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**New High-Speed Internet Health Information Network to Connect
State’s Urban, Rural Health Care Providers**
*Colorado Telehealth Network to improve access, quality of care
for thousands in rural communities*

DENVER – The [Colorado Hospital Association \(CHA\)](#) and the [Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council \(CBHC\)](#) today announced that they have selected [Qwest Communications](#) (NYSE: Q) to provide high-speed broadband services that will link nearly 400 of the state’s urban and rural health care and behavioral health providers, and facilitate telemedicine access. Once complete, the [Colorado Telehealth Network](#) will be the among the largest health care information networks in the United States.

The Colorado Telehealth Network, managed by CHA and CBHC and powered by Qwest, will also move Colorado one step closer to achieving one of [Gov. Bill Ritter](#)’s promises: to significantly expand broadband communication to rural areas of the state.

“The ability of Colorado’s health care providers to accurately exchange information with each other in a timely fashion is a critical component of the state’s efforts to make health care more affordable, and to improve coverage and access,” Ritter said. “I am pleased to see our vision of an interconnected system move one step closer to reality.”

Once completed, the Colorado Telehealth Network will connect nearly 400 hospitals, clinics and other health care and behavioral health providers in Colorado to Qwest’s national fiber-optic network and enable them to provide patients—especially those in rural areas—with state-of-the-art, long-distance medical care using speeds up to 100 megabits per second.

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“Too many rural communities are isolated from many of the advanced diagnosis and treatment technologies available in urban areas,” said CHA President and CEO Steven J. Summer. “The Colorado Telehealth Network, when implemented, will enable Coloradans to receive the right care, at the right place and at the right time.”

Telehealth and telemedicine services provide patients in rural areas with access to critically needed medical specialists, in some instances without leaving their homes or communities. Intensive care providers can monitor critically ill patients around the clock and video conferencing allows specialists and mental health professionals to care for patients in different rural locations, often hundreds of miles away. The network will enhance the delivery of health services, help control costs and make care more affordable, reduce travel time for consumers, decrease medical errors and enable health care providers to share critical information. It also will minimize the amount of time workers are away from their jobs visiting health care professionals.

“The Colorado Telehealth Network will promote better health in many ways, while greatly reducing the need for rural residents to travel long distances to receive quality care,” said George DelGrosso, executive director of the Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council. “This innovative system will save lives and scarce health care resources.”

Qwest will manage [metro optical Ethernet](#) and [data networking](#) technology to provide a secure, reliable, scalable voice and data platform to health care providers of all sizes, enabling them to share critical medical information over large distances, control costs and reduce patient travel time, thereby providing a better patient care experience. The high level of security and around-the-clock network management Qwest provides will help these medical institutions meet HIPAA compliance requirements.

“The Colorado Telehealth Network is an example of how Qwest’s network solutions can eliminate the obstacle of geography and revolutionize the delivery of quality health care in rural areas of the state,” said Sharon Montgomery, Vice President, Qwest Government and Education Services. “Hospitals and clinics of all sizes will be able to use this technology to extend their reach to access remote information and expertise to deliver quality patient care to every community, regardless of location or size.”

The Colorado Telehealth Network is funded by collaborating two [awards from the Federal Communications Commission \(FCC\)](#). An FCC award to CHA provides up to \$4.6 million in federal funds over three years. When combined with a similar award to CBHC, \$9.8 million will be available for the initiative. In addition, a 15 percent match from participating health care providers will supplement the program.

CHA and CBHC expect that the Colorado Telehealth Network will connect approximately 70 percent of the 388 eligible facilities by the end of the year and will complete connectivity in early 2010.

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About the Colorado Hospital Association

CHA works on behalf of Colorado's 90 hospitals and health systems to transform health care through advocacy and representation, leadership, education and information. For more information, visit www.cha.com.

About the Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council

CBHC is a nonprofit organization that represents Colorado's network of community behavioral health care providers (including 17 community mental health centers, two specialty clinics, and five behavioral health organizations). Members contract with the State of Colorado and others who work together to provide comprehensive, community-based behavioral and psychiatric services to more than 84,500 people across Colorado. CBHC members provide a network of skilled therapeutic and community resources to meet the mental health need of individuals and families. For more information, visit www.cbhc.org.

About Qwest Business

Qwest Business is a choice of [95 percent of Fortune 500](#) companies, offering a comprehensive portfolio of data and voice networking communications solutions to enterprises, government agencies and educational institutions of all sizes. The Qwest network covers the entire continental United States and has one of the largest fiber footprints in the U.S., capable of supporting 40Gbps data transmission rates. Go to Qwest.com/business to see why enterprises coast to coast rely on Qwest for first-class communications solutions and to learn more about Qwest's commitment to perfecting the customer experience.

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