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Denver Health HOPE program receives AHA Dick Davidson NOVA Award

DENVER (May 12, 2026) — Denver Health has been recognized with the American Hospital Association's (AHA) Dick Davidson NOVA Award, which honors outstanding collaboration by hospitals and health systems working to build healthier communities.

The recognition highlights Denver Health's Housing Outreach, Partnerships and Engagement (HOPE) program, a hospital-based partnership model that improves health outcomes for patients experiencing homelessness. HOPE works closely with collaborative partners, including the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, Denver Rescue Mission, the Denver Housing Authority, Corporation for Supportive Housing, WellPower, Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI) and the city of Denver to identify, outreach and connect patients to housing programs and supportive services during hospital visits. To date, the program has served 680 patients with 75% receiving direct assistance to address housing barriers, connect to community service providers, or enter housing.

While hospitals treat acute medical needs, recovery for unhoused patients often depends on access to stable housing after discharge. As Denver's safety-net health system, Denver Health serves a population in which nearly one in five hospitalized adult patients is unhoused, often facing complex medical, behavioral health and social challenges.

Co-led by Sarah Stella, MD, and Mara Prandi-Abrams, HOPE builds on partnership work launched in 2018, ensuring hospitalization becomes a point of connection to housing and homelessness-response services.

"Healthcare is good at saying, 'We know how to solve this issue,' but that's not the approach needed here," Stella said. "We're all challenged by patients with unmet needs and limited resources. This work requires true partnership."



Together, complementary efforts include funding recuperative care beds operated by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, which allow patients to continue healing outside the hospital, and a partnership with the Denver Housing Authority to open the 655 Broadway Transitional Housing Program for older and disabled patients.

These initiatives have reduced the average hospital length of stay for unhoused patients from 11 days in 2022 to eight days in 2025 and lowered uncompensated care costs by more than \$6 million in the past year.

“HOPE shows what’s possible when housing is treated as part of healthcare,” said Denver Health CEO Donna Lynne. “We put our toes in the water. Now we have a proof point.”

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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 165 years, Denver Health has been guided by its mission to serve the people of Denver, to educate the next generation of healthcare professionals and to engage in research and community partnerships to better deliver the services that meet our patients’ healthcare needs while strengthening our community.