Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center

colorado school of public health

ANNUAL REPORT 2026



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RMPRC'S MISSION, VISION & APPROACH

The RMPRC is an affiliated center of the CDC-funded national network of Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) that works together to develop and test solutions to promote the health and wellbeing of communities across the U.S.

RMPRC Approach

The RMPRC approach includes:

- Building and sustaining long-term partnerships with early child learning centers, schools, and communities to enhance child health and family health and well-being
- Conducting community-engaged research to improve social-emotional development and well-being with children and families in under-served communities
- Using a multi-level approach to connect families to evidence-based programs and multi-sector partnerships to strengthen community capacity



Mission

The RMPRC mission is to conduct community-engaged research with schools and communities across the Rocky Mountain region to promote social-emotional, mental, and physical health.

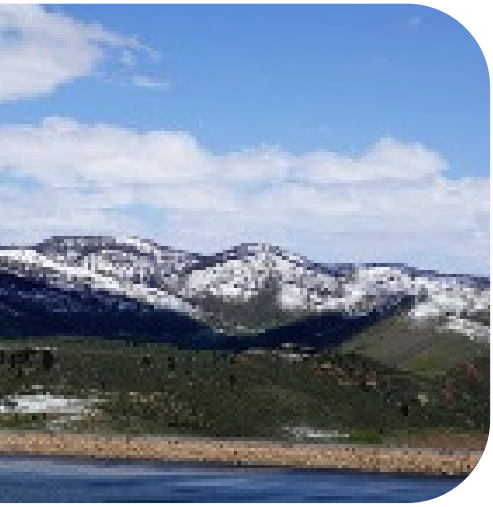
Vision

The RMPRC vision is that children and families live in communities that optimize health and well-being.

INTRODUCTION







History of RMPRC

Since 1998, the RMPRC at the Colorado School of Public Health has focused on advancing healthy lifestyles and preventing chronic disease among residents and communities in the Rocky Mountain region by conducting, disseminating, and serving as a resource for community-based research and policy.

The success of the RMPRC has been the result of a core partnership between researchers from CU Anschutz and community members of the San Luis Valley (SLV), a beautiful area located in Southcentral Colorado, where approximately half of the residents are Hispanic/Latino and a quarter live in poverty. The RMPRC has partnered with a SLV community advisory board (CAB) for over 20 years to conduct community-based participatory research. Through active collaboration, we build local capacity to execute evidence-based public health practice.

Recently the RMPRC completed a 5-year research project that focused on the prevention of the intergenerational transmission of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). We worked with the SLV CAB to develop and test a multi-level, community-based study that coupled implementation of evidence-based strategies while leveraging extant community infrastructure and resources. While it originated directly from the community, this priority also aligns closely with national public health priorities.

Leadership Team

Jenn Leiferman, PhD; Director



Jini Puma, PhD; Associate Director



Tara Abram, Center Manager



Charlotte Farewell, PhD, MPH



Core D & I Director

Megan Cherewick, PhD, MPH



Core Training & Eduction Director

Affiliated Faculty

Sarah Brewer, PhD, MPA



Samantha Brown, PhD, LPC, IMH-E



Lori Crane, PhD, MPH



Mary Dinger, PhD, MSEd



Russell Glasgow, PhD



Kathy James, PhD, MS, MSPH



Glen Mays, PhD, MPH



Beth McManus, PT, MPH, ScD



Betsy Risendal, PhD



Elaine Scallan Walter, PhD, MA



Sarah Schmiedge, PhD



Heather Smyth, PhD



RMPRC Staff



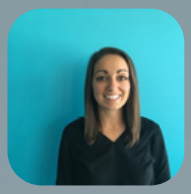
Rosalina Balleza



Kathleen Leedom, MA



Diane Brogden, MA



Emily Maiurro, MS



Joanna Coleman, MA



Maria Noboa De Garcia, BA



Tracy Doig, MEd



Julia Pangalangan, DrPH, MS



Ellie Dudley, MA



Jennie Quinlan, MPH



Sarah Gelinas, MPH



Sharon Scarbro, MS



Lisa Gonzales, MPH



Ethen Tietze, MPH



Deanna LaFlamme, MA



SLV Community Advisory Board



Don Hanna



Robert Chavez



Ashley Koppenhafer



Lisa Lucero



Sandy Ortega



Kathryn Trujillo



Antonio Sandoval

ACADEMIC PARTNERS

Eugene S. Farley, Jr. Health Policy Center
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

ACCORDS
ADULT AND CHILD CONSORTIUM FOR HEALTH OUTCOMES RESEARCH AND DELIVERY SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO | CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL COLORADO

University of Colorado Cancer Center

Community & Behavioral Health
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The Kempe Center

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Department of Family Medicine
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO | **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

OB-GYN
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Health Systems, Management & Policy
colorado school of **public health**

College of Nursing
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Department of Psychiatry
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

Injury & Violence Prevention Center
colorado school of **public health**

RMPHTC
Rocky Mountain Public Health Training Center
A Member of the Nation's Network of Public Health Training Centers

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Department of Pediatrics
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

Center for Bioethics and Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Trainings Offered

Community D/I Science

The RMPRC partnered with ACCORDS to host a Dissemination and Implementation (D&I) Research Workshop and Series. The workshop is a half day collaborative event that focuses on defining the intended users of community-based D&I research and their needs, barriers and pressure points in conducting community-based D&I research. The workshop brings individuals together from the Rocky Mountain region along with national partners.

Provider Trainings on Mental Health and Substance Use

The RMPRC in partnership with the Rocky Mountain Public Health Training Center (RMPHTC) is offering opportunities for public health professionals from rural Colorado to participate in a unique online training which covers core concepts including defining public health issues, conducting community assessments, prioritizing options and evaluating programs and policies to prevent mental illness and substance misuse.

Prenatal Depression and Anxiety

Healthcare providers play an integral role in identifying and managing (i.e. treating or referring to care) mood and anxiety disorders among pregnant women. This free training is designed to provide an overview of the harmful effects of depression and anxiety on numerous maternal and child outcomes, as well as enhance patient-provider communication using a 5As framework (i.e. Assess, Advise, Agree, Assist, and Arrange).

PAUSE for your Well-Being

The PAUSE For Your Well-Being campaign, funded by the RMPRC and the RMPHTC, aims to motivate individuals to adopt five evidence-based activities that foster well-being and improve mental health. PAUSE For Your Well-Being was presented at local events and included in national resource repositories.

RMPRC Core Services

The RMPRC has three cores, each with their own set of expertise.

Surveillance and Evaluation

- Conduct formative (e.g., needs assessments), process, outcome and impact evaluations
- Develop and test theory-based conceptual models/frameworks
- Create logic and planning models
- Design, collect and analyze survey data
- Develop interview guides and collect qualitative data (e.g., interview/focus groups)
- Conduct mixed-methods evaluations (with quantitative and qualitative data)
- Conduct research/evaluation projects in preschools, schools, healthcare and community settings serving low-income and/or ethnic minority populations

Community Partnerships & Engagement

- Partner with communities to enhance engagement using community-based participatory research and evaluation principles
- Strengthen local, academic, state, regional and national partnerships, creating a pathway for translational activities
- Create linkages within and across communities within CO and Region 8 to promote participation in programs and program evaluation activities
- Foster community support for knowledge, product translation, and evaluation

Training and Dissemination

- Develop collaborative dissemination plans to support translational research and training activities within CO and Region 8
- Provide training and technical assistance related to dissemination of and implementation of evaluation tools and materials
- Work with organizations to strengthen community capacity to optimize family and child well-being by training the current and future workforce
- Offer strategic planning support for training activities and learning opportunities to train the current workforce and community members using a variety of modalities

RMPRC Projects









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Anschutz Mental Health Collaborative



Objective

The Anschutz Mental Health Collaborative (AMHC) is a campus-wide initiative dedicated to transforming mental health across Colorado through prevention, early intervention, clinical care, research, and workforce development. Supported by an initial $50 million gift from The Anschutz Foundation, the Collaborative brings together interdisciplinary faculty, clinicians, health systems, community organizations, and public health partners to expand access to evidence-based mental health services, strengthen cross-campus collaboration, and accelerate innovations that improve mental health across the lifespan.

RMPRC Contribution

As a community interventions partner within the AMHC, the RMPRC is expanding two evidence-based programs that strengthen mental health promotion and prevention in early childhood education settings.

Together, these programs contribute to the Collaborative's shared goals of increasing community engagement, expanding access to evidence-based preventive mental health services, supporting implementation and dissemination of effective interventions, and improving mental health outcomes for Colorado communities.

Supporting Trauma Awareness & Nurturing Children's Environments (STANCE)

- Expands community-based screening, assessment, referral, and prevention efforts related to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- Connects children and families with evidence-based supports while strengthening community systems of care
- Advances community-engaged implementation strategies to improve child and family mental health outcomes

Well-being of the ECE Workforce in Low-Resourced Locations (WELL)

- Expands evidence-based strategies that promote educator well-being through stress management, sleep, physical activity, and behavioral change support
- Supports organizational policy, systems, and environmental changes that foster healthy workplaces
- Strengthens the early childhood workforce to promote resilience and improve the well-being of educators and the children they serve

STANCE

Supporting Trauma Awareness & Nurturing Children's Environments

Goal

Interrupt the intergenerational transmission of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) by strengthening positive childhood experiences (PCEs).

Objective

The objective of STANCE (Supporting Trauma Awareness & Nurturing Children's Environments) is to build trauma-responsive early childhood systems by strengthening educator capacity, supporting parent and caregiver resilience, and creating safe, nurturing, and emotionally supportive learning environments that foster positive childhood experiences, resilience, and healthy social-emotional development for children.

STANCE Intervention Levels and Components:

Educator-Level:
Build educator knowledge and skills about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and positive childhood experiences (PCEs) through awareness trainings and professional development opportunities that support safe, predictable, and nurturing learning environments

Family-Level:
Strengthen parent and caregiver resilience through evidence-based curricula that promote positive parenting, stress management, and family well-being

Classroom-Level:
Implement evidence-based practices that create emotionally safe classrooms, strengthen relationships, and promote children's social-emotional development

Center/System-Level:
Support early childhood programs in adopting flexible, trauma-responsive approaches tailored to family needs through screenings, referrals and coordinated community-based supports

WELL PROGRAM

Well-being of the ECE workforce in Low-resourced Locations



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Working in early childhood education (ECE) settings is stressful and ECE educators often face excessive demands and low-resourced workplaces. This imbalance in demands and resources impacts overall well-being of the ECE workforce. The WELL program investigates factors associated with worker well-being and implements an intervention to support and promote the well-being of the ECE workforce.

WELL INTERVENTION

Organizational Supports:

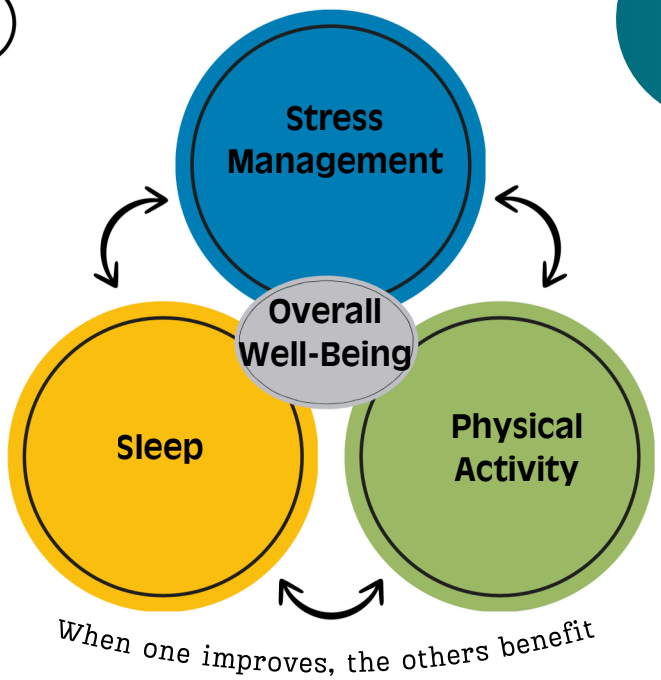
- Policy, systems, and environment changes

Social Supports:

- Workplace wellness program
- Social connection & team building activities

Individual Behavior Supports:

- Hands-on professional development opportunities
- Well-being messaging campaign



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

After participating in WELL:

- 89% intended to set a well-being goal
- 93% had a better understanding of strategies they could use if they had trouble sleeping
- 91% intended to set a goal related to sleep health

> "WELL motivated me to exercise, eat better, and take better care of myself."

Substance Use Program Evaluation, including ACEs and Recovery (SPEAR)

Background

The Substance Use Program Evaluation, including ACEs and Recovery (SPEAR) project is a community-academic partnership between the Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center (RMPRC) and organizations across Colorado's San Luis Valley (SLV). Since 2022, SPEAR has worked alongside community partners to strengthen the region's prevention, treatment, and recovery system by identifying local needs, improving collaboration, and developing practical tools that support long-term systems change.

Objective

To strengthen the SLV's substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery network by evaluating community needs, identifying strengths and service gaps, and translating these findings into resources that improve coordination, referrals, and access to care

Project Components:

Community Partnership & Coalition Building – Convene the multidisciplinary SPEAR Coalition to guide priorities, foster collaboration, and support regional systems improvement

Data-Informed Decision Making – Analyze regional social determinants of health (SDoH) and other community data to identify needs and inform coalition priorities

Community Assessment & Evaluation – Conduct lived experience interviews, stakeholder engagement, and community assessments to better understand barriers, strengths, and opportunities across the continuum of care

Resource & Tool Development – Develop practical resources that improve navigation, referrals, data collection, and coordination across prevention, treatment, and recovery organizations

Knowledge Translation – Share findings with community partners to support planning, quality improvement, and sustainable implementation

Mothers Optimizing Resources Everyday (MORE)



Objective

The primary research objective of the MORE study is to integrate advanced analytical modeling with qualitative data to inform the timing, duration, content and delivery modalities of a multi-level psychosocial intervention to promote perinatal well-being among individuals experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage.

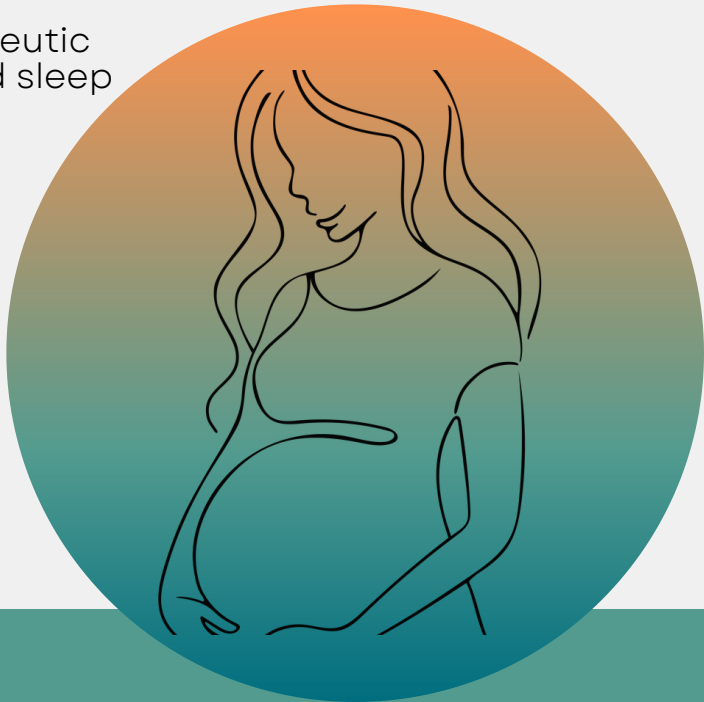
MORE aims to:

Investigate point-estimates and trajectories of psychological capital across the perinatal period in 300 individuals experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage (1st trimester, 3rd trimester, 6-weeks postpartum, 12-weeks postpartum).

Identify cross-sectional and longitudinal associations between psychological capital trajectories, social resources and mental health outcomes.

Adapt a multi-level psychological capital intervention for perinatal populations experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage.

Development of multi-level, nature-based therapeutic interventions (ROOT, NAPS) to improve mood and sleep among low-SES perinatal individuals



Restorative Outdoor Opporunities for Thriving (ROOT)



Background

ROOT is a six-week, nature-based therapeutic intervention designed to promote sleep and reduce anxiety among low-income perinatal women by targeting key biological, psychological, and social resources (e.g., light exposure, mindfulness, peer support). Developed through a three-phase process - including a longitudinal mixed-methods study of perinatal anxiety (n=481), a systematic review of nature-based interventions (NBIs) for perinatal women, and community-engaged refinement with a community advisory board - ROOT was intentionally designed to be culturally relevant, feasible, and responsive to the needs of underserved populations.

Findings

Findings from these phases informed its group-based format, hybrid delivery model (three in-person and three Zoom sessions), early postpartum implementation, and emphasis on basic psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, competence, and relatedness). Grounded in relational forest therapy and mind-body practices, participants engage in group-based guided sensory and observational exercises and receive resource materials addressing social determinants of health, including food insecurity.

Project Components:

Each cohort is led by a specially trained perinatal doula who receive comprehensive training in ROOT content and facilitation, ensuring intervention delivery that are both evidence-based and community-centered.

Pilot test of ROOT:

- Pilot study: ROOT was piloted in Spring 2026 with a cohort of low-SES postpartum women (n = 5).
- High feasibility: 80% of participants attended all six sessions, and 100% attended at least five sessions and completed all study assessments.
- High acceptability: 100% of participants strongly agreed that ROOT was acceptable and feasible.
- Positive perceived impact: 100% of participants reported improvements in:
  - Knowledge related to sleep and anxiety
  - Attitudes toward sleep and anxiety management
  - Self-efficacy for improving sleep and managing anxiety
  - Goal setting related to sleep and anxiety

High Potency Marijuana (HPM) Perinatal Project



Background

Cannabis use during pregnancy and postpartum is an important public health concern, with many individuals using cannabis to manage symptoms despite limited evidence and inconsistent clinical guidance. Building on the team's previous work developing and beta testing the Healthy Pregnancy AI Assistant, this year's project focused on refining digital patient education, expanding clinical dissemination, and developing provider training to support evidence-based, nonjudgmental care.

Objective

To support the prevention and reduction of cannabis use during pregnancy and postpartum by strengthening patient-facing education and provider-facing clinical guidance through tools that provide pregnant and postpartum individuals with evidence-based, nonjudgmental support and equip providers to identify cannabis use, counsel patients, and connect them to appropriate resources.

Project Components:

- Patient Education & Digital Health – Developed the Healthy Pregnancy AI Assistant, an AI-driven SMS chatbot that provides evidence-based education, coping strategies, self-screening, and connections to resources while offering providers a dashboard to monitor patient engagement.
- Provider Education & Clinical Training – Developed a free, two-credit-hour CME training that equips providers with evidence-based guidance and practical counseling strategies for addressing cannabis use during pregnancy and postpartum.
- Research & Knowledge Generation – Analyzed statewide survey data and prepared a manuscript examining cannabis use, knowledge, confidence, and counseling needs among pregnant and parenting populations to inform future clinical practice and research.

Wellbeing In Nature (WIN)

The Wellbeing In Nature (WIN) pilot study will evaluate the feasibility of implementing a forest bathing program to improve mental health and wellbeing among students, faculty, and staff of CU Anschutz. Forest bathing is a nature-based intervention (NBI) derived from the Japanese practice of Shinrin-Yoku, which involves slow walking, mindful sensory engagement, and quiet attentiveness to one's surrounding natural environment for the purpose of promoting relaxation, psychological restoration, and physiological wellbeing. Research on "nearby nature" suggests that natural features within or near one's neighborhood can have restorative benefits for health and may be an especially important strategy to increase access to Nature-Based Interventions is for urban communities or populations with limited resources, including time and transportation.



WIN study participants will participate in at least one 90-minute group forest bathing session with a trained forest therapy guide (Dr. Charlotte Farewell and/or Dr. Jenn Leiferman) at a location close to the CU Anschutz campus. Participants will complete pre- and post- interventions surveys as well as interviews to assess intervention feasibility as well as impacts on stress, positive affect, social connectedness, nature-relatedness, and frequency of outdoor exposure. We have held 3 of 10 planned forest bathing sessions with a total of 21 participants. Interest in the study is high: 102 individuals have enrolled. We will continue recruiting and scheduling. participants in the Fall.

AMBASSADORS FOR LITERACY & RESILIENCY

A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Mission Statement

The Ambassadors for Literacy and Resiliency (AFLR) program affirms the understanding that education is a social determinant of health. Within the broad realm of education, from ECE to High School, AFLR provides flexible, multifaceted and beneficial educational experiences to the communities it serves. AFLR reduces cost barriers to post-secondary education, maximizes access to materials and resources that enrich early literacy and social emotional development, and prepares young adults to become fiscally aware, responsible community role models.







Project Highlights

AFLR has primarily worked with schools in the San Luis Valley and Weld County

- 52 high school students have completed the program supporting hundreds of ECE students
- Over $300k worth in scholarships have been distributed
- More than 6,000 hours of volunteering within the school communities

Culture of Wellness in Preschools (COWP)

Overview:

COWP is a comprehensive and collaborative early childhood obesity prevention program, which aims to promote a “culture of wellness” in preschool settings by increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity levels. This is accomplished by bringing the following to preschool sites throughout Colorado: 1) classroom-based nutrition education; 2) a preschool physical activity professional development program; 3) parent wellness workshop series; 4) a staff workplace wellness program; and 5) a strategic planning process to make center environment and policy changes that focus on increasing healthy eating and physical activity levels. All program components are evidence-based or promising practices.

Denver Great Kids Head Start (DGKHS)

Denver Great Kids Head Start is one of our longest standing partners for Culture of Wellness in Preschools. This partnership creates healthy learning environments where children, families and educators work together to build lifelong healthy habits. The program integrates nutrition education, physical activity, family engagement, and healthy policies into everyday classroom experiences to support children’s overall health, development and school readiness.

- Hands-on nutrition education and food exploration delivered monthly.
- Teachers receive professional development to increase physical activity and active play throughout the day, and portable play equipment is delivered to schools.
- Family engagement through wellness workshops: cooking classes, and practical strategies they can use at home. All food and materials provided to support home-to-school connections.
- Support healthy environments through healthy policies and staff wellness activities.
- Participate and support the yearly Parent Extravaganza where families get to explore a local family friendly venue and receive lunch, gather resources and participate in activities.



COWP: Nutrition Education and Food Access



Program Overview:

The Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center is implementing an expanded version of its evidence-based Culture of Wellness in Preschools program that pairs hands-on nutrition education with enhanced food access and caregiver supports. Informed by community needs and successful Healthy Food for Denver's Kids microgrant work at four Denver Public Schools early childhood education sites, the model connects classroom learning, healthy food distribution, family cooking education, and practical improvements to early childhood settings.

Supported by the Healthy Food for Denver's Kids Initiative, the three-year program will serve 94 classrooms across Denver's Great Kids Head Start and Denver Public Schools. It is expected to reach approximately 1,880 preschool and kindergarten students each year in under-resourced Denver communities.

Program Components:

Hands-on Nutrition Education - Participating classrooms receive six developmentally appropriate nutrition lessons each school year. Teachers are provided with lesson plans, books, kitchen supplies, and foods for tasting and preparation activities that give children repeated, positive experiences with healthy foods.

Family Food Access - Families receive healthy foods through culturally responsive farmers markets, pantry tables, strengthened pantry infrastructure, and recipe-linked food bags. Foods are selected to complement classroom lessons and family preferences and may include produce, whole grains, and healthy protein foods.

Supportive Site Environments - Participating sites receive support to implement practical improvements that make healthy eating easier for children and families. Examples include pantry infrastructure, classroom supports, and healthy eating practices selected according to each site's priorities and capacity.

Caregiver Cooking and Nutrition Education -Caregivers can participate in multilingual virtual classes focused on simple, affordable, and culturally relevant meals. Families receive ingredients and practical kitchen tools in advance so they can cook along from home and continue using the recipes after class.

Together, these components create a coordinated model that strengthens nutrition knowledge and food skills while reducing practical barriers to healthy eating at home and in early childhood settings.

Healthy Eating Research (HER) Guidelines and Colorado Farm to Child Collaborative



Projects to support the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) implementation of the Colorado State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) Grant.

Objective

This project aims to reduce chronic disease and improve health outcomes across Colorado by increasing access to healthy foods and beverages. Through implementation of the Healthy Eating Research (HER) Nutrition Guidelines in Colorado's charitable food system and expansion of Farm to Early Care and Education (Farm to ECE) initiatives, the project supports food banks, early childhood education settings, and community partners in creating healthier food environments. Special emphasis is placed on advancing equitable access to nutritious foods, strengthening local food systems, and promoting healthy eating habits that contribute to lifelong health and well-being.

Program Components:

- Food Bank Support: Develop training and provide technical assistance to Colorado's five food banks to implement and adopt HER Nutrition Guidelines.
- Farm to ECE Leadership: Coordinate the Colorado Farm to Child Collaborative, conduct needs assessments, facilitate meetings, and share resources to strengthen Farm to ECE efforts statewide.
- Partnership Development: Collaborate with Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), Feeding Colorado, and the Colorado Department of Education to advance nutrition and healthy food access initiatives.
- Evaluation and Reporting: Collect data, assess outcomes, and report on nutrition guideline adoption, training participation, and Farm to ECE activities.

Intended Outcome

Increase access to healthy, nutritious foods, strengthen healthy food systems, and support long-term health outcomes for Colorado communities, particularly those experiencing food insecurity and health disparities.



Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition/Family Friend and Neighbor(FFN)

Grant in partnership with the Colorado Department of Early Education (CDEC)



- Colorado's first ever state investment in FFN care.
- Services include evidence-based training for providers on a variety of early childhood topics to increase the quality of care provided. This program was designed for informal caregivers such as neighbors, and grandparents.

- The program provided professional development training and a materials grant up to $950 per provider for books, health and safety equipment, education supplies and learning materials.

- We facilitated over 8 training sessions with FFN providers around healthy eating, learning new recipes, exploring fruits and vegetables with take-home nutrition education lessons, books, food; and created a community of learners through FFN cohorts.

- Over 80 providers participated in our training series program through the Culture of Wellness in Preschools.

- Sessions were held in communities where participants could join at community centers, churches, recreation centers and our campus at UCD Anschutz.



Text2Live Healthy: Mulitilingual Health Education

Program Overview



Text2LiveHealthy is a multilingual texting program that delivers practical health education directly to community members. Building on an established nutrition and physical activity model, the program works with community navigators and partner organizations to provide culturally and linguistically tailored health information to immigrant and refugee communities in English, Spanish, Amharic, Arabic, and Dari.

The expanded program addresses a broad range of community health priorities, including nutrition, physical activity, mental health, preventive care, vaccines, healthcare navigation, chronic health conditions, and healthy sleep. The immigrant and refugee initiative is supported by the Rose Community Foundation and other public and philanthropic partners.

Program Components:

- Multilingual Health Education – Subscribers receive brief, accessible health messages in their preferred language. Messages use plain language and may include videos, graphics, and links to trusted health resources.
- Community-Informed Adaptation – Multilingual staff, community navigators, and community members help adapt message content, examples, and recommendations for each audience. This process helps ensure that information is understandable, relevant, and responsive to community priorities.
- Trusted Community Outreach – Community navigators and partner organizations recruit subscribers, introduce the program, gather feedback, and connect the texting campaign with broader health and resource-navigation efforts.
- Evaluation and Continuous Improvement – Subscriber responses, link engagement, surveys, and qualitative feedback are used to assess program reach, acceptability, and potential effects on health knowledge, confidence, and behavior. Findings inform improvements to message topics, language, format, frequency, and recruitment strategies.
- A recent five-language campaign reached more than 1,200 subscribers. Evaluation findings indicated high acceptability and promising self-reported improvements in health knowledge, confidence, and health-related behavior.
- Together, these components provide a low-barrier way to deliver trusted health information, reinforce healthy behaviors, and expand access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health education.

Lifestyle Medicine for Cardiometabolic Disease Prevention in Midlife Women

Collaborators: Women's Health, Sports and Performance (WHSP) Institute; Elizabeth Frates, MD (PAVING the Path to Wellness)

Objective:

This research program aims to develop and implement a scalable lifestyle medicine intervention to prevent cardiovascular disease (CVD) among perimenopausal women. Through support from and a partnership with the Women's Health, Sports and Performance (WHSP) Institute, this work aims to adapt and evaluate PAVING the Path to Wellness (PAVING), a group-based lifestyle medicine intervention that addresses the six pillars of lifestyle medicine: physical activity, nutrition, sleep, stress management, social connection, and avoidance of risky substances. The project applies implementation science methods to identify the clinical, organizational, and patient-level factors needed to successfully integrate lifestyle medicine into routine women's healthcare.

Activities

- Adapt a group-based lifestyle medicine intervention for perimenopausal women
- Implement a lifestyle medicine intervention in an active women's health care setting
- Apply implementation science frameworks to guide adaptation and evaluation
- Train healthcare providers to deliver group-based lifestyle care
- Test the feasibility of intervention delivery and outcome measurement
- Develop implementation strategies to support the clinical integration of lifestyle interventions into routine practice
- Generate data for continued funding to scale lifestyle interventions for women's cardiometabolic health
- Disseminate of findings to clinical, academic, and community partners

Climate, Mental health, and Preparedness among Migrant Farmworker Families

Objective

This project examines how climate-related hazards—extreme heat, storms, flooding, and agricultural disruption—affect mental health, family wellbeing, and disaster preparedness among migrant farmworker families. Using surveys, interviews, focus groups, and Photovoice across six Florida farmworker communities, the study identifies risk and protective factors related to psychological distress, trauma symptoms, climate anxiety, coping, adaptation, and preparedness.

Relevance to Colorado

Though based in Florida, findings translate directly to the Rocky Mountain region, where agricultural workers and rural communities already face heat, drought, wildfire smoke, economic uncertainty, and disaster risk. Results will inform community-engaged strategies for behavioral health, climate adaptation, and preparedness among frontline agricultural communities in Colorado.

Activities

- Household surveys with farmworker families
- Focus groups and semi-structured interviews
- Photovoice to elevate community perspectives
- Community dissemination events and stakeholder engagement



Affiliated Faculty Projects

Validation of Self-Reported Vaccination Status among Adult Patients in Private, Public and Managed Care Health Care Settings

Objective

Vaccines are credited as one of the most successful public health achievements in history and estimated to have saved 154 million lives since 1974. Organizations charged with protecting the public health, like the national Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), use large national surveys to monitor vaccination rates in the U.S. These surveys rely on people's ability to accurately report the vaccines they have received. However, it is not known how accurate people are in reporting their vaccine status.

The purpose of this study was to determine the accuracy of vaccine self-reporting for nine adult vaccines: influenza, pneumococcal, herpes zoster, hepatitis A and B, human papillomavirus (HPV), and tetanus vaccines (Tdap and Td). We compared people's reports of their vaccinations with information from their medical records.

We also explored other data sources for their usefulness in estimating vaccination coverage in the U.S.

Findings

- For routinely recommended adult vaccines, we found that adults are mostly accurate in their reporting. On average, adults somewhat over reported their receipt of routine influenza and HPV vaccines and under-reported their receipt of pneumococcal vaccine. Survey estimates had little to no bias for tetanus and zoster vaccines.
- For hepatitis A and B vaccines among people who are at elevated risk for these diseases, we found that our self-report survey produced estimates that were somewhat higher (over-reporting) compared to medical records.
- During pregnancy, vaccination for influenza and Tdap are recommended to protect both the baby and mother. We found that survey estimates for these vaccinations during pregnancy were highly accurate.
- Pneumococcus vaccination is routinely recommended for adults over the age of 65. For people under 65 who have certain risk factors, it is also recommended. For the group under 65 with risk factors, we found significant under-reporting of vaccination status.
- We examined 9 non-survey data sources for estimating vaccine coverage. Most used health insurance records to assess vaccinations. We concluded that these sources have important limitations for estimating national vaccination coverage in the U.S., mostly because they represent only portions of the population.



A Sampling of Our Publications

Leiferman JA, Powers J, LaRooca D, Scarbro S, Gelinas S, Smyth H, Schmiege S, and Puma J. Supporting Trauma Awareness and Nurturing Children's Environments (STANCE): Findings from a Multilevel Community Intervention. Prevention Science (in press)

Farewell, C.V., Gahrns, J., Pangalangan, J. Curl, E., Pangalangan, A. (2025). Community-Based Doulas and Medicaid Expansion: A Resource-Based Approach to Support the Well-being of Low-Income Postpartum Women. BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth, 25(1): 757.

Hurley LP, Crane LA, Daley MF, Beaty B, Rice JD, Homdayjanakul KJ, Lyons J, Lou Y, Elliott L, Shoup JA, Robertson E, Manning B, Black CL, Lu PJ, Singleton JA. Accuracy of self-reported vaccination status using surveys in safety-net, integrated and rural health systems in Colorado. Vaccine. 2025 Dec

Puma, J.E., Pangalangan, J., & Farewell, C.V. (2025). Impact of Economic Stress and Organizational Factors on Turnover Intent in Early Care and Education. Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 1-9.

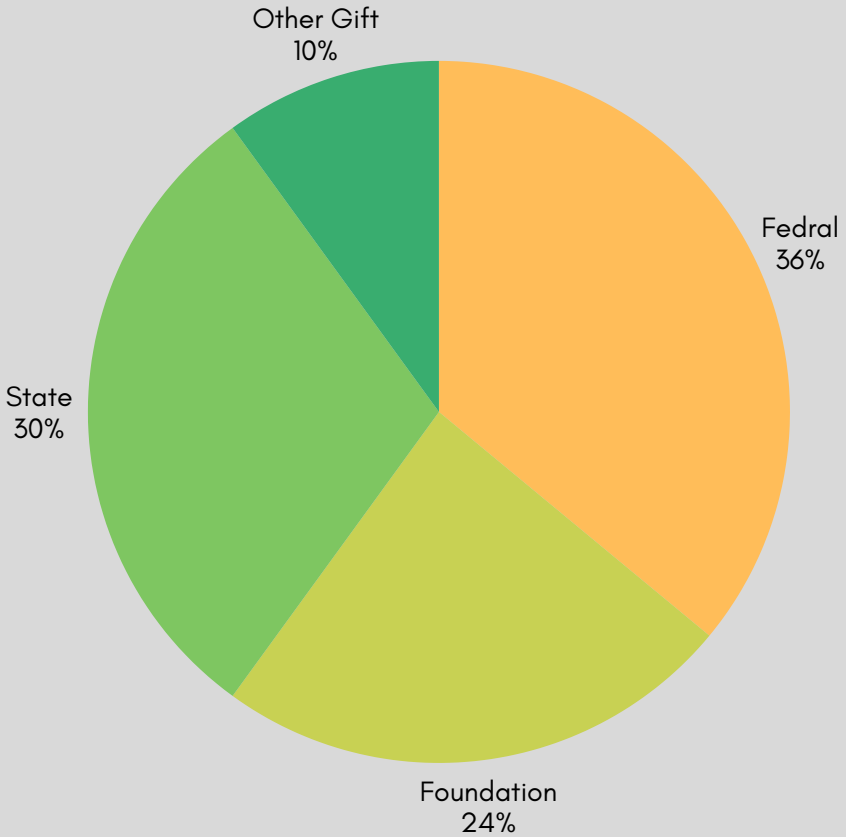
Farewell, C.V., Schmiege, S., & Leiferman, J.A. (2025). Racial Differences in Psychosocial Resources and Mental and Physical Health Outcomes during Pregnancy: A structural equation modeling approach. Maternal Health, Neonatology and Perinatology, 11:16.

Pangalangan JML, Farewell CV, Frates EP, Tollefson M, Brooks-Russell A, Puma JE. Assessing Preliminary Implementation Outcomes of a Lifestyle Medicine Intervention. Health Promotion Practice. 2026;0(0). doi:10.1177/15248399261419077

FINANCIAL UPDATE

The RMPRC had a diverse funding portfolio in FY 2026.

Federal	**$914,496**
State	**$614,920**
Foundation/Non-Profit	**$776,552**
Other Gifts	**$243,962**





Looking Ahead

Upcoming Projects

The RMPRC will be collaborating on a project for the Rural Health Transformation Project (RHTP) which aims to reduce chronic disease morbidity and mortality and improve access to social services and supports in Colorado's rural and frontier communities. The project is supporting the development of a Rural Chronic Disease Consortium and regional framework to strengthen coordination among healthcare providers, public health agencies, and community organizations. Through stakeholder engagement, regional readiness assessment, and mapping of chronic disease prevention and management programs and resources, RHTP will identify service gaps and opportunities to strengthen community-clinical linkages, care coordination, workforce capacity, sustainability, and data-informed planning.

Opportunities for Partnership

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