



In response to emerging needs relating to individual and community health, a year-long discovery process in La Plata County was conducted on how to best address health care issues. A key recommendation from this study was to establish a panel of local experts which could focus, in a collective manner, on improving the area's health status. A group of leaders from public health, health care, mental health, education, and human services came together to form the *Health Alliance of La Plata County* in November of 2010. **This newly formed Alliance envisions an integrated health system where all residents of La Plata County have access to timely, comprehensive, high quality, and affordable care and services at the most appropriate place to meet their needs.**

Members are high-level decisions-makers from key organizations whose work touches health care. They have united around the following purposes:

- Create and sustain partnerships that can assess and address the health care needs of people living in La Plata County, especially the medically underserved
- Create a constructive and collegial environment in which the leadership of partner agencies can share information and work together on community solutions to health care issues, with particular focus on issues affecting the medically underserved in the region
- Foster creative and innovative planning and decision making
- Provide opportunities for collaboration, shared learning, system thinking and the development of service for the medically underserved population

Members currently include:

Bern Heath, CEO, Axis Health System

Bill Esterbrook, Superintendent, Durango School District 9-R

Bob Juskevich, retired physician, Citizen's Health Advisory Council

Brett Gosney, CEO, Animas Surgical Center

Karen Zink, Board Member, Durango Network

Kirk Dignum, CEO, Mercy Regional Medical Center

Joe Theine, Director of Public Health, San Juan Basin Health District Region (Chairman)

John Synder, Executive Director, Durango Network

Lezlie Mayer, Director, La Plata County Human Services

Ryan Mickelson, DDS, La Plata Dentist Society

Since the over-arching goal of the Health Alliance is to improve the health status of the La Plata County region, Alliance members encourage community involvement and welcome the expertise of stakeholders.

CONTACT: If you would like to address the Alliance, please contact Bob Juskevich at rsjuskevich@gmail.com, the community representative to the Alliance, or attend the open Citizen's Health Advisory Council (CHAC) on the second Friday of each month. More information about CHAC is located on the website: www.chaclaplata.org.