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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 18, 2022

Supporting Families in Need with Peak Vista's First Visitor Program

Colorado Springs, Colo. – First Visitor is a free home visitation program that provides education and resources to new or expecting parents. The program, unlike many in the area, is completely open to the public, allowing it to help more parents in need. Any family with children between the ages of zero to five years old is eligible, regardless of income level or affiliation with Peak Vista. The First Visitor program believes in the importance of providing parents with the tools they need to help their child flourish and to prevent child abuse and neglect.

The program is based around the home visit. After a referral from a Peak Vista provider or community partner, one of Peak Vista's Family Support Care Managers (FSCM) calls to set-up a time to visit the family's home. During the visit, the FSCM will provide the family with an educational packet based on the child's age group. The packet includes material on safe sleep, the importance of dental care, shaken baby syndrome, self-care and more. FSCMs will connect the family with resources in the community, such as food stamps, housing and food resources, if they need it. They will also bring age-appropriate gifts for the family, all brought in through donations, like diapers, gently used clothing or hand-knit blankets. Each visit can last up to two hours, and Peak Vista's three Family Support Care Managers complete two to three home visits every day.

Kimberly Abel, a First Visitor FSCM, recounts one of her first clients:

"I met this family around the holidays last year. They were struggling financially, waitlisted for housing, and living out of a motel. The family had two older children and a newborn baby. During the home visit, the mother mentioned needing Christmas gifts for her children. I enrolled the family in two programs, Christmas Unlimited and Gries Christmas. Come Christmastime, we were able to provide the family with resources for their baby, like formula and diapers, and gifts for the other children. When she saw the gifts, the mother was brought to tears."

After their visit, families can request more time with their care manager to dive into specifics about childcare and family management. To ensure families have the knowledge they need, First Visitor offers three classes a week on safe sleep and shaken-baby syndrome, as well.

"We love the mission," says FSCM, Silvia Lara, "Something as simple as a winter coat— something that we may take for granted— can be lifechanging for these families in need. Being able to provide that...There's nothing like it."

To learn more about Peak Vista's First Visitor program, please visit peakvista.org/services/first-visitor.

About Peak Vista Community Health Centers

Peak Vista Community Health Centers is a nonprofit organization providing exceptional health care to people facing access barriers through clinical programs and education. Celebrating over 50 years of community health service, Peak Vista offers primary medical, integrated behavioral health and dental care services. We proudly serve over 93,000 patients annually through outpatient centers in Colorado's Pikes Peak and East Central regions. To learn more about Peak Vista, visit www.peakvista.org.

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