# Regional Health Connectors

## Changing Systems in Colorado

www.regionalhealthconnectors.org | September 2022

Regional Health Connectors (RHCs) are a community-based workforce who build and strengthen connections between the systems that keep us healthy...

...but what does it mean to change healthcare-based systems?

Systems change is work that is *informal, ongoing, and voluntary* and results in new ways of collaborating<sup>1</sup>.

RHC systems change work focuses on both *technical* and *adaptive* challenges<sup>2</sup> to local issues.

- Technical challenges mean that the solution is well-known and there are proven best practices to address.
- Adaptive challenges represent an emerging practice, requires flexible and collaborative leadership. Solutions are unknown, but possibilities are endless.

# Smaller impact Signal | Item | Signal | Item

Larger

**Impact** 

### Counseling & Education

RHC Example: Providing Mental Health First Aid and other trainings to clinical and community partners; Promoting local and statewide opportunities, events, and resources to clinic and community partners.

### **Clinical Interventions**

RHC Example: Supporting implementation of social needs screening tools in a healthcare setting for improved access to resources and community support and navigation; Supporting clinical quality improvement (QI) projects.

### Long-lasting, Protective Interventions

RHC Example: Promoting local COVID-19 vaccine clinics; Promoting and coordinating programs to improve clinical outcomes, such as Innovation Support Program and HPV programs.

### **Changing the Context**

RHC Example: Supporting healthcare clinics to access grant funds to address food insecurity by expanding the Food Rx program and promoting food resources; Connecting clinics and community resources and improving referrals and workflows between agencies.

### Socioeconomic Factors

RHC Example: Convening local housing, transportation, and food coalitions; Convening multisectoral collaboratives to improve access to care for systematically excluded communities (e.g. LGBTQ+, Communities of Color, Rural).

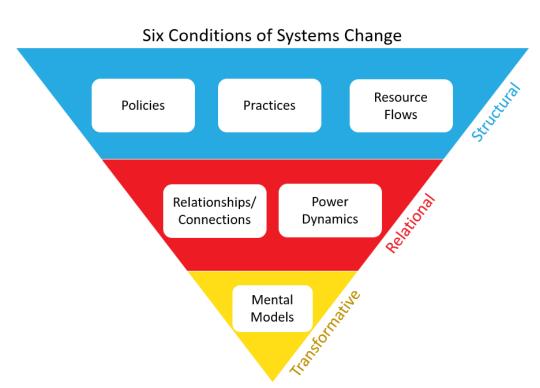
RHCs work at all levels of the Health Impact Pyramid<sup>3</sup> with a focus on improving health equity and leveraging existing community assets.

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### RHCs create and support conditions of systems change within local communities.



Policies

Government, institutional and organizational rules, regulations, and priorities that guide actions.

**Practices** 

Activities of institutions, coalitions, networks, and other entities targeted to improving social and environmental progress. Includes procedures, guidelines, or informal shared habits that comprise the work.

**Resource Flows** 

How money, people, knowledge, information, and other assets such as infrastructure are allocated and distributed.

Relationships & **Connections**  Quality of connections and communication occurring among actors in a system, especially among those with differing histories and viewpoints.

**Power Dynamics** 

The distribution of decision-making power, authority, and both formal and informal influence among individuals and organizations.

Mental Models

Habits of thought—deeply held beliefs and assumptions and taken-for-granted ways of operating that influence how we think, what we do, and how we talk.

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