

Local community health centers to receive millions in American Rescue Plan funding



COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (KRDO) -- Two Southern Colorado community health centers are getting a boost from the Biden Administration in the fight against COVID-19.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, \$131 million is being allocated to 19 centers in Colorado starting in April, through the administration's American Rescue Plan.

"For us to be able to receive this funding is monumental," Peak Vista Community Health Centers Interim President and CEO Lisa Ramey said.

The funding will allow health centers to expand COVID-19 vaccination, testing, treatment and primary health services for vulnerable populations.

"Community health centers are trusted primary care homes for vulnerable populations, minority populations and underserved populations," Pueblo Community Health Center CEO Donald Moore said.

According to Moore, the \$4.8 million that Pueblo Community Health Center is expecting will go toward the nearly 30,000 patients that rely on their services.

"With this money, we'll do everything that we can to reach them with vaccines and get them caught up on their healthcare needs," Moore said.

Most of those patients, he said, are currently living below the poverty line and have had to put off or delay care throughout the pandemic.

"In 2019, my organization served almost 28,000 unique individual people. In 2020, that fell to 24,000."

Funding will also go toward vaccination efforts, like those hosted by Peak Vista Community Health Centers in Colorado Springs.

"We had partnered with Governor Polis to work on an equity clinic, specifically for vaccines, trying to reach those individuals who may have vaccine hesitancy or even concern to come in," Ramey said.

Ramey said their organization's \$15 million share will be heavily invested in longterm, creative ways to better reach patients.

"We need to be very strategic in how we approach this funding and how we use it in the best benefit of our patients, because we need to ensure this is sustainable."

Leaders for both community health centers said they're currently still in the planning stages, but expect to start receiving some of the funds in April.

[To learn more about initiate](#), or find [a complete list of centers receiving grants](#), visit their websites.