

Vision:

A community where all residents have an opportunity for health.

Mission:

Achieve equitable access & promote a healthier Aurora for everyone.

Equity Statement:

Aurora Health Alliance's commitment to health equity means we strive for and promote the highest possible standard of health for all people.

To Aurora Health Alliance, health equity means everyone has a fair opportunity to be as healthy as possible, regardless of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, language, physical and mental ability, and other core aspects of identity. It requires the dismantling of structural racism through the removal of barriers to health. It requires both improving access to the care and resources needed to thrive, along with equitable treatment once that access is gained.

Our Work:

Aurora Health Alliance (AHA) offers an inclusive convening table where health and community leaders can come together to discuss and develop solutions to health access issues in their community: inadequate primary care capacity, limited access to specialty care, inequitable distribution of health resources, and fragmented approaches to solutions. We provide a practical, innovative, and open approach to collaboration, and we not only react to, but also tries to anticipate, the needs in the community.

Guiding Principles:

- Serve as a catalyst, coalition-builder, and impartial convener.
- Build and nurture collaboration in understanding and in seeking solutions to Aurora's healthcare problems.
- Commit to an inclusive, productive, and respectful approach to community discussions and problem-solving; one that focuses on solutions, not blame.
- Seek to engage and listen to those directly affected by community health issues.
- Offer multiple ways to engage in what we do, so that more people, communities, and organizations can participate.
- Identify, promote, and build upon what is already working well.
- Strengthen Aurora's capacity by supporting new and emerging professionals, providers, activists, and leaders.
- Acknowledge contributions and celebrate successes.

2009 - 2010

Early 2009 - The parishioners of St. Theresa's Church were concerned about access to healthcare in NW Aurora and began to hold neighborhood meetings to discuss the problem.

November 2009 - St. Theresa's hosted a community meeting to discuss healthcare access in Aurora - over 150 people attended. Together Colorado and STRIDE (then called MCPN) helped organize the event. The group identified 3 guiding principles: 1) the healthcare system in Aurora can meet the needs of all residents; 2) it will take all of us working together to succeed; and 3) the diversity of Aurora is a strength and all with aligned interests are welcome.

January 2010 - As a result of the community meeting, the all-volunteer Aurora Health Access Task Force was formed and the Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved (now called the Center for Health Progress) received a grant to help support AHA.

2011

A community survey was conducted to identify health access priorities for AHA to address. The highest priorities identified were: 1) high numbers uninsured/underinsured, 2) inadequate primary care capacity, 3) limited integration, care coordination, and access to specialty care, and 4) inequitable distribution of healthcare resources.

AHA Access Task Force received a small grant to expand health insurance coverage, especially among Aurora's immigrant and refugee communities. They worked with Aurora's ethnic restaurants to provide community education about health insurance enrollment through table tents, post cards, and coloring placemats. This kind of outreach - with informal, trusted community leaders was a very effective way to reach their targeted families.

2012

AHA volunteers conduct a "Canvassing and Congregation" survey of 161 families in NW Aurora.

- 63% said they avoided getting medical care because of cost.
- 31% had difficulty getting a primary care appointment within a month for a non-urgent need.
- Working with the Colorado Children's Healthcare Access Program (CCHAP) AHA produced a list of Pediatric Medical Homes serving Aurora.

June 2012 - Centers for Medicare and Medicaid awarded a 3-year \$4.2 million grant to Metro Community Provider Network (now STRIDE) to implement the "Bridges to Care" program at the University of Colorado Hospital.

- AHA, along with Aurora Mental Health and Together Colorado were key community partners.
- The goal of the grant was to reduce emergency room visits and unnecessary hospitalizations.
- The program served over 600 patients, and among 225 program graduates, the number of ED visits to UCHospital decreased 49 percent, while the number of hospitalizations fell 55 percent, and that resulted in savings of nearly \$8 million in charges.

2013

The 1st Aurora Kids Convening was held January of 2013. The Colorado School of Public Health, Colorado Children's Health Access Program, and Children's Hospital Colorado partnered with AHA to organize the event. One of the major problems identified was lack of health insurance.

- Data showed that the proportion of uninsured children in North Aurora (21.4%) was two times higher than Colorado statewide (10.1%), and stakeholders estimated that 20% of Aurora's youth were uninsurable due to lack of documentation.

AHA later took on several projects related to health insurance and documentation, including a report titled Private Health Insurance Options for Undocumented People.

AHA received a 3-year operating grant from The Colorado Health Foundation to hire an Executive Director, formalize a governance structure, and develop a sustainability plan.

2014

AHA began working with and supporting Primary Care Progress, a dedicated group of students (and some faculty members), and the Fields Foundation to explore the feasibility creating a free student-run clinic in Aurora. In July of 2014, 740 students across the Anschutz campus signed a petition to support such a clinic, and the DAWN Clinic opened in March 2015!

March 2014 – AHA hired its first Executive Director – Denise Denton

October 2014 – An Oral Health Convening was held at the Martin Luther King Library to identify oral health needs and resources in Aurora, and 22 organizations participated.

December 2014 – The Senior Circle was formed, led by partners at InnovAge and the Colorado Gerontological Society!

2015

June 2015 – The first Aurora Senior Forum was held in the community room of St. Theresa's Church, with 76 participants and 14 exhibitors.

AHA's Adult Access Work Group voted to become the Access to Specialty Care Task Force, to focus on a chronic and worsening problem.

AHA's Board revised the mission statement "to collaboratively improve access to care and create a healthier Aurora," adding, "with a focus on our most vulnerable and underserved residents."

