

Colorado Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program

# Advisory Council Legislative Report

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**COLORADO**  
Department of Public  
Health & Environment

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## Foreword

This Colorado Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program Legislative Report is responsive to the requirement found in *C.R.S. 25-1.5-505 Advisory Council - Report*:

“(1) On or before December 1, 2011, and on or before December 1 every two years thereafter, the primary care office, with assistance from the advisory council, shall submit to the governor, the health and human services committee of the senate, the committees on health, insurance, and environment and on public health care and human services of the house of representatives, or any successor committees, a report that includes, at a minimum, the following information:

“(a) A description of the health care professionals, behavioral health care providers, candidates for licensure, nursing faculty members, and health care professional faculty members participating in the Colorado Health Service Corps Program and the scholarship program;

“(b) A description of the programmatic goals of the Colorado Health Service Corps and the scholarship program, including the present status of and any barriers to meeting those goals;

“(c) Existing efforts and potential future projects to overcome any barriers to meeting the programmatic goals of the Colorado Health Service Corps and the scholarship program;

“(d) An analysis of the effects of the Colorado Health Service Corps program and the scholarship program on addressing the health care and behavioral health care needs of communities in Colorado;

“(e) A summary of any assessment or evaluation of program performance conducted during the year; and

“(f) A description of the nursing faculty or other health care professional faculty members participating in the Colorado Health Service Corps and the educational institutions where the participants teach.

“(2) The department of public health and environment shall include the report required by this section as part of its “State Measurement for Accountable, Responsible, and Transparent (SMART) Government Act” hearing required by section 2-7-203.”

## The Colorado Health Service Corps

The Colorado Health Service Corps loan repayment program (CHSC) is administered by the Colorado Primary Care Office (PCO) in the Prevention Services Division at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. The purpose of the CHSC is to improve the health of Colorado's medically vulnerable populations by alleviating health disparities resulting from poor access to primary medical, oral, and behavioral health care services.

The CHSC achieves this purpose by repaying the educational loan debt held by licensed clinicians in exchange for health care service in a Health Professional Shortage Area. The CHSC requires a service obligation of three years of clinical practice to low-income, publicly insured, uninsured, and geographically isolated Coloradans. The service obligation is two years for physician and nurse faculty and six months for Certified Addictions Counselor (CAC) scholars. All clinical sites, with the exception of qualifying substance use disorder treatment programs and health professions education programs, are nonprofit or public safety net clinics. All clinical sites are determined to have a provider shortage.

The PCO's statutorily created loan repayment programs are the focus of this legislative report:

1. Colorado Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program
2. Physician Faculty Loan Repayment Program
3. Nurse Faculty Loan Repayment
4. CAC Scholarship Program

### ***Response to 25-1.5-505(1)(a)***

Conditions of participation for the CHSC require that the applicant and awardee be a qualifying health care professional employed by a CHSC-certified site in a Health Professional Shortage Area. Health professionals eligible to participate in the CHSC fall into five categories: outpatient primary medical; outpatient oral and outpatient behavioral health clinicians; inpatient and outpatient substance use disorder treatment clinicians, candidates for licensure in behavioral health, scholars, and health professional faculty members. Clinicians working in the treatment of pain management or substance use disorders who are

actively pursuing supervised clinical hours to obtain full licensure and are a behavioral health clinician are also eligible to participate in the CHSC.

**Table 1: CHSC Eligible Clinicians, Service Obligations, and Award Amounts**

Category	Licensure & Award Levels	Specialties
Primary Medical Care  3-year CHSC Service Obligation	<b>Allopathic and Osteopathic Physician (MD or DO)</b> \$90,000 full-time clinical contact & \$45,000 part-time clinical contact	Family Medicine Internal Medicine Psychiatry Child Psychiatry Geriatrics Obstetrics/Gynecology Pediatrics Addiction Medicine Pain Medicine 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Family Physician Resident
	<b>Advanced Practice Nurse (APN)</b> \$50,000 full-time clinical contact & \$25,000 part-time clinical contact	Family Nurse Practitioner Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Certified Nurse Midwife Gerontology Nurse Practitioner Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Substance Use Disorders & Pain Management Specialist
	<b>Physician Assistant (PA)</b> \$50,000 full-time clinical contact & \$25,000 part-time clinical contact	Family Medicine Internal Medicine Pediatrics Psychiatric Geriatrics Women's Health Substance Use Disorders
	<b>Pharmacist (PharmD)</b> \$50,000 full-time clinical contact & \$25,000 part-time clinical contact	Clinical Pharmacy
Oral Health Care  3-year CHSC Service Obligation	<b>Dentist (DDS or DMD)</b> \$90,000 full-time clinical contact & \$45,000 part-time clinical contact	General Dentistry Pediatric Dentistry
	<b>Dental Hygienists (RDH)</b> \$20,000 full-time clinical contact & \$10,000 part-time clinical contact	N/A

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Behavioral Health Care  3-year CHSC Service Obligation	Psychologists (Ph.D. or Psy.D) \$50,000 full-time clinical contact & \$25,000 part-time clinical contact	Clinical Psychology Counseling Psychology Candidate for Licensure
	Clinical Social Worker (CSW) \$50,000 full-time clinical contact & \$25,000 part-time clinical contact	Candidate for Licensure
	Professional Counselor (LPC) \$50,000 full-time clinical contact & \$25,000 part-time clinical contact	Candidate for Licensure
	Addiction Counselor (LAC) \$50,000 full-time clinical contact & \$25,000 part-time clinical contact	Candidate for Licensure
	Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC) 20,000 full-time clinical contact & \$10,000 part-time clinical contact	CAC I CAC II CAC III Candidate for Licensure
	Marriage and Family Therapists (MFT) \$50,000 full-time clinical contact & \$25,000 part-time clinical contact	N/A
Faculty  2-year CHSC Service Obligation	Allopathic and Osteopathic Physician (MD or DO) \$45,000 full-time faculty member duties	Faculty physician at a Colorado Family Medicine Residency Program
	Nurse (RN, Master’s Degree or Higher) \$40,000 full-time faculty member duties & \$20,000 part-time faculty member duties	Nurse faculty of any accredited Colorado Board of Nursing approved nursing program
Scholarship  6-month CHSC Service Obligation	Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC I, CAC II, CAC III) \$15,000 scholarship	Any individual accepted into a Colorado Office of Behavioral Health CAC clinical training program and commits to 6-months of SUD clinical practice upon graduation and licensure

Sites eligible to participate in the CHSC fall into three categories: public, nonprofit safety net; health professional education programs; and public, nonprofit, or private pain management or substance use disorder treatment programs. With the exception of health

professional education programs all CHSC-certified sites share the following attributes in common:

1. Located in a designated Health Professional Shortage Area (primary care, oral health, mental health, substance use disorder).
2. Provide comprehensive primary medical, oral health, behavioral health, pain management, or substance use disorder treatment services.
3. Accept all patients regardless of ability to pay and offer a sliding fee scale based on family size and annual income for those at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.
4. Accept patients on public insurance, including Medicare, Medicaid, and CHP+. For practices that provide substance use disorder services, sites are eligible to participate if they do not accept Medicaid and/or Medicare so long as a meaningful sliding fee scale for low-income patients is available to clients. If a site does not see patients over age 65, the Medicare requirement is waived; if a site does not see children, the CHP+ requirement is waived.

**Table 2: Colorado Health Service Corps-Certified Clinical Sites and Eligible Academic Programs**

Category	Clinical Site or Academic Program Type
Public, Non Profit, Outpatient Safety Net Clinics	Federally Qualified Health Centers Rural Health Clinics Community Mental Health Centers Community-funded safety Net Clinics Hospital affiliated outpatient clinics Free Clinics Year-round School-based Health Centers Substance Use Disorder Treatment Clinics State Correctional Facilities Colorado Mental Health Institutes Tribal Health Clinic
Public, Nonprofit, or Private Pain Management or Substance Use Disorder Treatment Programs	Opioid Treatment Programs (OTP) Office-based Opioid Treatment Programs (OBOT) Medication Assisted Treatment Programs (MAT) Non-opioid substance use disorder treatment programs (SUD)
Health Professional Education Programs	Colorado Family Medicine Residency Programs Colorado-based Nursing Programs* Colorado Office of Behavioral Health CAC Clinical Training Programs

\*Eligible Colorado-based nursing programs must be accredited and approved by the Colorado Board of Nursing

## **Response to 25-1.5-505(1)(b)**

The PCO administers the CHSC in accordance with a work plan that includes a project goal and measurable outcomes to generate program funding, program demand, and impacts. Program impacts are presented in *Response to 25-1.5-505(1)(d)* and *Response to 25-1.5-505(1)(f)*.

### **Goal**

Improve the health of Colorado's underserved and medically vulnerable populations by alleviating health disparities resulting from poor access to primary medical, oral, behavioral health care, and substance use disorder services.

### **Measurable Outcome 1**

During FY 2019-20, the PCO will repay the educational loan debt held by CHSC-qualifying health care professionals through two application cycles of the Colorado Health Service Corps loan repayment program and the Colorado Health Service Corps CAC Scholarship Program. This work is evidenced by executed loan repayment contracts that obligate awarded health professionals or students to full-time or part-time clinical service in the Colorado safety net.

### **Measurable Outcome 2**

During FY 2019-20, the PCO will repay the educational loan debt held by physician faculty employed by any Colorado Family Medicine Residency Program. The PCO will also repay the educational loan debt held by nurse faculty (Master's Degree or higher) employed by any accredited, Colorado-based and Colorado Board of Nursing approved nursing program. This work is evidenced by executed loan repayment contracts that obligate awarded faculty members to two years of full-time or part-time faculty duties within their affiliated health professional education and training program.

### **Status**

The PCO administers CHSC application cycles in September and March of the state fiscal year. Applications for the Colorado Health Service Corps CAC Scholarship Program are accepted on the same time line. Applications for the Physician Faculty Loan Repayment Program and the



Nurse Faculty Loan Repayment Program are accepted from July 1 through September 30 of the state fiscal year. The PCO maintains the funding, personnel, and infrastructure necessary to conduct application cycles, review loan repayment applications for eligibility, convene external partners to score loan repayment applications and facilitate meetings of the Colorado Health Service Corps Advisory Council per C.R.S. 25-1.5-504 for the purpose of making loan repayment awards, loan repayment contract execution, and contract monitoring.

## Barriers

Given the heavily process oriented nature associated with each stated measurable outcome the PCO experiences relatively minor barriers in program delivery. The addition of the Physician Faculty Loan Repayment Program, Nurse Faculty Loan Repayment Program, Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Program expansion enabled by SB18-024, and the CAC scholarship program has required the Primary Care Office to re-examine and revise program policies and procedures that were established when the CHSC was in its infancy. This work is discussed in *Response to 25-1.5-505(1)(C)*.

## ***Response to 25-1.5-505(1)(c)***

### Existing Efforts: Senate Bill 18-024

The future of the Colorado Health Service Corps is evident in the program expansion enabled by Senate Bill 18-024. SB 18-024, signed into law on May 21, 2018, resulted in significant expansion of the CHSC. The law expanded the scope of behavioral health care providers eligible to participate in the CHSC to include primary care professionals specializing in pain management and behavioral health clinicians engaged in the delivery of substance use disorder treatment services (see Table 1). SB18-024 expanded access to the CHSC to qualifying behavioral health clinicians who are candidates for licensure (See Table 1). It permits the Colorado Health Service Corps Advisory Council to prioritize for award behavioral health care providers and candidates for licensure practicing in private, clinical settings (See Table 2). Finally, the law established the CHSC CAC scholarship program.

The Primary Care Office has fully implemented SB18-024. The CHSC program expansion enabled by the law rolled out in phases and concluded at the end of FY 2018-19. The journey to full implementation required immediate stakeholder engagement to understand clinical

settings in which substance use disorder treatment professionals practice, certify qualifying substance use disorder treatment programs for participation in the CHSC, identify and engage CAC training programs, establish a Colorado substance use disorder workforce shortage area designation, and navigate contracting and procurement for candidates for licensure and CAC scholars (Table 3: SB18-024 Implementation).

**Table 3: SB18-024 Implementation**

Milestone	Date Completed
SB18-024 signed into law	May 21, 2018
Substance Use Disorder Treatment Programs (SUD) certified to participate in the CHSC	September 1, 2018 - Ongoing
1 <sup>st</sup> CHSC, SUD loan repayment application cycle	September 1 - September 30, 2018
1 <sup>st</sup> cohort of CHSC, SUD loan repayment awardees	November 13, 2018
2 <sup>nd</sup> CHSC, SUD loan repayment application cycle	January 1 - January 31, 2019
2 <sup>nd</sup> cohort of CHSC, SUD loan repayment awardees	January 15, 2019
1 <sup>st</sup> CHSC, CAC scholarship application cycle and 3 <sup>rd</sup> CHSC, SUD application cycle	March 1 - March 31, 2019
1 <sup>st</sup> cohort of CHSC, CAC scholarship awardees, 3 <sup>rd</sup> cohort of SUD loan repayment awardees	May 13, 2019

## Barriers

The Primary Care Office experienced four barriers associated with the implementation of SB18-024:

1. CHSC participation criteria were designed for the nonprofit, public sector. These criteria had to be modified to facilitate participation of for-profit behavioral health providers.
2. Substance use disorder treatment sites across the state are distinct from other clinical providers who are participating in CHSC. Program staff had to research and adapt to different models of care delivery (e.g. Colorado Office of Behavioral Health approved Opioid Treatment Programs, Office Based Opioid Treatment Programs, MAT services, Non-Opioid Substance Use Disorder Sites).
3. Contracting with candidates for licensure presented certain administrative challenges

and required longer than typical contract agreements.

4. Contracting with CAC scholars presented certain administrative challenges related to prepayment of training dollars to a diverse set of training institutions.

FY 2019-20 is a period of necessary process improvement for the CHSC. The process improvement effort will result in streamlining existing programs policies and procedures necessary to:

- Clarify and delineate PCO staff roles and responsibilities.
- Affirm timelines of program deliverables necessary to fully execute program application and award cycles from start to finish.
- Guarantee contract monitoring processes adhere to department requirements and enforce conditions of participation for awarded clinicians, students, and faculty.

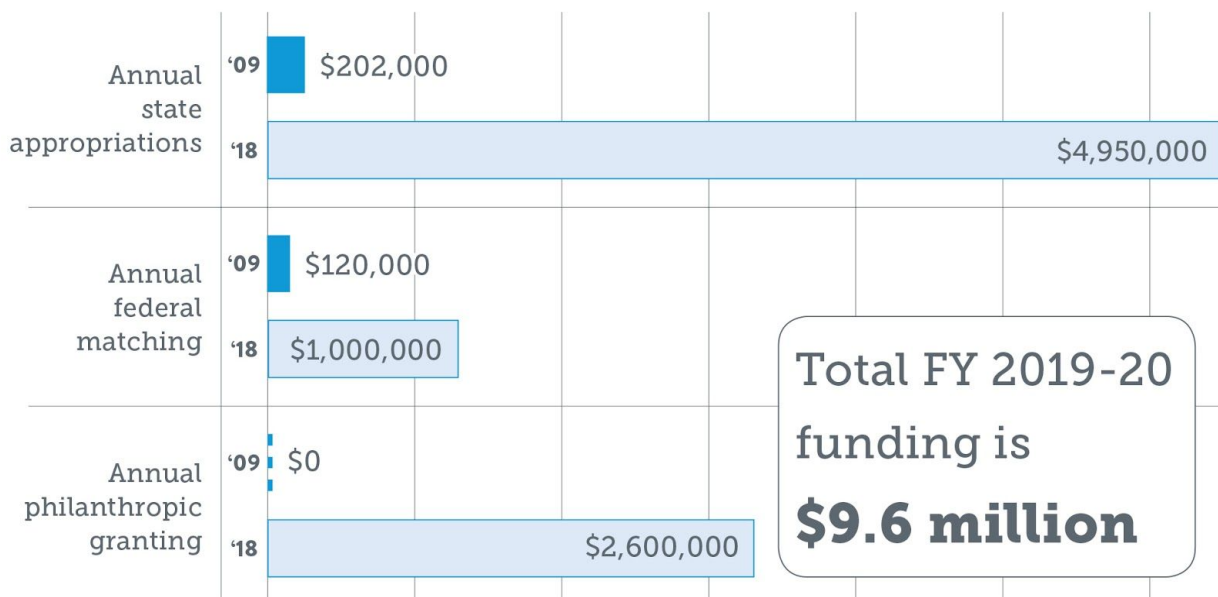
### ***Response to 25-1.5-505(1)(d)***

The CHSC is a public-private partnership funded by federal, state and philanthropic sources. It compliments the workforce recruitment and retention efforts of safety net clinics and substance use disorder treatment programs. The PCO leverages funding for the CHSC to meet the access-to-care need across the state (Graphic 1). The number of Coloradans served by CHSC clinicians and years of contracted service show that the CHSC and scholarship program are meeting the health care and behavioral health care needs of the state (Graphic 3). These outcomes show how CHSC implementation is meeting the intended purpose of the initial legislation.

Graphic 1: CHSC Funding Growth 2009 - Present



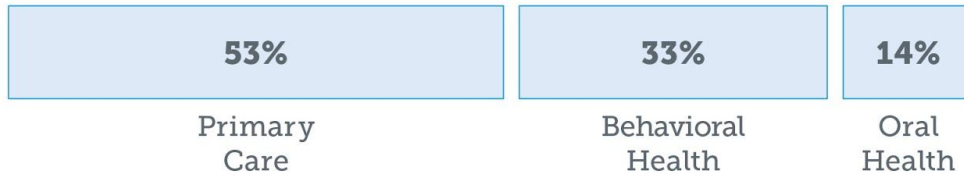
**FUNDING GROWTH FROM 2009 TO PRESENT**



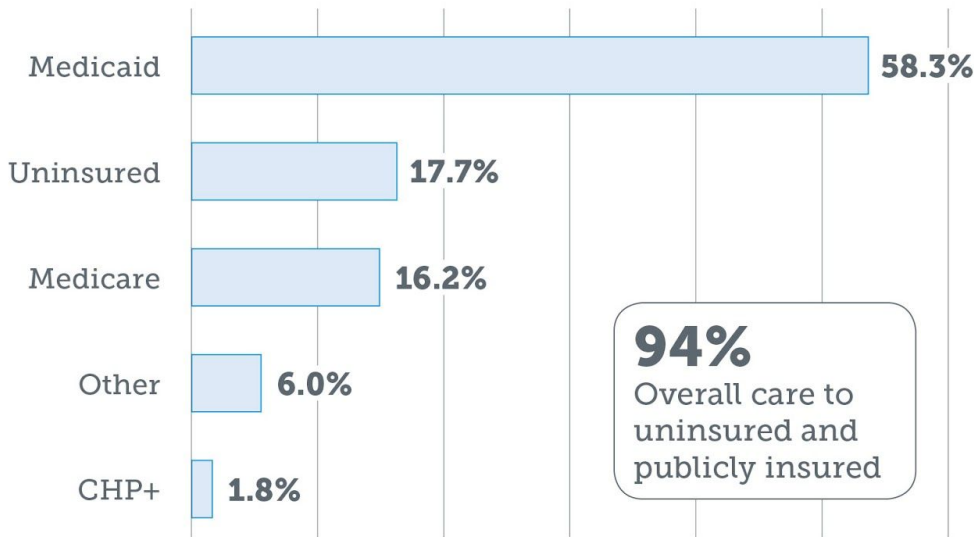
CHSC’s reach within the Colorado safety net is notable. Nearly half of the CHSC’s currently obligated health care professionals practice at a Community Health Center. Over thirty percent of currently obligated health care professional practice in the Community Mental Health Center setting. Even distributions of currently obligated CHSC clinicians practice in a Colorado Department of Corrections or Colorado Mental Health Institute site.

Graphic 2: CHSC Sites, Participation by Field and Payer Profile

**CHSC PARTICIPATION BY FIELD**



**PATIENTS' PAYER PROFILE**



**368**  
CHSC approved sites

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**\$28.5 million**  
loan repayment awards to date

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**31%**  
CHSC providers serving rural or frontier sites

Graphic 3: Snapshot of CHSC Cumulative Program Stats

**SNAPSHOT**

**685** CHSC providers - current and alumni

**+** **+** **+** **+** **+** **+** **+**

**393** **292**

Current primary, behavioral and dental health care professionals serving in safety net health care facilities in shortage areas, both urban and rural, throughout the state

Alumni

**1,917,698**

Patient visits CHSC clinicians have provided to medically vulnerable and underserved Coloradans since 2009

**1,942**

Total years of obligated service to underserved communities

**Table 4: CHSC Substance Use Disorder Program Expansion Output**

Program	Number of Awards To-Date
CHSC Substance Use Disorder Treatment Loan Repayment Program	66
CHSC, CAC Scholars	5
CHSC, CAC Scholar Applications in Review (October 25, 2019)	68

## Response to 25-1.5-505(1)(e)

**Graphic 4: CHSC Retention Effect 2009-Present**



Evaluation of CHSC clinician retention is powered through the Colorado Health Systems Directory (CHSD). The CHSC provides the PCO with much needed, accurate data about where clinicians practice, how they practice, and how much patient care they provide. The directory aggregates information on clinicians and systems from multiple public and proprietary data sources, matches the information to date in the system, standardizes information, and applies an algorithm to determine current information for clinicians and systems. The CHSC gives the PCO the ability to assess CHSC clinician retention, in real time, by identifying changes in clinical practice location and employers.

## Response to 25-1.5-505(1)(f)

**Table 5: Nurse Faculty Loan Repayment Programs Awards by Institution**

Nursing Program	Number of Awards To-Date
Regis University Loretto Heights School of Nursing	8
University of Colorado, Colorado Springs Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth El College of Nursing	2
Metro State University Department of Nursing	2
Otero Junior College Nursing Program	1
Colorado Mountain College Nursing Program	1