



Chanda Hinton

When you look into the face of Chanda Hinton, you see vitality and radiant health; you see a young woman with passion and determination; you see a person of strength and purpose. If you glance down from her face, you will see her wheelchair, and you realize the goals of the nonprofit organization she founded 17 years ago. You will see that her role is rooted in her own personal story.

At age 9, she endured a spinal cord injury leaving her paralyzed. When she should have been livin' it up in college, her health took a significant decline. It was during a meeting with her health provider that her sister, a yoga therapist, asked about integrative therapy options. The physician responded, "At this point, Chanda has nothing left to lose, so do it." Within days of receiving integrative therapies, Chanda's health began to shift dramatically. As her health improved from acupuncture massage & chiropractic care, she began to research why there was a lack of these services available to people living with long-term physical disabilities. Thus, the Chanda Plan Foundation was born, and the Chanda Center for Health was built.

"Chanda is an amazing advocate. I worked closely with her in three consecutive legislative sessions on policies to improve access to care for people with disabilities. Her knowledge, tenacity, and heart have driven progress on these critical issues and have directly impacted the lives of hundreds of Coloradans." -Representative Kennedy

Chanda is the Executive Director of the Chanda Center for Health and Chanda Plan Foundation, which provides access to holistic, collaborative, accessible and competent healthcare programs to individuals with physical disabilities.

Chanda is from Nebraska and has a bachelor's degree in Communications from the University of Denver and earned a Masters in Non-Profit Management from Regis University. In her spare time (wait, what spare time?), she enjoys cheesy '80s chick flicks, thoughtful conversations with people in community and spending time with loved ones.



The Chanda Center for Health & The Chanda Plan Foundation

The Chanda Center for Health strives to improve health outcomes for people living with long-term physical disabilities by delivering comprehensive integrative healthcare, which include Acupuncture: Behavioral Health: Chiropractic : Dental : Massage : Adaptive Yoga : Physical Therapy : Care Coordination. Funding for services is provided by Medicaid, because of the Center's advocacy work, and generous donors of the Chanda Plan Foundation, both 501 (c) (3) non-profit organizations.

As a leader in disability, competent healthcare delivery models, access to care, etc. the Chanda Center for Health is a stranger to Advocacy. In 2009, the organization led a movement to pass Colorado House Bill 1047, which created the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Waiver, offering acupuncture, massage, and chiropractic care through Medicaid to evaluate cost-effectiveness and improve quality of life for persons with spinal cord injuries in the Denver metro area. In 2021, the movement evolved expanded these services legislatively to other diagnosis and to be a statewide benefit and today continues by addressing health disparities for individuals with disabilities through disability competent care by advocating policy changes.

Chanda Center for Health: Deliver and advocate for integrative therapy, primary care, and other complementary services to improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare costs for persons with physical disabilities. <https://chandacenter.org/>

Chanda Plan Foundation: To support the mission of the Chanda Center for Health by providing sustainable financial impact. <https://chandacenter.org/chanda-plan-foundation/>



Health Equity for Disability NOW!

THE LAW

For almost fifty years, federal civil rights laws such as Section **504 of the Rehabilitation Act** of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 1557 and other provisions of the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act have prohibited discrimination against Americans with disabilities, specifically financial aid recipients of Medicaid and Medicare (CMS), which include which includes Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) ensuring their programs, activities, and services are accessible to and readily usable by individuals with disabilities.

THE ISSUE

50 Years Of Disability Civil Rights Laws Have Not Achieved Equitable Care!

Today, individuals with physical disabilities continue to face an abundance of health barriers, causing increased health issues and deaths among this population. Individuals with disabilities are facing a lack of accessible clinics, not being examined outside of the wheelchair, and old narratives about how we speak of and view disability that still prevents quality and equitable healthcare.

With the intention of fighting these health issues, the Chanda Center for Health created the “Disability-Competence Curriculum for Healthcare Providers.” Funded by the Colorado Health Foundation and developed with many stakeholders, the course was designed at the request of the medical community to provide an in-depth look at ways individual healthcare professionals, their medical teams, and administrative staff can better serve individuals with disabilities as members of the system of care.

THE FEEDBACK

As the Chanda Center for Health shared the “Disability-Competence Curriculum for Healthcare Providers,” to physicians, support staff, hospitals, and educational organizations throughout the last two years, the same dead ends advocated a quarter of a century ago, continue to be dismissed, even today. Some healthcare clinics, when approached, turned down free education and possible funding for equipment needed to serve people with disabilities. Some of the responses include the following:

"Why does healthcare need to adjust for this community?"

"I don't have patients who are disabled."

"Why should I care?"

THE RESEARCH

In 2022, a study published by [Health Affairs](#) showed how people with disabilities face numerous barriers when it comes to accessing healthcare, and the various biases they face from physicians who are inadequately prepared or held accountable.

In 2009, a report by the [National Council on Disability](#) noted that "the absence of professional training on disability competency issues for health practitioners is one of the most significant barriers to preventing people with disabilities from receiving appropriate and effective healthcare."

A variety of studies performed by the [Disability Equity Collaborative](#) cites findings on how to increase accessibility in healthcare for individuals with disabilities, the following are necessary: need for increased education and awareness of disability disparities, existing laws are necessary but not sufficient, and healthcare is motivated by cost, quality and competition.

"Research has repeatedly demonstrated that persons living with disabilities experience numerous barriers in accessing accessible and equitable healthcare services. Having models of excellence in providing equitable care, such as the Chanda Center, are an essential step in understanding how to address disparities in care experienced by persons with disabilities."

-Megan Morris, Founder of Disability Equity Collective & Associate Professor CU Anschutz

SYSTEMATIC CHANGE AND ADVOCACY GOALS

While the need for a curriculum is obvious, based on the above feedback and research above, the battle for health equity goes beyond education and outreach. For this reason, the Chanda Center has shifted its focus to systematic change and to dissolve these health barriers through policy changes.

Current efforts include working with current government agencies on policy changes on state and federal levels with the inclusion of but not limited to guidance, audits, improved payment, penalties, ongoing education, etc. for purposes of improving health equity for persons with disabilities.

For more information visit, <https://chandacenter.org/who-we-are/> or contact Chanda Hinton at ch@chandaplan.org.

Previous & Future Bills

Senate Bill 2021-038

Accessing integrative therapies for those with long-term physical disabilities begins with Medicaid reform. With the support of a volunteer lobbyist and policy makers, the Chanda Plan Foundation worked to change Colorado state legislation in 2009, and Medicaid instituted a Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) waiver to provide massage, acupuncture, and chiropractic services to eligible participants. Over the last 13 years (2009-2023), the waiver evaluated the impact of these services and the consequential cost savings for those enrolled. The most recent evaluation of the waiver validates what we witnessed through our direct services—better health outcomes at lower costs. With the same level of support, the Chanda Center for Health continues to advocate for the demographic and geographic expansion of the SCI waiver through Bill SB21-038. Most recently, the bill was changed to the CIH Waiver (Community and Integrative Health).



Contact

Chanda Center for Health
1630 Carr Street
Lakewood, Colorado 80214

info@chandacenter.org

www.chandacenter.org

