



COLORADO
Governor Jared Polis



COLORADO
Lt. Gov. Dianne Primavera

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Office of eHealth Innovation Advancing Pandemic and Behavioral Health Response Efforts

DENVER - The Office of eHealth Innovation (OeHI) continues to support and advance the Governor's pandemic response and call to action to improve behavioral health for Coloradans through telemedicine and health information technology.

On September 14, 2020, OeHI, in partnership with the Governor's Office, and their fiscal agent, Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF), received federal fund match approval for \$65,099,970 from the Centers of Medicaid and Medicare (CMS) through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Health Information Technology Act to both continue key health IT infrastructure projects and new projects launched during early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic that include telemedicine, health information exchange enhancements, care coordination systems, information governance, and other innovations. These funds continue many projects that CMS funded as part of the approved emergency response funds, as well as projects established by HCPF, OeHI, and the eHealth Commission prior to the pandemic response.

"Colorado is leading the way in saving people money on healthcare by using health information, telemedicine, and innovation to address our immediate COVID-19 pandemic response needs. This approach is a key component about how the state moves forward in the coming months to address both physical and behavioral health needs of hardworking Coloradans," said Governor Polis.

With this important funding, HCPF, OeHI, and the eHealth Commission are establishing critical and strategic health IT infrastructure to support Coloradans through the COVID-19 emergency response and beyond.

"We are still learning about the impacts of COVID-19 and time is of the essence. Access to real-time health information can help slow the spread of COVID-19 and enable patients and clinicians to make more informed decisions," said Lt. Governor and Office of Saving People Money on Health Care Director Dianne Primavera. **"One of the biggest barriers to using telemedicine is understanding what it is and how to have the visit with your doctor. We have heard from doctors and patients around the state who are using telemedicine that it takes time to learn. But when they figure it out, many patients and providers prefer the virtual option for convenience and safety, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic."**

One of the first projects launched during the initial response included improving how COVID-19 results are routed from lab facilities to providers and patients by submitting the results through Colorado's Health Information Exchanges (HIEs). Through OeHI-led projects, Coloradans now receive their COVID-19 test results in their patient portals faster than before.

To inform all telemedicine efforts, OeHI has launched telemedicine projects with over 37 Medicaid providers who provide physical and mental health services, telemedicine analysis and evaluation with the Colorado Health Institute (CHI) using clinical and claims data, and regional learning collaboratives with Prime Health

to increase learnings and collaboration across the state. The culmination of these projects will inform future state infrastructure and policy efforts. The first several telemedicine projects to launch include projects with the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, Developmental Disability Resource Center, Axis Health System, Mental Health Center of Denver, and Beverly Hawpe & Associates. Many more projects with Medicaid providers will be launched throughout October. In addition to these projects, the telemedicine evaluation with CHI leverages interviews with patients and providers and information from the Colorado Health Observation Regional Data System (CHORDS), a data partnership between 14 provider organizations to use clinical information to inform public health response and policy. Through this research, OeHI and CHI are releasing a number of publications that highlight patient, provider, and payer perspectives about telemedicine use, cost, and preferences.

To help improve information about virtual care and telemedicine for all health needs and for all Coloradans, OeHI has launched [Health at Home](#), a new website in both English and Spanish. OeHI launched the site over the summer and will continue to refine the content in the coming months. This site is geared towards whole person care, which includes both physical and mental health. This site, along with OeHI's other efforts, is part of Polis' strategy to operationalize the recommendations of the Behavioral Health Task Force Blueprint and Covid-19 Committee recommendations. OeHI is working closely with the Governor and Lt. Governor's Office to finalize approaches, projects, and next steps for advancing this work.

To guide this work in the coming days, weeks, and months, Governor Polis and Lt. Governor Primavera continue to rely on the OeHI and eHealth Commission to oversee, coordinate, and strategize health IT policy, infrastructure and innovation in a way that leverages the lessons learned through the pandemic response, as well as existing foundational efforts established through [Colorado's Health IT Roadmap](#), which focuses on leveraging Colorado's health information exchanges (Colorado Regional Health Information Organization and Quality Health Network) to provide trusted infrastructure.

For more information about the Office of eHealth Innovation's telemedicine and health IT projects such as the latest publications with Colorado Health Institute refer to their website: <https://oehi.colorado.gov/>

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