

Physicians: Setting and Meeting Population Health Goals for Colorado Retreat Summary

A group of Coloradans met in Florissant from June 21 to 23, 2013. They were Colorado physicians, medical students, and public health professionals who focus on the health care workforce. They considered data about health in Colorado, engaged in discussions about the way forward, and explored ways that the voice of physicians could leverage a healthier future for Colorado.

The group concluded that the health of a community is only as healthy as its children. Colorado may be one of the healthiest states in the nation, but this will not continue judging by the current health of our children, which is mediocre at best.

The group acknowledged that today's children, tomorrow's children and all Coloradans need access to health care and also access to the conditions that determine health in the first place. The group recognized that the Governor's new plan to become the healthiest state (www.colorado.gov/stateofhealth) is wholly consistent with better health, unanimously **endorsed the Governor's plan**, and encourages other groups of health care providers to do the same.*

The group was also clear that the Governor's plan **does not reach far enough**. Physicians can and should lead the vision and the action beyond the goals in the plan. Colorado is neither socially nor politically ready to support conditions that allow health for all people. Regardless, as trusted members of the community, Colorado's physicians should advance the dialogue on the social determinants (root causes) of health to move our state to a place of good health and not just good health care. Other important steps beyond the Governor's plan include compulsory access to health care for all children (just as we support compulsory education for children), broad expansion of behavioral health care (in recognition that cognitive and emotional functioning are as important to an economically and socially productive life as physical functioning), and the prevention of financial ruin for Colorado's families due to catastrophic health care costs.

The determinants of health (for example, meaningful and economically productive work) are everywhere, and the systems in which these determinants reside are huge and feel overwhelming. The personal challenges to health (for example, reversing one's obesity) can also feel impossible to address successfully. Understandably, many patients feel hopeless about their personal future, and see no better future for their communities. By using their voice to endorse the Governor's plan, the group believes that they can also **inspire hope and motivation** among Coloradans for better health and a better future.

As Coloradans, we value individualism. Healthy individuals will not remain healthy for long in communities whose conditions work against their health. We must **work together**, and we must work both at the individual level and at the community level to make Colorado healthy.

Members of the group expect to meet with the Governor's staff to explore the best use of the voice of physicians (and other health care providers) consistent with the points in the declaration from the Florissant retreat*. This statement will be shared with other health professional groups, and widespread endorsement of the Governor's plan will be encouraged.

****The members present "declare support for the Governor of Colorado's "State of Health" platform and encourage other health professional organizations in our state to also declare their support for this plan; endeavor to collaborate with other health professionals - knowledgeable in the unique health concerns of our communities - on improving health outcomes; and endeavor to specifically work toward a goal of access to health and healthcare, including behavioral health for all children, in our communities and in our state."***