

Tri-County Health Network brings health equity talks to town

By Jessica Kutz, Staff Reporter | Posted: Friday, January 20, 2017 4:55 pm

With the future of health care up in the air, health equity has become a pertinent talking point across the United States.

The Tri-County Health Network, a local nonprofit, is bringing the conversation to the box canyon through the Health Equity Learning Series — held in partnership with the Denver-based foundation The Colorado Trust.

“Racism and Health Inequities,” the second presentation of the four part series, will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 25, from 9-11 a.m. at Wilkinson Public Library’s program room.

The presentation begins with a viewing of a video-recorded talk by Dr. Rachel Hardeman, whose work is focused on the ways race impacts health care. A facilitator from Transformative Alliances — an organization that works with historically oppressed groups — will lead the discussion afterward.

Katie Mackay, development specialist at TCHNetwork, said the presentation is intended to raise awareness of racism and health inequity.

“Health inequity is ever-present in our community,” she said. “I think just gaining a better awareness and understanding is important.

“Dr. Hardeman talks about how structural racism leads to inequity and how those inequities lead to disparity,” she said.

Mackay said understanding the root cause of disparities in the community will make it easier to address the issue.

Mackay added, the speaker will also talk about the Flint, Michigan water crisis, and the importance of language when talking about race.

Rasa Kaunelis, director of strategic initiatives for TCHNetwork, said the speaker gives advice on addressing health inequity in the community.

“She provides some really great suggestions as far as how we can combat structural racism in our specific community,” Kaunelis said. “The facilitator will be there to help work through some of these ideas. It will be very impactful.”

Kaunelis added: “There is quite a bit of health inequity that really exists in our community. We have a very rural population. We also have a high population of Latino residents and income inequality.”

TCHNetwork is able to bring the equity series to Telluride thanks to a grant from The Colorado Trust. The grant provides funding for interpretation services at the event as well as childcare.

Julian Kesner, director of communications for the trust, said the aim of the series is to educate a wider audience on health equity.

“We wanted to make sure that this series had a state-wide impact,” he said. “We did not want only people in the Denver metro area to be the only ones able to experience (the live talk) and learn from it.

“By having grantees around the state that can hold these local viewing parties, it helps broaden the impact to a much larger audience,” he said.

In its fourth year, the equity series has worked with over a dozen speakers, he said.

Kaunelis said she hopes that residents and representatives from local community organizations can attend the event.

“I would love if people could RSVP by Sunday evening,” she added.

For more information or to sign up for the event, email info@tchnetwork.com.

EQUITY SERIES

The third part of the health equity series will feature Lydia Z. Brown, “a gender/queer and transracially/transnationally adopted east Asian autistic activist, writer and speaker,” according to the TCHNetwork. Her work “has largely focused on violence against multiply-marginalized disabled people, especially institutionalization, incarceration and policing.”

The date for the presentation has not been finalized, but it will be scheduled for late March or early April.