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Denver Health Receives Transformational Philanthropic Investment to Expand and Sustain Behavioral Health Services for Denver Students

DENVER (Feb. 2, 2026) — Denver Health’s school-based health centers (SBHCs) play a vital role in responding to the physical and mental health needs of Denver Public School students and their siblings. Plans to expand behavioral health services at these school-based health centers in an innovative way are moving forward thanks to a transformational gift from The Anschutz Foundation.

Philanthropic investment has long played a critical role in ensuring that Denver Health's school-based centers have the resources they need to provide exceptional care for Denver's young people, including behavioral health support for kids in crisis. This new investment builds on that history to expand behavioral health support to meet students before they experience a crisis.

“As the Heart of Denver, we are often the first place our community turns for care. For many students, our Denver Health school-based health centers are where they first connect with behavioral health services,” said Matthew Hoag, MA, AC, LPC, Director of Integrated Behavioral Health. “We are grateful to The Anschutz Foundation and Denver Public Schools for partnering with us to strengthen that connection. This grant expands integrated behavioral health services at our school-based locations, giving students earlier access to whole-person care in a setting they know and trust.”

Care teams at 19 school-based health centers help students and their families manage common behavioral health conditions such as anxiety, worry, and depression, and are treating an increasing number of students considered to be in crisis situations. Being able to connect while conducting a physical or other types of visits can lead to an appropriate intervention sooner.



“I deeply believe in the school-based health care model because it meets students where they spend the majority of their day, ensuring they are both healthy and ready to learn,” said Sonja O’Leary, M.D., chair of Pediatrics at Denver Health. “For many students, school is the only place they can access behavioral health care due to barriers like transportation, mental health stigmas, and lack of insurance or high deductibles. This grant will allow us to create a sustainable model that reaches even more children. With the Anschutz Foundation’s support, Denver Health’s nationally recognized school-based health centers can continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of students.”

[Denver Health’s 19 school-based health centers](#) served more than 14,000 students in the 2024-2025 school year, providing over 61,000 medical, mental health, psychiatry, dental, and health education visits.

Denver Health Foundation works on behalf of the patients and providers at Denver Health to partner with others in the community committed to ensuring Denver Health’s legacy of providing exceptional care for all. The Anschutz Foundation is driving a statewide focus on behavioral health, supporting programs at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Children’s Hospital Colorado and UCHHealth along with this gift to Denver Health. As a major catalytic investment, this gift is intended to position Denver Health to create durable, long-term strategies that extend the impact of these programs well beyond the initial funding.

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About Denver Health

Denver Health is a comprehensive health and hospital system that provides high-quality care and proudly serves as the city’s safety-net hospital. For more than 160 years, Denver Health has been guided by its mission to serve the people of Denver, to educate the next generation of health care professionals and to engage in research and community partnerships to better deliver the services that meet our patients’ health care needs while strengthening our community.

About Denver Health Foundation

Denver Health Foundation connects generous donors and volunteers with Denver Health, our community’s essential health system and most trusted care partner for life’s journey. Through philanthropy, we provide vital resources that advance Denver Health’s mission to ensure access to high-quality health care for everyone in our community regardless of ability to pay, educate the next generation of health care professionals, and deepen research and community partnerships to better meet patients’ needs.