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**Caring for Denver Foundation Announces Funding in Support of COVID-19 Community and Frontline Responders**

*Denver, CO* – Caring for Denver Foundation announced today funding designed to help organizations and frontline responders during the COVID-19 crisis.

Caring for Denver Foundation was created to quickly respond to emerging mental health needs and substance misuse issues in our communities. We are designed to react to the rapidly changing needs of our communities and to support them as they address the growing impacts of this current pandemic.

Though our physical offices are closed, we are working diligently to provide fast, general operating funding to support our communities by:

1. Ensuring our funding reaches those most likely to be able to respond to mental health and substance misuse crises during this time.
2. Reinforcing the frontline resources of community-driven mental health and those working to address substance misuse so they may continue meeting the needs of the populations they serve.
3. Supporting providers and organizations overwhelmed working on mental health and substance misuse during this time so they remain able to continue to support the ongoing needs of the community as this rapidly changing situation progresses.

To this end, Caring for Denver has designated a Colorado COVID-19 Support Fund including grants and staff support in three specific areas:

- An emergency childcare program for children of those providers in Denver supporting critically at-risk populations. Caring for Denver is dedicating resources toward efforts to help ensure those have the social supports they need to continue providing vital services to meet the demand for care and limit any barriers to care.
- Funding to support self-care including crisis intervention for support and access to behavioral health for those on the frontlines caring for the critically ill and homeless populations.
- Flexible and responsive funds to those providers working on mental health and substance misuse issues so they can continue to serve at-risk populations.

In partnership with other foundations, agencies, and community organizations, Caring for Denver will continue to monitor needs and align resources for both the short-term and long-term.

"These are difficult times for us all, especially those on the frontlines, as we combat the spread of coronavirus across our city and state. As we navigate these uncharted waters, I am proud to

work with Caring for Denver to bolster social supports for our healthcare workers and the mental health programs available to them," Leslie Herod, Caring for Denver Foundation Board Chair.

"We want to ensure that providers are equipped to meet the rapidly changing needs of the communities they're serving during this crisis. And as we've continually done, we'll listen to the community and adjust our actions to address needs as this situation changes," said Lorez Meinhold, Executive Director.

"I applaud Caring for Denver for taking these steps to support the hard-working residents of our city when they need it the most," Mayor Michael B. Hancock said. "I've said from the beginning, we are going to get through this together, by taking care of each other and ensuring the most vulnerable among us are always a priority."

Mental health and substance use organizations are critical Denver safety-net providers in communities serving at-risk populations. This funding will seek to ensure the following organizations have the operational resources necessary to meet the community's ongoing needs:

- Servicios de la Raza
- The Harm Reduction Center
- The Center for Trauma and Resiliency
- Life-Line Colorado
- Element of Discovery - Therapists of Color
- Tribe Recovery Homes
- Sobriety House
- The Center
- The Empowerment Program
- The Rose Andom Center
- Friends of the Haven
- CHARG Resource Center

Self-care dollars for staff supporting critically at-risk homeless populations:

- The Gathering Place
- Urban Peak
- Denver Rescue Mission
- Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
- Volunteers of America
- The Salvation Army
- The Delores Project
- Catholic Charities
- St. Francis Center

To find out information about future funding opportunities, please visit [caring4denver.org](https://caring4denver.org) or follow [facebook.com/caring4denver](https://facebook.com/caring4denver).

### **About Caring for Denver Foundation**

Caring for Denver Foundation was founded and funded with overwhelming voter support in November of 2018 to put 25 cents from every hundred dollars spent into a community fund for

mental health and substance misuse issues. Caring for Denver will distribute at least \$35 million per year to support programs in Denver that:

- Increase mental health and substance misuse prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction.
- Provide alternatives to jails and emergency rooms as a first stop for those in crisis.
- Fund community-identified priorities.

These actions outlined above fit squarely in the areas of early prevention of mental health and substance misuse challenges and will help ensure Denver residents have access to the appropriate care at the right time and support to navigate that care.

Caring for Denver Foundation is a public 501c3 nonprofit organization integrated with and accountable to stakeholders across Denver with oversight from 13 Board members appointed by the Mayor, District Attorney, and City Council President. Representative Leslie Herod serves as the board chairwoman.

#### **About Board Chair Rep. Leslie Herod**

Colorado State Representative Leslie Herod (D-Denver) was elected in 2016 as the first LGBTQ African American in the Colorado General Assembly. Since then, she has passed 52 bills, addressing criminal justice reform, mental health, addiction, youth homelessness, education, and civil rights protections. Herod championed the Caring for Denver Ballot measure and now serves as Chair of the Caring for Denver Board.

#### **About Executive Director Lorez Meinhold**

Lorez Meinhold serves as the Executive Director of Caring for Denver. She brings over nineteen years of implementation and policy experience as a director of multilateral initiatives involving the public, private and civic sectors, working at the local, state, and national levels. Lorez has worked in many capacities integrating health programs addressing mental health and substance misuse needs, connecting early childhood and health communities, delivery and payment system reforms, and efforts that required statewide stakeholder engagement.