

*Voice of the Rocky Mountain Empire*

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## YOURHUB

### Colorado Access set to expand its coverage



**By Joe Vaccarelli**  
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**C**olorado Access already serves 385,000 people throughout the state, but look for that number to go up in the coming years.

The nonprofit health plan is currently an insurer and an administrator for residents on Medicare, Medicaid and Child Health Plan Plus and is the leading public service health provider in the state. Now its leaders are looking at broadening its scope.

“We’re headed toward entering commercial markets for employers who want to be at risk for their own cost as opposed to paying premiums for employees,” said Ballard Pritchett, vice president of strategic communications for Colorado Access.

Pritchett said Colorado Access will be involved in providing insurance coverage for small employers through the Colorado Health Insurance Exchange, which was created through the Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, also referred to as Obamacare.

The exchange will be operational in 2014, Pritchett said. It will provide a new marketplace for individuals and small employers to shop for and enroll in both public and private health insurance coverage.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, if it is upheld by the Supreme Court, will also expand Medicaid to 133 percent of the poverty level and subsidize health care for those between 133 percent and 400 percent of the

poverty level, giving Colorado Access the opportunity to serve more clients on that end.

Colorado Access has been in existence since 1994 and has served many in that time. Anyone on Medicaid, Medicare or CHPP can enroll any number of ways, such as by visiting Colorado Access' Denver office, calling on the phone or visiting the group at a health fair. It also serves those who need behavioral care and have helped those patients get the help they need.

One patient, Zim Olson, has benefited to the point where he now works part time at the center where he was receiving treatment.

Olson suffers from paranoid schizophrenia and spent time homeless before getting care he needed at the CHARG Resource Center in Denver.

He said without Colorado Access, he would not be able to afford the new medication he is on,

Latuda, which he said has helped him considerably more than any other drug.

"I would say it's a life-changing drug," Olson said. As these expansions take place within Colorado Access and more can receive the type of care that Olson received, Pritchett said he expects the group to be able to create more jobs.

"We've increased our payroll here steadily over last four years. That will keep on going," he said.

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