

CEO Report for December 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 an overview of things happening in the agency.

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My focus over the last month can be summed up in three things: Strategic Plan goals, Personal Outcomes Measures training and Festival of Trees. Well, four things, because I could add Festival of Trees twice. Adding the virtual component has been like starting a whole new event. As such, I’m keeping the CEO Report short and sweet this month so I can get back to keeping those full plates in the air (mixing metaphors there a bit, but I think it works).

State—HCPF/DHS/Alliance.

Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF)—

- EVV—Is a nightmare. Not only is it a hassle for everyone involved, but it isn’t even working! We keep getting these vague messages from an automated system that not all of our claims are adding up, but we don’t get the specifics we need to pinpoint what the problem is. It’s maddening. Everyone across the state is grumbling about the same problem. I’ve escalated my concerns to one

of the leaders at the Department, and he has promised to help me solve our mysteries.

- **Alliance**—Alliance is gearing up for the legislative session with an emphasis on protecting our rates for the 21-22 budget (or restoring some if at all possible!) The governor’s budget did not include rate cuts for Medicaid providers, which was a good sign, but a lot could happen between now and a signed long bill (which is what they call the bill that reflects the state budget). The Joint Budget Committee will start hearings on the different state department budget proposals in December, which is when we start to see the priorities for funding really take shape. Fortunately, 4 of the 6 Joint Budget Committee members are incumbents to the committee from last year and are already well-versed with the needs of IDD providers.

Local Community

No updates at this time. Our local communities are in lock down!

Fundraising/Development

- **FOT**—Thanks to everyone who has helped out with the raffle sales and FOT prep and donations. I can honestly say that each and every one of our Board members has been a rock star with your support this season. We really appreciate all your hard work to support the financial viability and, perhaps even more critical the visibility of Community Connections. We absolutely could not have done without all footwork and great ideas from the FOT Committee—Greg Furda, Sarah Kahn, Cathy Sykes, Cynthia Sadler and Rachel Arnold (and of course, Ellen, Laura and Tara on staff). They have pulled off the nearly impossible.

We have 60 trees and wreaths on display for bid this year. 60!!! During a pandemic! That’s almost double last year and we thought 2019 was a pretty decent year. And that doesn’t count the dozens of individuals and businesses who donated for the raffle, gift cards on wreaths and trees, or donated their goods or services to help support the event. Of course, a third of those supporters are from our newly added “Festival of Wreaths” in Cortez. Cynthia and her friends and family hit the streets to get 20 wreaths sponsored and hung along Main Street in Cortez.

Now we have one more CRITICAL ask of you—let all your friends and families know! We aren’t going to need you at the venue to set up, tear down, sell tickets, count participants, etc. But we need you to hit that forward button *a lot*. The bulk of the action is going to occur on the weekend of December 4-6th, and people can just get on the [CCIFOT.givesmart.com](https://www.ccifot.givesmart.com) site and explore all the fun options we’re adding. Or they can register ahead of time at the [CCIFOT.givesmart.com](https://www.ccifot.givesmart.com) site or by texting ‘CCIFOT’ to 76278. If they register, they will be asked for their name,

email and phone number so they can receive updates leading up to and during the weekend. We're adding content all the time, and people can get sneak previews of some of the fun ahead. The trees and wreaths this year are awesome, and most of them include great gifts and gift cards to local businesses.

Internal CCI highlights

- *Personal Outcome Measures*—Our adult services team participated in the Personal Outcomes Measures training in mid-November, and it was excellent. It is really going to help us look at where we have opportunities to increase and improve the supports we offer on an individual and agency-wide basis. You'll see some examples of how we'll be able to do that when I report on our Strategic Plan progress in January.
- *COVID-19*—We are monitoring the situation in all five of our counties very closely due to the significant increase in cases. I include our Board members in our COVID update newsletter, so I won't bore you with repeating what I've already shared. For obvious reasons, we are back to highly discouraging working in the office unless necessary (we were always encouraging people to work at home, but we've reverted to monitoring the office occupation closely to stay at 10% capacity or less at all times). Client services are only happening one-on-one or with people in the same household. Pine Street has suspended group services once again.

The good news is that the first phase of vaccines are expected to arrive in SW Colorado in late December. We are working with local emergency response teams to determine the prioritization of applicable members of our staff and clients.

- *Open Enrollment*—November and December is open enrollment time for our CCI benefits. All our benefits are available to full-time (30+ hours per week) employees, although current protections are allowing us to continue benefits for employees whose hours dip below the full time threshold due to COVID reductions. We were pleased to be able to increase our health insurance offerings from a choice between 2 plans to a choice of 8, allowing our employees to find a plan that best meets their needs. This allowed employees to maintain essentially the same monthly premium as in 2020, reduce their premium by over 50% or increase slightly to purchase a lower deductible plan. So far the response has been positive. Community Connections was simultaneously able to maintain our current level of contribution, which in the past has increased by as much as 30% to keep premiums affordable for employees. Employees can also choose from benefits including Vision insurance, Dental Insurance, gap insurance (Aflac), Flexible Spending Account contributions, Pre-paid Legal and Identify Theft Protection programs.

Facilities

- Thanks to Rachel Arnold (Cynthia’s daughter and Kaki’s sister), a couple of our facilities are getting some free upgrades! The Arnolds’ video production company is shooting some “how to” videos for the construction industry, and they were looking for some projects to film. We’re so fortunate they thought of us! For the filming, Pine Street is getting a new water heater and Sawyer is getting some drop ceiling tiles replaced.

Other

- *Goal Progress:*
 - **Strategic Plan**—I will be presenting a mid-year update on the Strategic Plan goals for 2020-21 at our January meeting. We have some exciting projects in progress that I can’t wait to share with you. Coronavirus may redirect our efforts, but it won’t stop them!
 - **Strategic Leadership Certificate**—Complete!!

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)