



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Groundbreaking Local Health Data Project Wins Funding

## The Colorado Health Foundation Awards Two-Year Grant to CHORDS

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Five metro Denver local public health agencies have banded together for a groundbreaking project that will use health care data in sophisticated new ways to better address obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and mental health issues at the community level.

The Colorado Health Foundation has awarded a two-year, \$1.9 million grant to the Colorado Health Institute (CHI) to lead the work. CHI will support CHORDS — the Colorado Health Observation Regional Data Service — and its partners. These include local public health agencies representing Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas and Jefferson counties as well as the University of Colorado Denver, Denver Health and CORHIO, Colorado’s largest health information exchange network.

CHORDS makes it possible for public health agencies to safely and securely query patient-level clinical data from participating health care providers. CHORDS aggregates data that is stripped of patient-identifying information to help public health agencies develop, target and measure interventions to improve health where they are most needed.

For example, health care providers calculate Body Mass Index (BMI) for each of their patients by weighing and measuring them. Collecting this clinical information may reveal that a certain community, or even a neighborhood, has many residents struggling with obesity. A public health agency could then partner with that community and determine which specific interventions, such as nutrition education classes or neighborhood walking challenges, would work best to address the obesity problem.

Eleven health care providers have so far agreed to participate in CHORDS: Children’s Hospital Colorado, Clinica Campesina, Clinica Tepeyac, the Colorado Alliance for Health Equity and Practice, the Denver Health and Hospital Authority, High Plains Health Center, Inner City Health Center, Kaiser Permanente of Colorado, Metro Community Providers Network, Salud Family Health Center and the Stout Street Clinic operated by Colorado Coalition for the Homeless.

“CHORDS can help public health professionals to better understand what health looks like in their counties,” said Sara Schmitt, CHI’s Director of Community Health Policy. “It adds a level of precision that will build on the survey data traditionally available to public health agencies and supports their efforts to address health disparities.”



CHORDS began as a pilot project in 2011 at the Colorado Clinical Translation Sciences Institute at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. The project is now housed at Anschutz's Adult and Child Consortium for Outcomes Research and Delivery Science. It is powered by PopMedNet, software developed by Lincoln Peak Partners with the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute and the Harvard Medical School's Department of Population Medicine.

"CHORDS allows us to see a bigger and more comprehensive picture than previous monitoring systems," said Dr. Arthur Davidson, director of Public Health Informatics, Epidemiology and Preparedness at Denver Public Health, one of CHORDS's founders.

"We are excited to have this new level of health data to share with community members and discuss how we can work together to improve health. We are thankful for the trust and partnerships with health care providers and communities to support this public health effort."

The CHORDS project is among the first in the nation to use the new technology at the local level, building on the technology's use in research and for several national networks.

Key activities planned over the two years include increasing the number of health care and mental health data contributors; extending access to all metro local public health agencies; updating CHORDS technology; engaging community members; and developing a governance structure.

