Type of Meeting	Monthly eHealth Commission Meeting
Facilitator	Kaakpema (KP) Yelpaala
Commission Attendees	Michael Archuleta,, Rachel Dixon, Sophia Gin, Patrick Gordon, Michael Feldmiller, Micah Jones, Krystal Morwood, Jackie Sievers, Kevin Stansbury, Parrish Steinbrecher, Misgana Tesfaye Absent: Toni Baruti, Mona Baset (prior notice), Amy Bhikha (prior notice)

Minutes

Call to Order

KP Yelpaala

- Quorum Met: Yes
- Voting of Meeting Minutes: A motion to approve the December meeting minutes was made by Commissioner Kevin Stansbury, seconded by Commissioner Parrish Steinbrecher
- Corrections for December 2024 eHealth Commission meeting minutes: None

Announcements

Stephanie Pugliese, Director, Office of eHealth Innovation

- Lieutenant Governor Dianne Primavera communicated that there is a lot of work to be done in 2025 and the coming years. She also expressed gratitude to both Michael Archuleta and Rachel Dixon for their time as commissioners.
- Stephanie Pugliese announced that Commissioners Rachel Dixon and Michael Archuleta's commission tenure is ending and expressed gratitude for their collaboration and support over the past 3 years
- Karen Haneke announced that a new Data Governance Workgroup will be starting on January 3rd. Individuals interested in joining should contact Kim Taylor at kimberly.taylor@state.co.us.
- Stephanie Pugliese announced that the Draft 2025 Health IT Roadmap will be available for public comment soon as the applications for healthcare organizations are now closed. Awardees will be notified by January 10th. Listening Sessions will be held January 20th-

February 10th.

- Stephanie Pugliese announced that we have two new commissioners, Ellen Sarcone and Alex Reed. Ellen provided an introduction.

New Business

Bridging the Digital Divide in Colorado, Brandy Reitter, Executive Director, Colorado Broadband Office

- Presentation Slides: Bridging the Digital Divide in Colorado

Detailed Summary: Brandy Reitter provided an overview of the work that the Colorado Broadband Office has been doing to bridge the 'digital divide' in Colorado. She explained many initiatives that the Colorado Broadband Office has been working on and provided context on what is to come regarding those initiatives in 2025.

- **Connecting 99% of Coloradans to high speed internet**
  - Brandy Reitter explained that in 2022, Governor Polis set a goal of connecting 99% of Coloradans to high speed internet by 2027.
  - The Colorado Broadband office is making progress towards that goal. In November of 2024, there were 131,000 households in Colorado that lacked high speed, quality, broadband internet. Previously it was reported that 160,000 households were without high speed, quality, broadband internet. (Data based on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) National Broadband Map).
  - The goal in 2024 was to have 94.8% of households connected to high speed, quality, broadband internet. The current status of this goal is 95.4% of households connected to high speed, quality, broadband internet.
  - For rural households, a goal of 70% of households connected to high speed, quality, broadband internet was set. The current status of this goal is 75.2% of rural households connected to high speed, quality, broadband internet.
- **How is the Colorado Broadband Office getting to the 99% (funding)?**
  - Brandy Reitter expanded on the funding allowing the Colorado Broadband Office to get to the 99%. The revenues are as follows:
  - State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds: House Bill 21-1289 allocated roughly 75 million dollars for digital inclusion, deployment and middle mile projects. This money has been utilized and as a result, the Colorado Broadband Office was able to connect 12,529 locations to high speed, quality, broadband internet. This did not only include rural, but 20 million of those dollars were given to the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Indian tribes.
  - Capital Projects Fund: The Broadband office allocated $113.5 million for last mile fiber to the home in rural Colorado. They are now finished with that program, but as a

result, they were able to connect 18,000 locations in 24 counties within our state, mostly in rural Colorado.

- ○ Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment: This is administered to the National Telecommunication Information Administration (NTIA), part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Colorado's portion of that funding was $826.5 million for last mile fiber and alternative technology deployment. This funding will address the remaining gap of 131,000 locations. Unfortunately, that 131,000 will not all be met, but the Colorado Broadband Office will continue to get as many people with high quality internet as possible in order to bridge the digital divide in Colorado.
- ○ Digital Equity Ace Capacity Grant: This is managed by the Office of Future Work and the Colorado Department of Labor and employment. This year, the Colorado Broadband Office was allocated 12 million dollars to address the adoption gap.

- **Capital Project Fund Wins**
  - ○ Brandy Reitter expressed that the Colorado Broadband Office reallocated about 12 million dollars to Crowley County, one of Colorado's most rural, underserved communities, to connect 1,753 homes and businesses.

- **Broadband, Equity, Access, & Deployment (BEAD) Program**
  - ○ Brandy Reitter discussed BEAD, the $825.6 million from the NTIA.
  - ○ Brandy Reitter explained that her office opened up a Grant application at the end of October and closed it in November. They received an overwhelming response ($2.3 billion in total project requests).
  - ○ 111,896 eligible locations were applied for
  - ○ 67, 559 were unserved locations
  - ○ 44,337 were underserved locations
  - ○ Every Colorado county had at least one application.
  - ○ 139 Priority Broadband Project applications
  - ○ 46 other Last-Mile Broadband Project applications
  - ○ A second ground is being opened on (hopefully) January 27th for 30 days.
  - ○ Selections will be made and the Colorado Broadband Office will submit a final proposal to NTIA by June.

- **Advance Colorado Broadband State and Local Dollars Program**
- **Workforce Development**
  - ○ Brandy Reitter explained that the Colorado Broadband Office is very focused on workforce development due to it being such a specialized industry.
  - ○ One of the barriers they've faced is the lack of skilled workforce to pull off large federal programs.

- ○ Big gaps in Broadband Deployment in Colorado are:
    - ■ Laborers
    - ■ Foremen
    - ■ Locators
    - ■ Restoration Crews
    - ■ Safety Leads
  - ○ There is a labor gap of around 3,000 jobs within the broadband workforce subset for skills.
  - ○ The Colorado Broadband office has a goal to get 3,000 Coloradans trained in broadband by the end of 2025 and create 1,500 new Coloradans employed in the telecom industry.
- **Legislation in 2025**
  - ○ Brandy explained that the Colorado Broadband Office isn't floating any legislation this year, but they do have legislation happening.
  - ○ Before summer, the General Assembly passed House Bill 24-1265 to deal with cell phone coverage gaps in Colorado. A cell phone interim study committee was established and they are proposing 3 pieces of legislation currently to improve the coverage gap.
  - ○ There is no funding for this. Funding will come in Bill number two.
  - ○ The Colorado Broadband Office is supporting this.
- **Stakeholder Outreach**
  - ○ Brandy Reitter discussed the following ways that the Colorado Broadband Office does stakeholder outreach:
    - ■ Community and Industry Leaders Roundtable Calls
    - ■ Weekly Broadband Legislative Stakeholder Calls
    - ■ Advance Consult Group
    - ■ CBO Advance-Local Program Webinar
    - ■ BEAD Weekly Office Hours

Open Discussion

- Commissioner Sophia Gin asked how Colorado compares to other states when it comes to gaps of broadband connectivity
  - ○ Brandy Reitter responded by saying that Colorado is not in the top 10 list for most connected state. Additionally, we fall a little bit in the middle of the road.
  - ○ She also mentioned that concerning broadband investment, there was an analysis that came out a couple of weeks ago that shows that we are still lagging behind.
- Commissioner Kevin Stansbury asked if the Colorado Broadband Office does any monitoring or analysis on the reliability of connected homes. He also asked if there were any standards for services that require them to have a level of redundancy to maintain access.

- ○ Brandy Reitter responded by saying that the Colorado Broadband Office does measure broadband performance (the speed of broadband). However, it is not as accurate as it could be due to self reported internet service providers (ISPs).
  - ○ She also mentioned that there is not a good way to measure the redundancy as of current because it is not regulated. The Colorado Broadband Office recognizes that there is a large redundancy issue.
- KP Yelpaala asked if affordability of the service in the Colorado Broadband Office's purview.
  - ○ Brandy Reitter responded by letting Kaakpema (KP) Yelpaala know that affordability of the service is something that the Colorado Broadband Office focuses heavily on. If individuals apply for the program, they are to offer a low cost plan that does not exceed $75/month. However, the minimum they would like to see is around $50/month or less.
- KP Yelpaala asked Brandy Reitter what people are allowed to pay for concerning satellite connectivity.
  - ○ Brandy Reitter let him know that this is something that the Colorado Broadband Office is still currently working on.

Public Comment Period

- No new comments

Action Items

- *Next meeting: February 12, 2025 (VIRTUAL ONLY) at 12pm*

Motion to Adjourn

Kaakpema (KP) Yelpaala

- Motion to adjourn this meeting was approved by Commissioner Patrick Gordon
- Seconded by Commissioner Rachel Dixon