



**NEWS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Community Health Champions Named** *Recognition for Exceptional Contributions to Health of Coloradans*

DENVER— Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN), the association of Colorado Community Health Centers (CHCs), announced its Community Health Champions last night at its annual legislative gathering.

The Community Health Champion award recognizes state legislators, reporters, and volunteer clinicians for their work to improve the health of Coloradans. The 2011 awardees are:

Representative Mark Ferrandino  
House District 2, Denver County

Senator Mary Hodge  
Senate District 25, Adams County

Dr. Joseph Kay  
Volunteer Clinician for Metro Community Provider Network (MCPN)

Chris Frost, KWAY Radio (Lamar)

### **Community Health Champion Legislators**

The Community Health Champion award for legislators is given to lawmakers who have gone above and beyond to support legislation and positions that directly support CHCs and increase access to primary health care for the underserved.

**Rep. Mark Ferrandino** has been a strong supporter of CHCs since becoming a state representative in 2007. He has worked to ensure the continued viability of CHCs during the recent recession. His breadth of knowledge, gained from his previous work as a budget analyst at the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, and his current work on the Joint Budget Committee, has provided him with knowledge necessary to effectively advocate for patients being able to receive care in community-based settings, rather than more expensive care settings.

Rep. Ferrandino's advocacy for the CHCs can be seen in the multiple pieces of legislation he has sponsored or cosponsored during the past three legislative sessions. These bills include:

- A bill to support the Colorado Health Services Corps, which helps provide annual loan repayment assistance for primary care doctors who work in underserved and rural areas of Colorado.
- Several pieces of legislation that, when combined, allowed for the refinancing of health care services to low-income Coloradans during the recent recession without limiting access to care.
- Rep. Ferrandino also spoke in support of Senate Joint Resolution 10-023, a resolution made last year to recognize Colorado's CHCs for providing access to comprehensive primary health care.

In addition, Rep. Ferrandino has supported legislation to increase access to health care, including the Health Care Affordability Act of 2009. As a result of this legislation, an estimated 100,000 people will be able to receive health care through the State's medical assistance programs by FY 2013-14.

Other examples of his work to increase access to health care include legislation to support the Child Health Plan Plus program; to lift restriction on where pharmacists can administer injectable medications, such as immunizations; to regulate insurance companies; and to increase the types of services covered by insurance.

Rep. Ferrandino is a tireless advocate for the uninsured and underserved in the State.

**Sen. Mary Hodge** has been a strong supporter and advocate of CHCs beginning with her work as a State representative for House District 30, and continuing now as senator for Senate District 25. She has always had an open ear to CHC concerns and has voted in favor or against bills that would either benefit or threaten the ability of CHCs to care for their patients. Similarly to Rep. Ferrandino, Sen. Hodge spoke during the reading of the 2010 joint resolution in support of CHCs. She is also a strong advocate of increasing health access across the state, including supporting bills to expand health care access for children and increase eligibility levels for state health plans.

Sen. Hodge has attended numerous Salud Family Health Centers events, including open houses and groundbreakings. She has taken the time to meet with other CHCs in her district including Metro Community Provider Network (MCPN) and Plains Medical Center. She met with and listened to the concerns of CHCs following the August 2009 state budget cuts, as well as more recently as the chair of the Joint Budget Committee.

We honor Sen. Hodge for her work to ensure that all members of Colorado's communities have access to health care.

### **Community Health Champion Volunteer Clinician**

Each year, CCHN recognizes a volunteer clinician who is dedicated to serving the needs of the medically underserved. This unpaid clinician is someone who provides direct patient services in a CHC or to CHC patients in his or her office, leads advocacy activities on behalf of the medically underserved, and has provided volunteer service for a minimum of three years.

**Dr. Joseph Kay**, the 2011 Community Health Champion Volunteer Clinician, has provided countless hours of volunteer services to MCPN over the years. He donates his time and expertise to patients in need of cardiology services.

Dr. Kay is the program director of the Adult Congenital Heart Disease Program at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. He is also assistant professor of medicine and pediatrics at the University of Colorado at Denver School of Medicine.

Dr. Kay provides cardiology services to hundreds of uninsured MCPN patients annually. He has worked closely with MCPN for four years and wholeheartedly supported the establishment of a volunteer cardiology clinic located at MCPN's Potomac Street Health Center (PSHC). This clinic is a critical resource for uninsured MCPN patients who suffer from cardiovascular disease. With the establishment of a "medical home" patient-centered care site at PSHC, Dr. Kay and his colleague Patrice Spurck have helped MCPN identify cardiologists who are willing to volunteer to provide cardiovascular disease management and care to MCPN patients. He has helped recruit additional cardiologists to join the specialty referral network at MCPN to offer additional services that extend beyond patient consultations. For chronic cardio cases, patients that were scheduled at the cardio clinic gain access to University Hospital, which has resulted in the successful extended care of 15 MCPN patients with dire cardiovascular needs.

### **Community Health Champion Media**

An integral part of community health is communicating. Information is essential to good health practices and the media plays a critical role in informing the public about health care. Each year CCHN honors a reporter or newspaper, radio, or TV station for reporting or otherwise significantly supporting Community Health Centers and the patients they care for. This award honors the recipient for high-profile coverage of issues facing the underserved, coverage of emerging issues in health care for the underserved, and for portraying the human faces of health care issues.

**Chris Frost**, the news director of KWAY radio in Lamar. Mr. Frost moved to Lamar about 2 years ago and since then has been very involved in the community.

Mr. Frost has been a strong advocate for High Plains Community Health Center. He shares news from High Plains with the community and follows up to get additional details and make sure he has the facts correctly. Additionally, Mr. Frost makes an effort to attend and report on events hosted by High Plains, including their Saturday Stroll and events organized for the annual National Health Center Week.

Just two weeks ago, he broadcast a thorough story reporting on the heroic efforts of the High Plains staff and friends to make sure patient care was not delayed when water pipes burst in the ceiling of High Plains and the facility was flooded. Mr. Frost told the community about the staff and friends worked through the night to make sure patients didn't miss any health care the next morning.

The staff and members of the Colorado Community Health Network congratulate the 2011 Community Health Champions and thank them for their work to improve the health of people in Colorado.

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*To interview the award winners, please contact Maureen Maxwell at (303) 861-5165, ext. 259, (303) 913-9078, or [maureen@cchn.org](mailto:maureen@cchn.org).*

*The Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN) is the collective voice for Colorado's 15 Community Health Centers (CHCs) and their patients. CHCs provide a health care home to more than 500,000 of their community members - one in 10 people in Colorado - from 58 of the state's 64 counties. Without CHCs, hundreds of thousands of Colorado's low-income families and individuals would have no regular source of health care. CCHN's mission is to increase access to high quality health care for people in need in Colorado. For more information about CCHN, please visit [www.cchn.org](http://www.cchn.org).*

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