COLORADO INITIATIVE
To Reduce Unintended Pregnancy

Working with public and private partners to reduce the pregnancies women themselves say were unplanned, with special attention to the needs of low-income and uninsured women.

UNINTENDED PREGNANCY MATTERS TO US ALL

Of the more than 100,000 pregnancies each year in Colorado, almost half are unintentional. Unplanned pregnancies are first and foremost an issue for individuals, but can also have far reaching impacts on families, communities and our shared future, including:

• Women with unplanned pregnancies are more likely to experience depression, physical abuse and poor health and less likely to breast feed or receive prenatal care, putting their babies at risk for low birth weight and childhood developmental challenges. Women who don’t receive prenatal care are five times more likely to have their baby die.

• Colorado spends an estimated $160 million annually for Medicaid costs associated with unintended pregnancy. National data shows that every $1 spent on pregnancy prevention saves $5.60 in avoided Medicaid costs.

• Women with unplanned pregnancy are less likely to finish high school or college and achieve financial stability in their lives. More than 60% of women in community college who become pregnant fail to complete their degree.

• Unintended pregnancies result in about 15,000 abortions in Colorado each year.

USING EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

Since 2008, the Colorado Initiative has been working with public health and community-based service organizations to increase the supply of and demand for the information and services needed to reduce unintended pregnancy in our state.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO QUALITY SERVICES:
More than 90 public health centers across the state have expanded their hours, providers and overall services available to women. The quality of care for patients has been enhanced through expanded and improved training for health providers. Nine in 10 women who use Colorado’s publicly funded family planning centers call it the primary source of health care – half of them say it is their only health care provider.

PROMOTING HEALTHY DECISIONS AND PLANNING:
Individuals, families and communities are working to normalize conversations about sexual health. Schools, parents, community groups and health care providers are central partners in new culturally-relevant and other informative education and outreach efforts. Beforeplay.org has emerged as a dynamic online hub for information and resources on birth control, pregnancy and STDs, with more than 20,000 Facebook fans engaging in the issues and tens of thousands more reached through one-on-one outreach.

INCREASING USE OF LONG-ACTING REVERSIBLE CONTRACEPTION (LARC):
IUDs and implants are birth control methods that are 99% effective in part because once they are placed no additional action is required. Though they have a high upfront cost, they can provide significant long-term savings for individuals and society alike. In removing the cost barrier to these effective methods for many women, together with education about newer methods for both consumers and providers, the demand for and use of LARC has increased. More women will be able to use a LARC method with much of the cost barrier being removed as more women transition to new health care coverage and prevention benefits provided by the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

IMPROVING PUBLIC POLICIES:
Federal and state policy changes have been implemented to help ensure contraceptive access for women. The number of school-based health centers providing contraception and/or advancing age-appropriate sex education has nearly doubled. Under strengthened leadership, Colorado has made reducing unintended pregnancy one of its major “Winnable Battles” for public health and is implementing various strategies to achieve that goal.
Building on Lessons Learned

During the past six years, the Colorado Initiative has gained insights into effective strategies to reduce unintended pregnancies – and promising results are surfacing. By building on these lessons, Colorado can improve the lives of children and families by helping parents better prepare for the demanding task of raising children. When children are planned for, families tend to be healthier, more economically stable and more opportunities for education and other life goals. With the help of new partners and resources, Colorado can continue making progress. Key steps that need to be taken include:

Enhance the Quality and Quantity of Services by reaching the 390,000 individuals not covered by the Affordable Care Act; ensuring that adolescents have access to quality, confidential care; and building human capital through training for health care providers and leveraging staffing in key public health institutions.

Expand Education and Outreach by supporting health educators in community and school-based clinics and Betterplay.org for public education and to encourage increased enrollment in new Medicaid and private health plans.

Increase Use of LARC by stepping up training for family practice and primary care providers, ensuring broadest coverage through Medicaid and new insurance plans, maintaining support for those without health care coverage.

Strengthen Public Policies by building support for public funding for confidential reproductive health services and comprehensive sex education; and enhancing standards for what it means to provide quality reproductive health services.

Early Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improved LARC Use</th>
<th>Increase in use of LARC since 2008</th>
<th>200%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Unintended or At Risk Pregnancies</td>
<td>Decrease in unintended pregnancies since 2009</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<td>Reduction in the number of births to at-risk women over the same time</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<td>Reduced Teen Births</td>
<td>Decrease in teen births since 2008</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<td>Drop in subsequent teen births over the same time</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<td>Improved Birth Outcomes</td>
<td>Decrease in preterm births</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Decrease in low-weight births</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced Abortions</td>
<td>Reduction in abortion rates for counties served by the Colorado Initiative</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Savings</td>
<td>Saved in Medicaid costs in Colorado for every 1000 teen moms who receive LARC to prevent a second pregnancy</td>
<td>$2.3 mil</td>
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Partner Organizations

Boulder Valley Women’s Health Center, Colorado Association for School Based Health Care, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights, Colorado Youth Matter, Children’s Hospital, Denver Health, Denver Public Schools, Focus Points Family Resource Center, High Plains Community Health Center, NARAL Pro Choice Colorado Foundation, Southwest Open School, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Valley-Wide Health System

Colorado Initiative to Reduce Unintended Pregnancy
1430 Front Street, Louisville, CO 80027
(720) 564-0537