



# Rural Sustainability Heatmap Narrative

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## Background

The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) contracted with Health Management Associates (HMA) to look into the services offered by Colorado's Medicaid program, Health First Colorado. They did this by creating a special map tool called a heatmap. The goal of this tool is to help HCPF find areas in Colorado where certain home and community-based services (HCBS) are hard to get (known as Care Deserts). It also helps identify places and groups of people who might be affected more than others by issues with the healthcare workforce, like not having enough healthcare workers.

To measure access to care, the heatmap tool compares the number of members in an area to the number of healthcare providers. This way of looking at it gives more importance to areas with more members. For example, if Region A has 500 members and only 1 provider, and Region B has 1 member and 1 provider, even though both have the same number of providers, Region A will seem like more of a problem because it has a lot more members for each provider.

By focusing on areas with more people, HCPF can put more effort into helping those places improve access to care.

On the map created by this tool, different shades of green show the different levels of access to care. Dark green shades mean there's not much access to care. On the other hand, the lighter the shade of green, the better the access to care in that area.

This accessibility narrative is intended to describe the color and information a person would perceive visually when looking at the map. It narrates the map's features, such as heatmap coloring, provider number(s), and member number(s) in selected areas, as if you were seeing it. Think of it as a guide that translates the map itself into descriptive language that conveys the same information, but in an accessible format.

## Heat Map User Guide

### User Inputs

Heatmap results depend on five user inputs: *Calendar Year*, *Benefit Type*, [Waiver or State Benefit](#), *HCBS Service*, and *Member/Provider Ratio for Care Desert Demographics*.

#### Step 1: Select Calendar Year

#### Step 2: Select Benefit Type

The heatmap includes data on the following Benefit Types: Dental, Emergency Department, FQHC, RHC, and IHS, General Hospital- Outpatient, HCBS, Home-Health, Hospice, and PDN, Imaging, Inpatient, Intermediate Care Facility, Pharmacy, Professional Services, and Transportation. Note - each selection filters following steps with only related options.

#### Step 3: Select HCBS Waiver or State Benefit

The heatmap includes data on Colorado HCBS waivers for adults and children.

- The adult waivers shown in the heatmap include Brain Injury (HCBS BI), Community Mental Health Supports (HCBS CMHS), Developmental Disabilities (HCBS DD), Supported Living Services (HCBS SLS), and Complementary and Integrative Health (HCBS CIH) (formerly the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) waiver). We also include the Colorado Choice Transitions (HCBS CCT) program, which is not a traditional waiver but a benefit available in each adult waiver.
- The children's waivers shown in the heatmap include Children's Home and Community Based Services (HCBS CHCBS), Children's Extensive Support (HCBS CES), Children's Habilitation Residential Program (HCBS CHRP), and the Children with Life-Limiting Illness (HCBS CLLI).

#### Step 4: Select HCBS Service

Note- only available for HCBS Benefits, as selected in Step 2.

#### Step 5: Select Members/ Provider Ratio for Care Desert Demographics

This is a user input to determine whether a region is considered a care desert. The care desert threshold is subjective and likely depends on the other selections above. As an

example, 500 members per provider may be an appropriate benchmark for professional-type services; while hospitals tend to have a much higher member-to-provider ratio since members do not consistently receive hospital-based services. Note - this user input does not impact the color-shading shown on the heatmap. This input is used only within the demographic charts shown below the heatmap.

## **Understanding Heatmap Tool Results**

The color-shading on the heatmap is based on a member-to-provider ratio within each Accountable Care Collaborative (ACC) region (left map) or county (right map). Lower member-to-provider ratios are favorable, as they suggest there may be enough providers to serve members within that region. Light green shading represents greater access to care (high provider density or lower member-to-provider ratios) and the darker green shading represents a care desert (lower provider density or higher member-to-provider ratios). White shading indicates that results cannot be shared because there is too little data and sharing them would not comply with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Safe Harbor requirements.

### **Accountable Care Collaborative (ACC)**

Colorado's Accountable Care Collaborative (ACC) contracts with regional organizations to 1. Ensure quality care for members, 2. Close health disparities and promote health equity for members, 3. Improve care access for members, 4. Improve the member and provider experience and 5. Manage costs to protect member coverage, benefits, and provider reimbursements. To do this, the state of Colorado is currently broken down into seven different regions. The regions are used in the Rural Sustainability Heatmap as a way to compare access across more than one county.

#### **Colorado ACC Regions:**

##### **Region 1, Rocky Mountain Health Plans:**

- Archuleta, Delta, Dolores, Eagle, Garfield, Grand, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Jackson, La Plata, Larimer, Mesa, Moffat, Montezuma, Montrose, Ouray, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, San Juan, San Miguel, and Summit

##### **Region 2, Northeast Health Partners:**

- Cheyenne, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, Weld, and Yuma

##### **Region 3, Colorado Access:**

- Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas, and Elbert

##### **Region 4, Health Colorado Inc:**

- Alamosa, Baca, Bent, Chaffee, Conejos, Costilla, Crowley, Custer, Fremont, Huerfano, Kiowa, Lake, Las Animas, Mineral, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo, Rio Grande, and Saguache

##### **Region 5, Colorado Access:**

- Denver

##### **Region 6, Colorado Community Health Alliance:**

- Boulder, Clear Creek, Gilpin, and Jefferson

## Region 7, Colorado Community Health Alliance:

- El Paso, Teller, and Park

### Members/ Provider Ratio for Care Desert/ Demographics

This is a way for users to decide if an area lacks enough healthcare services, which is called a "care desert." How many people are served by each healthcare provider can help determine if an area is a care desert. The exact number depends on what type of healthcare service we're talking about. For example, for regular medical services, having 1,000 people served by each provider might be okay. But for hospitals, the number of people served by each provider is usually much higher because not everyone goes to the hospital regularly. It's important to note that this user input doesn't change the colors on the heatmap; it's only used in the charts that show information about the people in the area below the heatmap.

## Calendar Year 2019

When the map is accessed on the Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) website, the default options that are selected are Year 2019, All Waivers, and All Services. This narrative will explore themes throughout the year 2019, making special notes of changes that happen in relation to the other years. If there are waivers and services that are not explored in this narrative that you are interested in, please reach out to [HCPF\\_RuralSustainability@state.co.us](mailto:HCPF_RuralSustainability@state.co.us).

Benefit: All

Waiver: All

Service: All

ACC Regions Map: Let's talk about the map showing different areas of Colorado and how easy it is for people there to get healthcare in 2019.

- ACC Region 1 covers Western Colorado and is marked with a light green color, which means it's pretty easy for people there to access healthcare. On average, there's one healthcare provider for every 111 people.
- ACC Regions 2, 3, and 4 cover most of Eastern and Southern Colorado and are darker shades of green, showing they have fewer healthcare options. In 2019, ACC Region 2 had 182 people for each provider, ACC Region 3 had almost 216, and ACC Region 4 had 140.
- ACC Regions 5, above Central Colorado, is dark green, indicating a care desert with nearly 306 members per provider.
- ACC Region 6, also above Central Colorado, is better, with 184 members per provider.
- ACC Region 7 in Central Colorado color shading suggests it falls in the middle of access to care. Region 7 clocks in at just over 174 members per provider

County Map: The county map is similar to the ACC Region regional maps but provides more detailed information for larger ACC Region regions like ACC Region 1, 2, and 4. Below, we've categorized each county based on whether they have good access to healthcare or if they're considered a healthcare desert, based on information from the Heatmap. Please note that while many of our rural counties suggest good access to care, the travel time can become a barrier for available providers to access all members in that area. Use the [Health First Colorado Find a Doctor Tool](#) to look for HCBS Services (and other waiver amenities) in your area.

- Good Access to Care (100 members per provider or less): Baca, Cheyenne, Dolores, Eagle, Elbert, Gilpin, Grand, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Kiowa, Kit Carson, Lake, Mineral, Ouray, Park, Phillips, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sedgwick, Washington,
- Care Desert (200+ members per provider): Alamosa, Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Conejos, Denver, Jefferson, Pueblo, Saguache, Weld
- Counties in the Middle (101 to 199 of members per provider): Archuleta, Bent, Boulder, Chaffee, Clear Creek, Costilla, Crowley, Custer, Delta, Douglas, El Paso, Fremont, Garfield, Huerfano, Jackson, La Plata, Larimer, Las Animas, Lincoln, Logan, Mesa, Montrose, Moffat, Montezuma, Morgan, Otero, Prowers, Rio Grande, Summit, Teller, Yuma

#### Percentage of Population in Care Desert by Waiver

In 2019, when we consider all benefits, waivers, and HCBS services with a standard of 500 members for each provider, we see that the HCBS CIH (Complementary/Integrative Health) Waiver has the highest proportion of people living in a care desert, at 22.1%.

#### Percentage of Population in Care Desert by Ethnicity

In 2019, when we consider all benefits, waivers, and HCBS services with a standard of 500 members for each provider, we see that 18.6% of Hispanic/ Latinos and 17.2% of the Asian community are living in care deserts.

## Calendar Year 2020

This narrative will explore themes throughout the year 2020, making special notes of changes that happen in relation to the other years. If there are waivers and services that are not explored in this narrative that you are interested in, please reach out to [HCPF\\_RuralSustainability@state.co.us](mailto:HCPF_RuralSustainability@state.co.us).

Benefit: All

Waiver: All

Service: All

ACC Regions Map: Let's talk about the map showing different areas of Colorado and how easy it is for people there to get healthcare in 2020.

- ACC Region 1 covers Western Colorado and is marked with a light green color, which means it's pretty easy for people there to access healthcare. On average, there's one healthcare provider for every 110 people, which is basically the same as 2019.
- ACC Regions 2, 3, and 4 cover most of Eastern and Southern Colorado and are again darker shades of green, showing they have fewer healthcare options than ACC Region 1. In 2020, ACC Region 2 had 175 members for each provider, ACC Region 3 had just over 205 (suggesting a health care desert), and ACC Region 4 had around 133. In comparison to 2019, these regions had a little easier time accessing care in 2020 than they did in 2019.
- ACC Region 5 is just above Central Colorado, and is a dark green shade, suggesting care is hard to access in this area. There are just over 300 members per provider in this area, which is a bit lower than 2019. This suggests care may have been marginally easier to access in 2020 than in 2019.
- ACC Region 6 is also just above Central Colorado and is a medium shade of green, showing better care access than ACC Region 5 with just over 181 members per provider in this area.
- ACC Region 7 in Central Colorado is a similar shade of green to Region 6 (but is a touch lighter), suggesting care is a little more easier to access with about 163 members per provider.

As a whole, the state of Colorado saw lower member to provider ratios in 2020 than in 2019, suggesting a shift towards easier access to care.

**County Map:** The county map is similar to the ACC Region regional maps but provides more detailed information for larger ACC Region regions like ACC Region 1, 2, and 4. Below, we've categorized each county based on whether they have good access to healthcare or if they're considered a healthcare desert. Please note that while many of our rural counties suggest good access to care, the travel time can become a barrier for available providers to access all members in that area. Use the [Health First Colorado Find a Doctor Tool](#) to look for HCBS Services (and other waiver amenities) in your area.

- **Good Access to Care (100 members per provider or less):** Baca, Cheyenne, Dolores, Eagle, Elbert, Gilpin, Grand, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Kiowa, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Mineral, Ouray, Park, Phillips, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, Saguache San Miguel, Sedgwick
- **Care Desert (200+ members per provider):** Alamosa, Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Conejos, Denver, Jefferson, Pueblo, Weld
- **Counties in the Middle (101 to 199 of members per provider):** Archuleta, Bent, Boulder, Chaffee, Clear Creek, Costilla, Crowley, Custer, Delta, Douglas, El Paso, Fremont, Garfield, Huerfano, Jackson, La Plata, Lake, Larimer, Las Animas, Logan, Mesa, Montrose, Moffat, Montezuma, Morgan, Otero, Prowers, Rio Grande, Summit, Teller, Washington, Yuma
- **Blinded (less than 30 members):** San Juan

## Notable Changes 2019 to 2020

- Lake County went from Good Access to Care to a County in the Middle
- San Juan's data was blinding in 2020 for having less than 30 members
- Lincoln County went from a County in the Middle to Good Access to Care
- Washington County went from Good Access to Care to a County in the Middle

### Percentage of Population in Care Desert by Waiver

In 2020, when we consider all services and waivers and set a standard of 490<sup>1</sup>, we see that the HCBS CIH (Complementary/Integrative Health) Waiver has the highest proportion of people living in a care desert, at 20.6%.

### Percentage of Population in Care Desert by Ethnicity

In 2020, when we consider all services and waivers and set a standard of 490, we see that 18.1% of Hispanic/ Latinos and 17.5% of the Asian community are living in care deserts.

## Calendar Year 2021

This narrative will explore themes throughout the year 2021, making special notes of changes that happen in relation to the other years. If there are waivers and services that are not explored in this narrative that you are interested in, please reach out to [HCPF\\_RuralSustainability@state.co.us](mailto:HCPF_RuralSustainability@state.co.us).

Benefit: All

Waiver: All

Service: All

ACC Regions Map: Let's talk about the map showing different areas of Colorado and how easy it is for people there to get healthcare in 2021.

- ACC Region 1 covers Western Colorado and is marked with a light green color, which means it's pretty easy for people there to access healthcare. On average, there's one healthcare provider for every 120 people, indicating that it may be a little more difficult to access care in 2021 than there was in 2020.
- ACC Regions 2, 3, and 4 cover most of Eastern and Southern Colorado and are darker shades of green, showing they have fewer healthcare options than ACC Region 1. In 2021, ACC Region 2 had almost 207 members for each provider, ACC Region 3 had just over 228, and ACC Region 4 had around 145. In comparison to 2020, these regions experienced more difficult access to care in 2021 than they did in 2020.
- ACC Region 5 is just above Central Colorado, and continues to be a dark green shade, suggesting a care desert. There are just over 333 members per provider in this area, which is higher than 2020. This suggests care may have been more difficult to access in 2021 than in 2020, similar to our other regions.

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<sup>1</sup> The greatest ratio of members/providers in 2020 was 493. If the filter in step 5 is set to above 493 the percentages will not populate since 0% of members live in a care desert as defined by greater than 500 members per provider. If you adjust the ratio you will see the percentages populating.



- ACC Region 6 is also just above Central Colorado and is a medium shade of green, showing much better care access than ACC Region 5 with just over 214 members per provider in this area.
- ACC Region 7 in Central Colorado is a little lighter shade of green, suggesting care is a little easier to access with about 177 members per provider.

As a whole, the state of Colorado saw higher member to provider ratios in 2021 than in 2020, suggesting a shift towards more difficulty accessing care.

County Map: The county map is similar to the ACC Region regional maps but provides more detailed information for larger ACC Region regions like ACC Region 1, 2, and 4. Below, we've categorized each county based on whether they have good access to healthcare or if they're considered a healthcare desert. Please note that while many of our rural counties suggest good access to care, the travel time can become a barrier for available providers to access all members in that area. Use the [Health First Colorado Find a Doctor Tool](#) to look for HCBS Services (and other waiver amenities) in your area.

- Good Access to Care (100 members per provider or less): Baca, Cheyenne, Costilla, Custer, Eagle, Elbert, Grand, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Jackson, Kit Carson, Mineral, Ouray, Park, Phillips, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, San Miguel, Saguache, Sedgwick
- Care Desert (200+ members per provider): Alamosa, Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Crowley, Denver, Jefferson, Pueblo, Weld
- Counties in the Middle (101 to 199 of members per provider): Archuleta, Bent, Boulder, Chaffee, Clear Creek, Conejos, Delta, Dolores, Douglas, El Paso, Fremont, Garfield, Gilpin, Grand, Huerfano, Kiowa, La Plata, Lake, Larimer, Las Animas, Lincoln, Logan, Mesa, Montrose, Moffat, Montezuma, Morgan, Otero, Prowers, Rio Grande, Summit, Teller, Washington, Yuma
- Blinded (less than 30 members): San Juan

#### Notable Changes 2020 to 2021

- Dolores County went from Good Access to Care to a County in the Middle
- Gilpin County went from Good Access to Care to a County in the Middle
- Grand County went from Good Access to Care to a County in the Middle
- Kiowa County went from Good Access to Care to a County in the Middle
- Lincoln County went from Good Access to Care to a County in the Middle
- Conejos County went from a Care Desert to a County in the Middle
- Crowley County went from a County in the Middle to a Care Desert
- Costilla County went from a County in the Middle to Good Access to Care
- Custer County went from a County in the Middle to Good Access to Care
- Jackson County went from a County in the Middle to Good Access to Care

#### Percentage of Population in Care Desert by Waiver

In 2021, when we consider all benefits, waivers, and HCBS services with a standard of 500 members for each provider, we see that the HCBS CIH (Complementary/Integrative Health)



Waiver continues to have the highest proportion of people living in a care desert, at 22.3%. The next closest is the HCBS DD (Developmental Disabilities) waiver at 10.9%.

#### Percentage of Population in Care Desert by Ethnicity

In 2021, when we consider all benefits, waivers, and HCBS services with a standard of 500 members for each provider, we see that 18.3% of Hispanic/ Latinos and 17% of the Asian community are living in care deserts. These races/ ethnicities continue to lead the Colorado population of those living in a care desert year over year.

## Calendar Year 2022

This narrative will explore themes throughout the year 2022, making special notes of changes that happen in relation to the other years. If there are waivers and services that are not explored in this narrative that you are interested in, please reach out to [HCPF\\_RuralSustainability@state.co.us](mailto:HCPF_RuralSustainability@state.co.us).

Benefit: All

Waiver: All

Service: All

ACC Regions Map: Let's talk about the map showing different areas of Colorado and how easy it is for people there to get healthcare in 2022.

- ACC Region 1 covers Western Colorado and continues to be marked with a light green color, which means it's pretty easy for people there to access healthcare. On average, there's one healthcare provider for every 125 people, indicating that it may be a little more difficult to access care in 2022 than there was in 2021.
- ACC Region 2 in Northeastern Colorado is a darkening shade of green, suggesting a shift towards a care desert with nearly 230 members per provider in this area. Also a darker shade of green covers ACC Region 3 near East/ Central Colorado. This area clocks in at nearly 234 members per provider. Both of these regions are reporting more members to provider in 2022 than they did in 2021, suggesting more difficulty accessing care in these areas.
- ACC Region 4 covers Southeastern Colorado and is a lighter shade of green than both ACC Regions 2 and 3, indicating easier access to care at just over 145 members per provider. This remains unchanged from 2021.
- ACC Region 5 is just above Central Colorado, and is a very dark green shade, suggesting a care desert. There are just over 327 members per provider in this area. This is slightly lower than 2021.
- ACC Region 6 is also just above Central Colorado and is shaded by a medium green shade, showing much better care access than ACC Region 5 with just over 220 members per provider in this area.
- ACC Region 7 in Central Colorado is a little lighter shade of green, suggesting care is a little easier to access with about 183 members per provider.

As a whole, the state of Colorado saw higher member to provider ratios in 2022 than in 2021, suggesting a shift towards more difficulty accessing care.

County Map: The county map is similar to the ACC Region regional maps but provides more detailed information for larger ACC Region regions like ACC Region 1, 2, and 4. Below, we've categorized each county based on whether they have good access to healthcare or if they're considered a healthcare desert. Please note that while many of our rural counties suggest good access to care, the travel time can become a barrier for available providers to access all members in that area. Use the [Health First Colorado Find a Doctor Tool](#) to look for HCBS Services (and other waiver amenities) in your area.

- Good Access to Care (100 members per provider or less): Baca, Costilla, Custer, Eagle, Elbert, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Jackson, Kit Carson, Mineral, Ouray, Park, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, San Miguel, Saguache, Sedgwick
- Care Desert (200+ members per provider): Alamosa, Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Denver, Jefferson, Larimer, Morgan, Pueblo, Weld
- Counties in the Middle (101 to 199 of members per provider): Archuleta, Bent, Boulder, Chaffee, Cheyenne, Clear Creek, Conejos, Crowley, Delta, Dolores, Douglas, El Paso, Fremont, Garfield, Gilpin, Grand, Huerfano, Kiowa, La Plata, Lake, Las Animas, Lincoln, Logan, Mesa, Montrose, Moffat, Montezuma, Otero, Phillips, Prowers, Rio Grande, Summit, Teller, Washington, Yuma
- Blinded (less than 30 members): San Juan

#### Notable Changes 2021 to 2022

- Cheyenne County went from Good Access to Care to a County in the Middle
- Grand County went from Good Access to Care to a County in the Middle
- Phillips County went from Good Access to Care to a County in the Middle
- Larimer County went from a County in the Middle to a Care Desert
- Morgan County went from a County in the Middle to a Care Desert

#### Percentage of Population in Care Desert by Waiver

In 2022, when we consider all benefits, waivers, and HCBS services with a standard of 500 members for each provider, we see that the HCBS CIH (Complementary/Integrative Health) Waiver continues to have the highest proportion of people living in a care desert, at 19.4%. The next closest is the HCBS DD (Developmental Disabilities) waiver at 11.9%.

#### Percentage of Population in Care Desert by Ethnicity

In 2022, when we consider all benefits, waivers, and HCBS services with a standard of 500 members for each provider, we see that 19% of Hispanic/ Latinos and 18.1% of the Asian community are living in care deserts. These races/ ethnicities continue to lead the Colorado population of those living in a care desert year over year.

# Calendar Year 2023

This narrative will explore themes throughout the year 2023, making special notes of changes that happen in relation to the other years. If there are waivers and services that are not explored in this narrative that you are interested in, please reach out to [HCPF\\_RuralSustainability@state.co.us](mailto:HCPF_RuralSustainability@state.co.us).

Benefit: All

Waiver: All

Service: All

ACC Regions Map: Let's talk about the map showing different areas of Colorado and how easy it is for people there to get healthcare in 2023.

- ACC Region 1 covers Western Colorado and is marked with a light green color, which means it's pretty easy for people there to access healthcare. On average, there's one healthcare provider for every 127 people, indicating very little change between 2022 and 2023.
- ACC Region 2 in Northeastern Colorado is a shade of dark green, suggesting a shift towards a care desert with nearly 243 members per provider in this area. Also a darkening shade of green covers ACC Region 3 near East/ Central Colorado. This area clocks in at just under 234 members per provider. These numbers also remain fairly consistent between 2022 and 2023.
- ACC Region 4 covers Southeastern Colorado and is a lighter shade of green, indicating easier access to care at 149 members per provider. This is a small increase in members to provider from 2022, indicating a shift toward more difficulty accessing care.
- ACC Region 5 is just above Central Colorado, and remains the darkest green on the map, suggesting a care desert. There are nearly 330 members per provider in this area, up a bit from 2022.
- ACC Region 6 is also just above Central Colorado and is a darker shade of green, showing better care access than ACC Region 5 with just over 224 members per provider in this area.
- ACC Region 7 in Central Colorado is a little lighter shade of green, suggesting care is a little easier to access with about 169 members per provider. This is down nearly 20 members from 2022, suggesting a little better access to care in 2023 than in 2022.

As a whole, the state of Colorado saw very little changes in access to care from 2022 to 2023, except for ACC Region 7 which saw a drop of nearly 20 members per provider, suggesting they experienced easier access to care in 2023 versus 2022.

County Map: The county map is similar to the ACC Region regional maps but provides more detailed information for larger ACC Region regions like ACC Region 1, 2, and 4. Below, we've categorized each county based on whether they have good access to healthcare or if they're considered a healthcare desert. Please note that while many of our rural counties suggest

good access to care, the travel time can become a barrier for available providers to access all members in that area. Use the [Health First Colorado Find a Doctor Tool](#) to look for HCBS Services (and other waiver amenities) in your area.

- Good Access to Care (100 members per provider or less): Baca, Cheyenne, Costilla, Custer, Eagle, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Jackson, Lake, Mineral, Phillips, Ouray, Park, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, San Miguel, Saguache, Sedgwick
- Care Desert (200+ members per provider): Alamosa, Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Conejos, Crowley, Denver, Jefferson, Larimer, Pueblo, Weld
- Counties in the Middle (101 to 199 of members per provider): Archuleta, Bent, Boulder, Chaffee, Clear Creek, Delta, Dolores, Douglas, Elbert, El Paso, Fremont, Garfield, Gilpin, Grand, Huerfano, Kiowa, Kit Carson, La Plata, Las Animas, Lincoln, Logan, Mesa, Montrose, Moffat, Montezuma, Morgan, Otero, Prowers, Rio Grande, Summit, Teller, Washington, Yuma
- Blinded (less than 30 members): San Juan

#### Notable Changes 2021 to 2022

- Elbert County went from Good Access to Care to a County in the Middle
- Kit Carson County went from Good Access to Care to a County in the Middle
- Cheyenne County went from a County in the Middle to Good Access to Care
- Lake County went from a County in the Middle to Good Access to Care
- Phillips County went from a County in the Middle to Good Access to Care
- Conejos County went from a County in the Middle to a Care Desert
- Crowley County went from a County in the Middle to a Care Desert
- Morgan County went from a Care Desert to a County in the Middle

#### Percentage of Population in Care Desert by Waiver

In 2023, when we consider all benefits, waivers, and HCBS services with a standard of 500 members for each provider, we see that the HCBS CIH (Complementary/Integrative Health) Waiver continues to have the highest proportion of people living in a care desert, at 19.8%. The next closest is the HCBS DD (Developmental Disabilities) waiver at 11.8%. These numbers are very similar to data from 2022.

#### Percentage of Population in Care Desert by Ethnicity

In 2023, when we consider all benefits, waivers, and HCBS services with a standard of 500 members for each provider, we see that 19.2% of Hispanic/ Latinos and 17.9% of the Asian community are living in care deserts. These races/ ethnicities continue to lead the Colorado population of those living in a care desert year over year.

# Calendar Year 2024

This narrative will explore themes throughout the year 2024, making special notes of changes that happen in relation to the other years. If there are waivers and services that are not explored in this narrative that you are interested in, please reach out to [HCPF\\_RuralSustainability@state.co.us](mailto:HCPF_RuralSustainability@state.co.us).

Benefit: All

Waiver: All

Service: All

ACC Regions Map: Let's talk about the map showing different areas of Colorado and how easy it is for people there to get healthcare in 2024.

- ACC Region 1 covers Western Colorado and is marked with a light green color, which means it's pretty easy for people there to access healthcare. On average, there's one healthcare provider for every 111 people, indicating a slight change between 2023 and 2024. In 2023, there were 127 members per provider, so there being 111 in 2024 would suggest it is a bit easier to access care in this region in the last year.
- ACC Region 2 in Northeastern Colorado is a shade of dark green, suggesting a shift towards a care desert with nearly 203 members per provider in this area. Also a darkening shade of green covers ACC Region 3 near East/ Central Colorado. This area clocks in at just under 203 members per provider, as well. Both Regions 2 & 3 saw positive movement in their member to provider ratio (around 40 less members per provider in each area), suggesting that access to care is getting better in both of these areas.
- ACC Region 4 covers Southeastern Colorado and is a lighter shade of green, indicating easier access to care at just under 129 members per provider. This is a small decrease in members to provider from 2023, indicating a shift toward better access to care in this region.
- ACC Region 5 is just above Central Colorado, and remains the darkest green on the map, suggesting a care desert in comparison to other areas. There are nearly 286 members per provider in this area, down from 330 in 2023. This is a large shift towards better access to care in this region, and one of the largest shifts we have seen in regards to this map.
- ACC Region 6 is also just above Central Colorado and is a darker shade of green, showing better care access than ACC Region 5 with just over 178 members per provider in this area. This is also down from 2023, and continues the trend of better access to care across all regions.
- ACC Region 7 in Central Colorado is a little lighter shade of green, suggesting care is a little easier to access with about 154 members per provider. This is down nearly 15 members from 2023, and follows other regions in their shift to better access to care.

As a whole, the state of Colorado saw better access to care across all regions when comparing member to provider ratios from 2023 to 2024. This is the first year we have seen all regions trend in that direction since the map began tracking this data in 2020.

**County Map:** The county map is similar to the ACC Region regional maps but provides more detailed information for larger ACC Region regions like ACC Region 1, 2, and 4. Below, we've categorized each county based on whether they have good access to healthcare or if they're considered a healthcare desert. Please note that while many of our rural counties suggest good access to care, the travel time can become a barrier for available providers to access all members in that area. Use the Health First Colorado Find a Doctor Tool to look for HCBS Services (and other waiver amenities) in your area.

- Good Access to Care (100 members per provider or less): Baca, Cheyenne, Costilla, Custer, Eagle, Elbert, Grand, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Jackson, Kiowa, Kit Carson, Lake, Mineral, Phillips, Ouray, Park, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, San Miguel, Saguache, Sedgwick, Summit
- Care Desert (200+ members per provider): Alamosa, Adams, Arapahoe, Archuleta, Broomfield, Crowley, Denver, Jefferson, Pueblo, Weld
- Counties in the Middle (101 to 199 of members per provider): Bent, Boulder, Chaffee, Clear Creek, Conejos, Delta, Dolores, Douglas, El Paso, Fremont, Garfield, Gilpin, Huerfano, La Plata, Larimer, Las Animas, Lincoln, Logan, Mesa, Montrose, Moffat, Montezuma, Morgan, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo, Rio Grande, Teller, Washington, Yuma
- Blinded (less than 30 members): San Juan

#### Notable Changes 2021 to 2022

- Elbert County went from a County in the Middle to Good Access to Care
- Grand County went from a County in the Middle to Good Access to Care
- Kiowa County went from a County in the Middle to Good Access to Care
- Kit Carson County went from a County in the Middle to Good Access to Care
- Summit County went from a County in the Middle to Good Access to Care
- Archuleta County went from a County in the Middle to a Care Desert
- Conejos County went from a Care Desert to a County in the Middle
- Pueblo County went from a Care Desert to a County in the Middle
- Larimer County went from a Care Desert to a County in the Middle

#### Percentage of Population in Care Desert by Waiver

In 2024, when we consider all benefits, waivers, and HCBS services with a standard of 500 members for each provider, we see that the HCBS CIH (Complementary/Integrative Health) Waiver continues to have the highest proportion of people living in a care desert, at 17.5%. The next closest is the HCBS DD (Developmental Disabilities) waiver at 10.4%. These numbers are very over a percentage point lower than in 2023.

#### Percentage of Population in Care Desert by Ethnicity

In 2024, when we consider all benefits, waivers, and HCBS services with a standard of 500 members for each provider, we see that 18.5% of Hispanic/ Latinos and 16.4% of the Asian community are living in care deserts. These races/ ethnicities continue to lead the Colorado population of those living in a care desert year over year.