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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Evaluation of SafeCare Colorado parent support program shows strong outcomes for vulnerable families

DENVER (February 8, 2017) — The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) announced today that Colorado families who completed the SafeCare Colorado program were significantly less likely to have an open child welfare case six months after completion when compared to similar Colorado families, according to a preliminary evaluation of the program. Parents and caregivers reported high satisfaction and improved skills upon completion of the program.

SafeCare Colorado is a flexible, free and voluntary in-home parent support program for at-risk families with children ages 5 and younger. SafeCare Colorado helps parents and caregivers build on their existing skills in the areas of home safety, child health and parent-child or parent-infant interactions. SafeCare Colorado depends on partners in the community to help identify families in need of parent support services, as well as child welfare departments and self-referrals.

“We know parenting can be both wonderful and stressful. SafeCare Colorado teaches parents and caregivers ways to keep their children healthy, safe and happy.” said Julia Blomberg, SafeCare Colorado program manager at CDHS. “This program provides critical emotional and social support to a vulnerable population, helping set parents and their children on the path to success.”

SafeCare Colorado is one piece of Gov. John Hickenlooper’s multi-faceted approach to child welfare called “Keeping Kids Safe and Families Healthy 2.0.” It was implemented as a three-year pilot program beginning in 2013. The Colorado Office of Early Childhood partners with the Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect to support the implementation of SafeCare Colorado. In June 2016, CDHS announced that approximately \$5.4 million had been secured to continue funding the program beyond the pilot.

Today’s announcement stems from an evaluation of the pilot program conducted by the Social Work Research Center at Colorado State University (CSU), which reported that program data shows SafeCare Colorado “is effectively reaching a highly vulnerable population of families, as intended.”

According to the [CSU evaluation](#):

- A total of 1,752 unique families were enrolled in the SafeCare Colorado program from January 2014 through June 2016. Sixty-eight percent reported an annual household income of less than \$20,000, and 62 percent had a high school education or less. As for



the children served, 43 percent of those enrolled were younger than age 2.

- The program piloted in 11 community-based agencies serving 39 counties and two tribal nations.
- A matched group comparison analysis of caregivers who participated in SafeCare and caregivers who did not participate in the program found that the SafeCare group had zero open child welfare cases during the six months following the completion of the program. By comparison, 6 percent of the comparison control group experienced an open case during the follow-up period. The difference is statistically significant.
- Caregivers who completed SafeCare satisfaction surveys and/or participated in focus groups reported very high satisfaction with all aspects of the program. A majority of caregivers who completed all three topics – home safety, child health and parent-child or parent-infant interaction – and participated in focus groups reported that they would recommend the program to other caregivers without question.
- Assessments completed by families at the beginning and end of each topic showed improvement in skill acquisition on safety, health, and parent-child and parent-infant interactions.

SafeCare Colorado has continued to expand since the pilot period concluded. In Fiscal Year 2016-17, the program will provide services to approximately 1,400 families and be implemented by 13 community-based agencies in 41 counties and two tribal nations.

SafeCare Colorado Sites

- Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
- Northwest Colorado Health, serving Moffat and Routt counties
- Baby Bear Hugs, serving Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington and Yuma counties
- Mesa County Health Department, serving Mesa County
- Montezuma County Public Health Department, serving Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan counties and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- Savio House, serving Denver County
- Arapahoe County Early Childhood Council, serving Arapahoe County
- Catholic Charities Diocese of Pueblo, serving Pueblo, Custer, Huerfano and Las Animas counties
- High Plains Community Health Center, serving Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers counties
- The Family Tree serving Adams, Douglas and Jefferson counties
- La Llave Family Resource Center, serving Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande and Saguache counties
- Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains, serving El Paso County
- North Range Behavioral Health, serving Weld County

Visit safecare.co4kids.org to learn more.

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