



Healing Beyond Medicine

Boulder Community Health Caregivers Learns Reiki to Strengthen Clinical Practice

Boulder, Colorado, August 12, 2026— Boulder Community Health (BCH) Foothills Hospital, a non-profit, independent health systems located in Boulder, CO has recently empowered its clinicians with evidence-informed complementary wellness practices that integrate care for the whole person.

Earlier this month, Reiki Level I training, informed by the theory and language of Watson's Caring Science, was presented to 20 BCH clinicians on the Foothills campus during a transformative weekend training. Reiki is a complementary wellness practice codified in Japan in the early 20th century. It works by organizing and supporting the natural flow of energy in the body through gentle, hands-on or hands-above-the-body techniques to support the body's natural healing processes.

Reiki Training Brings Caring Science into Practice

The offering of this training to BCH clinicians embodies BCH's commitment to creating a healing environment for both patients and caregivers. Since 2021, BCH has been recognized as a member of the National Caring Science Affiliate System of The Watson Caring Science Institute (WCSI). Watson's Caring Science emphasizes the importance of authentic human connection, presence, compassion and caring relationships as essential elements of care and healing. Bringing the language of these principles into Reiki practice, supported clinicians in exploring how intentional presence and a caring relationship can complement clinical care and support physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of patients as well as themselves. Integrating Caring Science into clinical education and complementary wellness practices such as Reiki reflects BCH's commitment to whole person care and fostering a culture in which caring, connection and clinical expertise work together to support meaningful healing experiences for patients and caregivers alike.

Reiki Colorado Academy (RCA) founder, Reiki Master and Watson Caring Science Faculty Associate Susan Chiocchi, along with RCA Reiki Masters guided students through the synthesis of performing a basic Reiki session grounded in the meaning and literacy of Watson's Caring Science.

A Special Visit from Dr. Jean Watson

Dr. Jean Watson, founder of the Watson Caring Science Institute and internationally recognized nursing scholar and educator, emphasizes that it is possible to read, study, learn about, teach and research caring theory, however, in order to truly "get it" one must personally experience it. Compassionate care is not simply a philosophy, it is a daily practice that honors authentic human connection. For BCH clinicians, this Reiki training offers an opportunity to put these principles of caring into practice through presence, intention and connection.

A highlight of the weekend training was a visit from Dr. Watson, who joined the clinicians for an informal teaching session and Q&A discussion. Watson highlighted the natural congruence between the practice of Reiki and the expression of caring, kindness and equanimity. Watson explained: "When we are

attuned through Reiki we essentially act as a channel for universal life force energy. This is the energy that is the action of compassion and the expression and of love.” She described Reiki as a perfect exemplar of the foundational principles of Watson’s Caring Science, emphasizing the ways in which intentional presence, compassion and love can be expressed through caring practices.

The training was made possible through generous funding from the BCH Foundation and an anonymous donor from the BCH Ambassadors, including support for lunch for the participating clinicians.

Expanding Whole-Person Care at BCH

BCH has been offering Reiki to patients for nearly 15 years, with the practice historically available to oncology patients and, more recently, through the Palliative Care department. This new training expands the number of BCH clinicians equipped to incorporate Reiki into staff self-care and creates an opportunity for deeper integration of Watson’s Caring Science principles throughout the organization.

“We are thrilled to see this alignment of Watson’s Caring Science and the practice of Reiki become part of the continued evolution of care at BCH,” said Michele Grulke, BCH Director of Clinical Performance. “This training gives our clinicians another way to bring presence, compassion and intentional caring into all their interactions at BCH. It reflects our commitment to creating a culture where caring is more than something we talk about, but rather something we embody and practice every day.”

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About the Boulder Community Health Foundation

Established in 1978, the Boulder Community Health (BCH) Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. The Foundation exists to inspire giving in support of BCH to enhance the quality and availability of health care in our community. For over four decades, the generosity of their community has led to more than \$80 million raised in support of BCH. Over the past five years, the BCH Foundation has granted over \$15 million to BCH in support of various capital and programmatic priorities.

About Boulder Community Health

Boulder Community Health is a non-profit, independent, integrated, regional health system with facilities throughout Boulder and Broomfield Counties. Boulder Community Health is known across Colorado for its clinical excellence in heart care, maternity care, stroke care, orthopedic care and cancer care. BCH’s mission is to provide their community with the highest value health care in an innovative, patient-centric environment. The BCH vision: Partnering to create and care for the healthiest community in the nation. For more information, visit www.bch.org and connect with BCH on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

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