COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

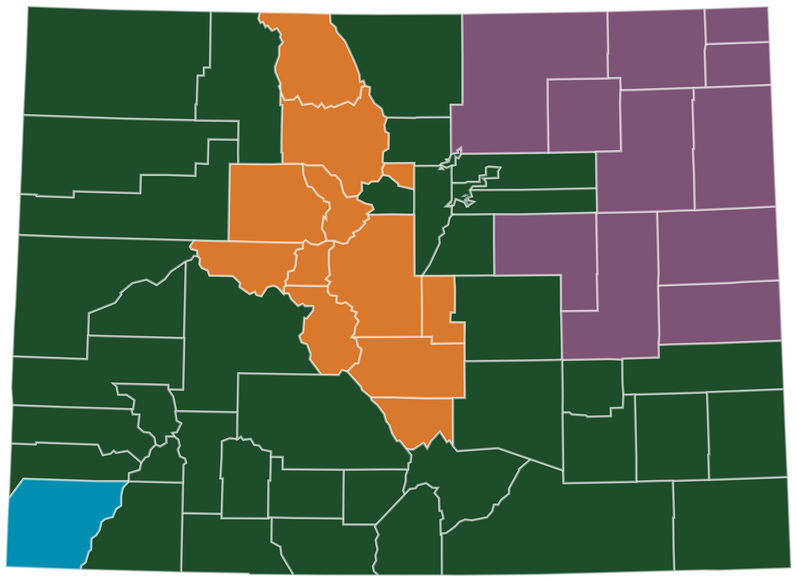
DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH ACROSS THE LIFESPAN: A TRI-REGION CASE STUDY OF HEALTH EXTENSION PROGRAMS IN COLORADO

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PURPOSE

The goal of this internship was to observe and evaluate the effectiveness of Health Extension programs throughout three regions in Colorado: the Southwest, Northeast, and Mountain regions. Health Extension works to promote behavioral, physical, and social health in all parts of Colorado and reaches all ages and backgrounds. In Extension, health moves beyond being defined as the absence of disease and instead moves towards a holistic view of improving individuals and communities through access to care and resources.

REGIONS OF INTEREST



WOMEN'S HEALTH: Studying the availability of women's health services and health education throughout the Mountain Region.

TELEHEALTH: Understanding barriers to internet access for telehealth services and opportunities for growth throughout the Eastern Region.

ADOLESCENT HEALTH: Reducing the impact of chronic disease on youth and families in Montezuma County in the Southwest region.

PROGRAMS OF INTEREST

Women's Health

Program

The Women's Health Survey is a statewide survey, with a focus on the Mountain Region, dedicated to understanding strengths and gaps in women's healthcare, education, and available resources.

Strengths

Exposure to potential partners in women's health throughout Colorado

Garnered interest in women's health services across the lifespan

Limitations

Limited survey responses throughout the state (31 counties with no response)

Variability in resources available throughout counties

Telehealth

Program

The Northeastern Colorado Digital Access Coalition, comprised of 11 county representatives, is working to understand regional opportunities for expanding digital access for rural and agricultural communities.

Strengths

Removal of stigma about mental health services

Improved mental health for both youth and aging adults

Reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation

Limitations

Limited internet and broadband access

Lower digital literacy in youth and older adults

Adolescent Health

Program

The Health Without Barriers program is a six-week curriculum that teaches healthy habits related to physical health, mindfulness, and healthy eating for rural Colorado teens and their families.

Strengths

Full family participation

Community-driven curriculum

Culturally sensitive to rural lifestyles and resources

Limitations

Limited training ability for new facilitators statewide

Community buy-in necessary for implementation

AGE AND HEALTH

All three programs address the social determinants of health: the factors in our community and lifestyle that impact how we live, work, and play. The Health Extension programs highlighted also demonstrate a commitment to health across the lifespan, from adolescence to aging populations. While specific needs differ, the **desire for resources and care locally** remains the major theme across women's health, telehealth, and adolescent health programming in Extension offices across Colorado. This shows that there is ample opportunity for Extension to continue to support health and wellness throughout Colorado.

NEXT STEPS

WOMEN'S HEALTH: The study will continue to gather results through the fall and distribute results through Extension offices and local public health agencies.

TELEHEALTH: Alongside partners in Northeast Colorado, the Coalition will begin facilitating mini-grants (totaling $83,000) to programs dedicated to improving digital access.

ADOLESCENT HEALTH: Health Without Barriers will commence in Durango in the fall, with plans to expand into other rural communities in coming years and a hybrid training model for facilitators.