

Implementation of the Life's Essential 8+ to improve health in rural and Latino communities.

Stephanie Coronel-Mockler, MPH, Nick Flattery, MPH, Jacqueline Howard, MPH, Kristin Kilbourn, PhD, MPH, Raymond Estacio, MD

Community Summary

This project aims to assess the feasibility of implementing a comprehensive framework into a health promotion program that is led by community health workers in seven communities. The framework, Life's Essential 8, features eight key components of cardiovascular health. Stress was added to address the mental health component of cardiovascular health. Since October 2023, 2,475 participants living in rural/frontier and Latino communities completed the Life's Essential 8+ assessment. Preliminary findings among those who repeated the assessment (n=618) show improvements in cardiovascular health scores.

Background

The Integrated Solutions and Programs to Improve Health Equity in Cardiovascular Health (INSPIRE-CVH) program is the latest iteration of two chronic disease prevention programs previously recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as promising practices for reducing cardiovascular disease risk factors: a group-based program (Community Heart Health Actions for Latinos At Risk, CHARLAR) and a one-on-one program (Colorado Heart Healthy Solutions).

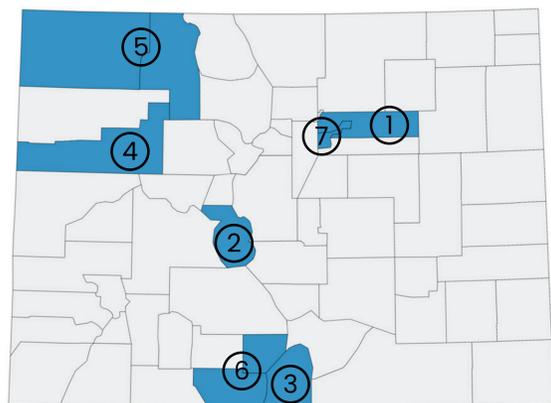
INSPIRE-CVH community health workers (CHW) deliver:

- health assessments,
- referrals to resources, and
- education and health coaching on health factors and health behaviors.

INSPIRE-CVH CHWs primarily serve communities experiencing disproportionately higher rates of chronic diseases, specifically those living in rural/frontier and Latino communities.

Objective: To assess the feasibility of implementing an expanded version of the American Heart Association's Life's Essential 8 framework into multiple components of the INSPIRE-CVH program.

INSPIRE-CVH Community Health Worker Partners



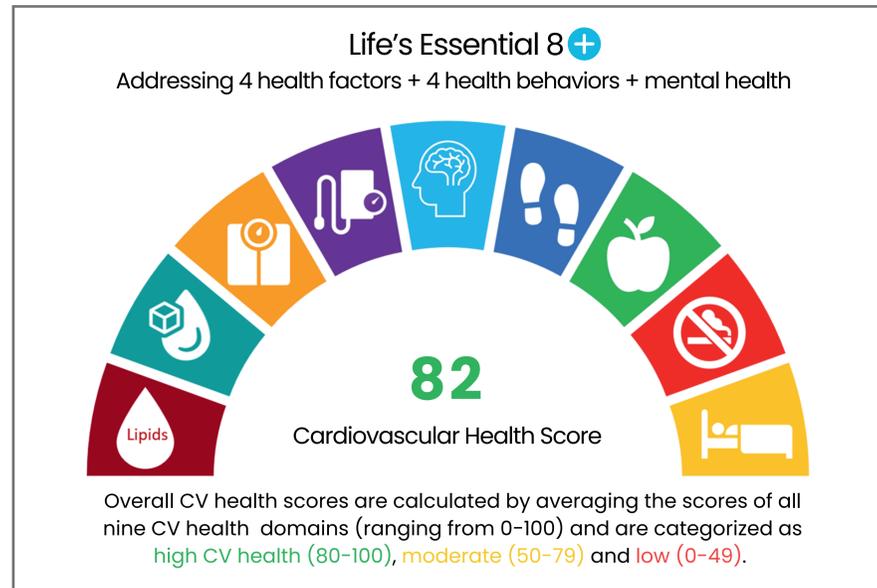
Legend

1. Adams County Public Health
2. Chaffee County Public Health
3. Costilla County Public Health
4. Garfield County Public Health
5. Northwest Colorado Health
6. San Luis Valley AHEC
7. Vuela for Health

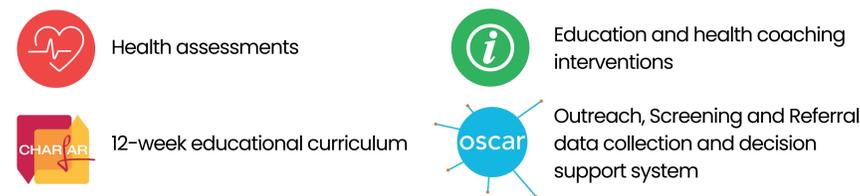
Methods

The Life's Essential 8 framework addresses four **health factors** and four **health behaviors** that are key to improving and/or maintaining cardiovascular (CV) health: diet, physical activity, nicotine exposure, sleep, blood pressure, glucose, lipids and weight.

A stress component was added by incorporating the 10-item Perceived Stress Score to simultaneously address mental health and CV health.



Life's Essential 8+ was utilized across several components of INSPIRE-CVH



OSCAR was updated to collect Life's Essential 8+ data, calculate CV and mental health scores, and generate evidence-based recommendations to support CHWs in facilitating education and health coaching with participants. Scan here to learn more.



Conclusion

This program demonstrates the feasibility of CHWs utilizing the Life's Essential 8+ framework to address CV and mental health with participants living in rural/frontier and Latino communities. Next steps will continue to evaluate the impact of the Life's Essential 8+ framework on CV health and mental health outcomes.

Results

Between October 2023 and September 2025, baseline Life's Essential 8+ health assessments were completed by 2,475 participants across five rural/frontier and two urban communities. Almost all (99.0%) participants received a health coaching intervention based upon their Life's Essential 8+ results.

Initial feedback about the Life's Essential 8+ framework from the CHWs has been positive. CHWs shared that the framework:

- made for easier conversations about health behaviors,
- more personalized health recommendations,
- facilitated self-reflection about one's health, and
- made it easier for participants to see different ways of improving their health.

Sociodemographic and cardiovascular health characteristics (N=2,475)	n (%)
Age in years (mean ± SD)	50.4 ± 17.0
Sex – Female	1704 (68.8%)
Race/Ethnicity	
• White, non-Hispanic	1265 (51.1%)
• Hispanic	816 (33.0%)
• Other	166 (6.7%)
Preferred Language	
• English	1589 (64.2%)
• Spanish	870 (35.1%)
County	
• Rural/Frontier	1837 (74.2%)
• Urban	639 (25.8%)
Social Determinants of Health	
• No medical home	711 (28.7%)
• Food insecurity	394 (15.9%)
• Housing instability	153 (6.2%)
• Unemployed	184 (7.4%)
• Less than high school education	424 (17.1%)
Health Coverage	
• Medicare	498 (20.1%)
• Medicaid	255 (10.3%)
• None	682 (27.5%)
Baseline CV Health Scores	
• High CV health	715 (28.9%)
• Moderate CV health	1593 (64.3%)
• Low CV health	82 (3.3%)

To date, 618 participants have returned for repeat Life's Essential 8+ assessments. Preliminary findings show improvements in overall CV health, health factor, health behavior and stress scores.

