-centered, value-based, integrated care to all, regardless of ability to pay.

- Jolene Singer, RN - Non-Physician Community Achievement Award. Jolene Singer is Mountain Family's Integrated Care Director. She is highly passionate about exploring innovative ways to improve integrated care through both the connection of the medical, behavioral and dental health disciplines within Mountain Family, and reaching out to find community partners beyond the organization's walls.

Mountain Family is proud of these leaders and offers our heartiest congratulations for your inspiring service to our patients and communities.

To learn more about Center for Health Progress and their work, click here.

**TIPS FOR A SMOOTH BACK TO SCHOOL TRANSITION**

Healthy Behaviors Ensure School Success  
By Carolyn Hardin, Development Consultant

It is back to school time again, and Mountain Family Health Centers would like to share tips about the many things families can do to ease the transition from summer time to school time, and to create new routines that will promote health and help the school year flow more smoothly.

Mountain Family suggests using this new beginning to prioritize healthy behaviors which will ensure school success. Start this week to ensure children are eating healthy foods, receiving adequate sleep and getting some type of exercise daily. Talk to your children about school safety. This is also a great time to schedule an appointment with your primary care provider for a well-child exam and to make sure your child has all the immunizations required for his or her age. If you do not have a provider or you need help paying for your child’s care, you can call Mountain Family at 970-945-2840. More

**GLENWOOD SPRINGS CLINIC CELEBRATES 17 YEARS**

Reflections From a Provider  
By Jenny Lang-Burns, FNP

*In honor of the Glenwood Springs clinic’s 17th birthday, Glenwood Site Medical Director Jenny Lang was invited to share a patient story in celebration. Jenny says her story is the story of Mountain Family Health Centers.*

As I approach my 17 year anniversary at Mountain Family, I have reflected on my patient stories and found it difficult to choose one to present. I thought instead of sharing the stories over the years that have kept me always coming back to work every day at Mountain Family.

There are the at risk pregnant women who deliver full term healthy babies, to the new families we guide through parenthood. There was the 15 year old adolescent who did not know what to do when her friend told her she was suicidal, but knew she could come to Mountain Family for guidance and was assisted by
the front desk and behavior health provider as to the next steps. There was the alcoholic woman who had just lost her partner to overdose and Behavioral Health was able to get her into detox the same day and then coordinated rehab services after discharge from detox. There was the woman who waited a month for her appointment because she was ready to share her story of childhood incest for the first time and knew she would be with people she could trust to help her navigate her path to healing. One patient, who had an abnormal chest X-ray at another facility, chose to return to her medical home at Mountain Family for the work up and we are now assisting her through her diagnosis of stage four lung cancer. There was the two year old whose two front teeth were damaged and decaying and Care Coordination was able to find funding to treat his dental disease and protect his adult teeth. There was the woman who, after a few phone calls and referrals and the grace of God, received a telephone call from University Hospital informing her that if she could make it to Denver, they had a free pacemaker she desperately needed. One young woman, who could not hold a job because she repeatedly had seizures on the job and was fired, then Care Coordination organized her receipt of a Vagus Nerve Stimulation device. Now, for the first time, she is able to hold down a job and provide for her family. There are the many Mountain Valley Development Services developmentally delayed adults we serve who are either running down the halls screaming or swearing at staff but everyone still treats them with love and kindness. There are the individuals we refer to specialists for care who then return to us for our opinion and understanding of what the specialist said. We have families who have good insurance and could choose any medical provider but want to come to Mountain Family because they know this is a special place.

Mountain Family makes miracles happen every day. From the front office staff and billing department to the behavioral health team, from the call center and outreach and enrollment departments to our medical assistants and nurses, from our medical providers and dental team to the executive team and board of directors, everyone plays an incredible role in changing people's lives every day. I have been lucky to serve our many patients and call Mountain Family Health Centers my family.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SUICIDE AWARENESS
Recognizing Symptoms and Getting Help
By Gary Schreiner, Ph.D., Behavioral Health Manager

September is Suicide Awareness Month and it is very important that we all consider twelve months of the year as Suicide Awareness months. The Western Slope of Colorado has one of the highest suicide rates in the United States. If you feel like you don't want to live anymore because of your current circumstances, allow a professional the chance to help you. You will have a lot to gain and nothing to lose.

How do you know someone is suicidal? Are there any recent significant losses in the person's life, such as a partner? Is this person giving away prized possessions? Is this person speaking to you like they are saying goodbye? Is this person withdrawing from friends and family? A primary indicator of suicide is when a person feels alone and not loved. This can even happen to someone with a big family.

How can you help? Don't be afraid to ask what is wrong and then listen without judgement. Help the person feel needed. Showing empathy works much better than giving advice. When in doubt, help the person get to a mental health professional who can help.
WORLD SEXUAL HEALTH DAY
Know the Complete Picture
By Susan Orcutt, FNP

This week, on September 4th, the World Association for Sexual Health marked its annual World Sexual Health Day. When we talk about sexual health, we often focus on preventing unintended pregnancy and protecting against sexually transmitted infections. While these are important issues, they are only a portion of sexual health. The complete picture of sexual health includes not only physical health, but also mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality. The World Health Organization goes further to say sexual health “requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.” Sexual health is more than condoms and birth control—it is about consent, mutually respectful relationships and self-empowerment. Take some time to check in with yourself and your partner about these topics. And find a healthcare provider who creates a safe and comfortable space for you to ask questions and get accurate information.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH
Honoring Our Family and Friends

Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15th to October 15th, by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

According to the Library of Congress, this Hispanic Heritage Week observation started in 1968 under President Lyndon Johnson, and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on September 15th and ending on October 15th. It was enacted into law on August 17, 1988.

The day of September 15th is significant because it is the anniversary of independence for the Latin American countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16th and September 18th respectively. Dia de la Raza, or Columbus Day, which falls on October 12th, also falls within this 30-day period.

VOLUNTEER FOR A WORTHY CAUSE
Mountain Family Health Centers and Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Day

Habitat for Humanity of the Roaring Fork Valley is a local affiliate of the global nonprofit. Their mission brings people together to build homes, hope and community; partnering to provide affordable home ownership for local families in need of a “hand up” not a “handout”. Mountain Family employees and friends will spend this day building with Habitat.

When: Saturday, September 30th 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Where: 1480 Grand Ave in Silt
Details: No skills are needed to volunteer, just come with a positive attitude and be ready to get a little dirty.
Volunteers are the very foundation of Habitat. Each year, over a thousand individuals in this community come together to help build homes with their partner families. For more information about Habitat for Humanity Roaring Fork Valley, click [here](#) or contact Amy French at 970-948-7207 or [Habitat.AmyF@gmail.com](mailto:Habitat.AmyF@gmail.com). For more information about Mountain Family's Habitat Volunteer Day, contact Garry Schalla at [GSchalla@mountainfamily.org](mailto:GSchalla@mountainfamily.org) or 970-945-2840, ext. 7290.

CARBONDALE'S 109TH POTATO DAY CELEBRATION
Join in the Fun on October 7th
By Danyelle Carlson, Executive Assistant

Potato Day is the longest running annual community event in Carbondale, celebrating the simple and versatile tuber that helped stabilize the community's economy after the silver bust at the turn of the century. Local farming and ranching families have kept the tradition alive since 1909, and the event continues thanks to the Xi Gamma Tau service sorority. All earnings from the event are distributed to local nonprofit organizations in the Roaring Fork Valley.

This year’s theme is Harry Potter and the Magic Potato: celebrating 109 years of Potato Days and 20 years of Harry Potter. There will be a parade down Main Street starting at 10:30 am, followed by a barbecue, farmer's market, live music and activities for the kids in Sopris Park in downtown Carbondale. And don't miss the famous cowboy coffee from the cauldron!

Potato Day is a great time to see friends and celebrate the harvest. To be a vendor or volunteer at the event email [carbondalepotatodays@gmail.com](mailto:carbondalepotatodays@gmail.com).

MIND SPRINGS HEALTH IS HIRING
Seeking a Community Health Worker

Mind Springs Health is seeking a Community Health Worker to work with a designated clinic care team to provide comprehensive case management, home visits and support for identified high-need patients. The CHW also provides health education, serves as a health promotion instructor for classes and provides periodic staffing support for outreach events. Click [here](#) to read the position description or click [here](#) to learn more about Mind Springs Health.

SEPTEMBER HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Months</th>
<th>National Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby Safety Month</td>
<td>Sept 10th - National TV Dinner Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Breakfast Month</td>
<td>Sept 12th - National Chocolate Milkshake Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Blueberry Popsicle Month</td>
<td>Sept 16 - National Play-Doh Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Papaya Month
National Suicide Prevention Month

Sept 19 - National Butterscotch Pudding Day
   Talk Like a Pirate Day
Sept 26 - National Dumpling Day
Sept 28 - National Drink Beer Day

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STAY CONNECTED

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