

**CEO Report for July 2020**  
Submitted by Tara Kiene, President/CEO

This report is a summary of key activities and highlights impacting the agency from the perspective of the President/CEO. While it is addressed to and aimed at the agency’s Board of Directors, it is also shared with CCI employees to offer and overview of things happening in the agency.

**Contents**

- State—HCPF/DHS/Alliance..... 2
  - Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF)— ..... 2
    - Retainer Payments..... 2
    - EVV..... 2
    - Department of Human Services, Office of Early Childhood..... 2
      - Emergency Rule ..... 2
  - Alliance— ..... 2
    - Town Hall with Senator Bennet..... 2
    - COVID Policy suggestions ..... 3
- Local Community ..... 3
  - ADA Anniversary ..... 3
- Fundraising/Development..... 3
  - CERF fund ..... 3
  - Cortez Luncheon..... 3
  - FDC recruitment ..... 3
  - Festival of Trees..... 4
- Internal CCI highlights ..... 4
  - COVID situation update ..... 4
  - New Payroll System..... 4
  - Single Entry Point..... 5
  - Client losses ..... 5
- Facilities..... 5
  - Greenhouse work at Holly House ..... 5
  - Harrison Irrigation ..... 5
- Other ..... 6
  - Goal Progress:..... 6

## State—HCPF/DHS/Alliance.

### *Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF)—*

- **Retainer Payments**—So long, retainer payments. We're sorry to see you go! On July 8<sup>th</sup>, we received word that HCPF finally received guidance from CMS that retainer payments were only available for 90 billing days in each state. Because Colorado initiated the retainer payments so early in the pandemic, that meant that by the time we received the guidance, there were only 7 days left to bill. Retainer payments officially ended on July 17<sup>th</sup>. Because they had hoped to extend the retainer payments longer and give providers more time to adjust to loss of retainer payments, HCPF is busy trying to develop alternative means of supporting us. I'm sure we'll receive many exciting updates over the coming weeks.
- **EVV**—The Electronic Visit Verification system goes live in August. Just as a reminder, the EVV is a federal requirement that certain in-home services must be accounted for through the use of an electronic check-in system. We are using our Therap EHR to meet the requirements. Although the federal requirement hasn't been rescinded due to COVID, the State of Colorado is not connecting any reimbursement consequences with the system. Thanks to Julie and Matt and their teams and Pat Smith for doing all the hard work to implement a system that will essentially be tied to nothing for the foreseeable future. There's a metaphor in there somewhere, I'm sure.
- ***Department of Human Services, Office of Early Childhood—***
  - **Emergency Rule**—The Office of Early Childhood has enacted an emergency rule that changes the eligibility for children to qualify for early intervention services from 25% delay in at least one domain to 33% delay. Many other states have used the 33% delay cut off for years. OEC is predicting that this change in eligibility criteria could reduce the number of children eligible for and receiving early intervention by up to 25-30%. This could mean dramatic caseload decreases at Community Connections, which we are trying to predict in our budget process. Service Coordinators are working to ensure that we have sufficient referral sources for children who are experiencing delays but will not qualify for early intervention services.

### *Alliance—*

- ***Town Hall with Senator Bennet***—Alliance has been trying to arrange a Town Hall with both US Senators from Colorado. We have a Town Hall scheduled with Senator Bennet on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, and I will be presenting on

Colorado's response to the challenges of COVID—what has worked and what we still need. Senator Gardner has not yet responded to requests for a meeting.

- **COVID Policy suggestions**—Alliance is working on some proposed policies for HCPF to implement, some on a short term basis and others more long term. These range from partial retainer payments (using state general funds without federal match) to continuing to allow virtual meetings, telehealth and electronic signatures.

## Local Community

- **ADA Anniversary**—The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disability Act on July 26<sup>th</sup> and Southwest Center for Independence is leading the local celebration. Check out their [Walk 'n Roll Celebration](#). I'll include the flyer in your supplemental materials. Hope to see you all there! The protections offered by the ADA have never been more important.

## Fundraising/Development

- **CERF fund**—We received a \$2500 grant from the CERF (Community Emergency Relief) Fund managed by the Community Foundation for Southwest Colorado. Our request was to use the funding as a sort of “scholarship” fund for businesses who have been impacted by COVID to be able to participate in Festival of Trees. Our goal is to make up for predicted FOT revenue decreases and also show our support for our long-time supporters. This was a great idea from Ellen, and we already have another funder interested in matching that fund.
- **Cortez Luncheon**—Board superstars Cynthia and Janice are putting together a physically distant lunch event in Cortez. Hopefully, you can entice them to share more at the Board meeting. Their goals is to start growing our engagement in and around Montezuma County.
- **FDC recruitment**—The Fund Development Committee has hit the unpaue button on recruitment efforts (although I guess officially the unpaue button is just the pause button hit for a second time, but that takes too much explanation, which you got anyway). We're going back to our previous candidates to ask them to join our committee. If you have ideas of people who would be excellent fundraisers for CCI, please let me, Ellen or Sarah know. We're also looking for participants in a subcommittee to organize the virtual aspect of the Festival of Trees, so anyone with good tech skills or experience with online events would fill in some important gaps in our committee's knowledge.

- *Festival of Trees*—We are on target for the Festival of Trees event on our usual weekend (Noel Night—December 4-6). Of course the pandemic situation could change significantly between now and early December, which is why we are looking at a combination of an online and in-person experience. We can shift the emphasis of one over the other depending on the conditions at the time. Our uber-volunteer Greg Furda has been making some calls to previous sponsors and his contacts have been very well-received, even by businesses who may not be able to participate this year. We’re also trying to get the raffle prizes dialed in ASAP so that we can start the process of getting the raffle tickets printed and the online sales set up. There are lots of details to figure out to link the raffle, the trees, and the online component. But your FDC is on it!

## Internal CCI highlights

- *COVID situation update*—Please check out our website at <https://www.communityconnectionscolorado.org/covid-19-.html> anytime you want an updated situation report for each of our departments. As you probably already know, COVID cases are on the rise on our communities, especially in La Plata and Archuleta counties where the tourists are congregating. You can see the data for La Plata and Archuleta counties on the [San Juan Basin Public Health](#) website and [Montezuma County](#) at their website. Dolores County has no confirmed cases and San Juan County, Colorado is still at 2. As a result of local conditions and continued Colorado restrictions we are still taking a very conservative approach to services. EI will start allowing “driveway” visits starting August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Case Management and Service Coordination monitoring and meetings are still required to be virtual. Some of our adult clients are receiving individualized services and getting out to do outdoor activities or being served at their homes. Virtual Day Programming is increasing its popularity and new classes and options are being designed as we speak. We’re also starting a partnership with Stepping Stone, a PASA in Littleton, who has a wide menu of virtual classes they are willing to open up to our clients. Our offices are closed to visitors and administrators are working from home for the most part.
- *New Payroll System*—For the past year, we’ve been looking at/talking about a new human resource information management and payroll system. The system we had with ADP didn’t have some features we really needed. After some shopping around, our HR and Finance departments agreed on a company APS out of Shreveport, Louisiana (my old stomping ground) because of their user-friendly interface and reputation for excellent customer service. We scheduled the transition for July 1<sup>st</sup> because that’s the cleanest for our records. I won’t say that it was an unmitigated disaster, but I can’t honestly say it went as smoothly as we’d like. We’re not sure if we just didn’t have appropriate expectations about the roll out, but it all felt very last minute and there are aspects of the

system that are still being built as I write this on July 16<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully once we get into really using it our hopes for excellence will be better realized.

- *Single Entry Point*—The Single Entry Point is officially moved in! There were a few technological glitches, but overall the transition (in the midst of pandemic) went about as smooth as it could. Our new SEP Program Director, Sylven Watson, will be our special guest at the board meeting and can tell us a little more about the program and the transition process. It has been a busy, busy time, though. Our VP of Case Management Elizabeth Fabrey, VP of Human Resources Judy Schreckenbach and Office Manager Laura Alsum all worked diligently and spent countless hours making this transition happen. I am so appreciative to them for taking this leap of faith with me.
- *Client losses*—I am very sad to share that we lost two long-time friends this week. Both had been declining physically for a some time and were on hospice, but we have lost a couple of bright lights in our communities.

## Facilities

- *Greenhouse work at Holly House*—Thanks to Summit Church Youth Group and Board member Cathy Sykes for the great work on the greenhouse! They pulled weeds and made repairs and spruced up the place.
- *Harrison Irrigation*—We're in the midst of getting bids to put irrigation in at the Harrison Office in Cortez. Historically, we've relied on our employees to manage the sprinklers, but the grass has certainly suffered at times. Plus, I understand the sprinklers can be quite a distraction for staff on a hot summer day...



## Other

*Goal Progress:* I have now completed 5 out of the 7 courses to complete the Strategic Leadership and Management certificate through the University of Illinois Gies School of Business. I should have the certificate completed by the end of summer. I have also done some initial preparation to begin stakeholder input sessions for our strategic and business plans.

### Acronym Cheat Sheet

- ART (Administrative Review Team) –The Executive Team and Program Directors oversight of Quality Indicators
- The Arc – advocacy organization for people with intellectual disabilities
- ANCOR (American Network of Community Options and Resources)
- BHO (Behavioral Health Organization)
- CCB (Community Centered Board) we are 1 of 20 in the state
- CCI (Community Connections, Inc.)
- CDLE (Colorado Department of Labor and Employment)
- CFCM (Conflict-Free Case Management) Federal mandate that the provision case management must be separated from direct program services.
- CES (Children’s Extensive Services)
- CHCBS (Children’s Home and Community Based Services)
- CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) Federal
- CORA (Colorado Open Records Act)

- DHS or CDHS (Colorado Department of Human Services)
- DSP (Direct Support Professional) – field staff working with clients
- DVR (Department of Vocational Rehabilitation)
- EI (Early Intervention) Developmental services for kids Birth to 3
- FOT (Festival of Trees)
- HCPF (Health Care Policy and Financing) State Medicaid office
- I/DD (Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities)
- JBC (Joint Budget Committee at the Colorado legislature)
- MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)
- PASAs (Program Approved Service Agencies) agencies approved to provide Medicaid Waiver services across the state
- PCA (Personal Care Alternative) residential services not in a host home
- RAE (Regional Accountable Entity) Medicaid Care Management organization
- Residential (a.k.a. Comprehensive – our adult 24/7 support)
- ROI (Return on Investment)
- SJBPH (San Juan Basin Public Health)
- SLS (Supported Living Services) – Services for adults living independently or with family
- TCM (Targeted Case Management)