

# New Anchorum philanthropy group taking the initiative

By [Gabrielle Porter gporter@sfnewmexican.com](mailto:gporter@sfnewmexican.com)

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Jenny Parks at Anchorum Health Foundation in Santa Fe on Tuesday. Parks, previously of the LANL Foundation, joined the new Anchorum group Jan. 8 as the senior vice president of strategic philanthropy as it seeks to give out \$500 million over the next decade to improve health outcomes in 10 Northern New Mexico counties.

[Gabriela Campos/The New Mexican](#)

Coming up with a half-billion-dollar plan is a lot of responsibility.

And, if you ask Jenny Parks of Anchorum Health Foundation, a lot of legwork.

Parks, the newly installed senior vice president of strategic philanthropy for the organization, is part of the team tasked with crafting how to spend the massive amount

of money it's set to receive following its predecessor's divestment of Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center.

The share transfer last year — technically by nonprofit Anchorum St. Vincent, which until last summer owned half of the Santa Fe hospital — is expected to bring the foundation \$500 million over the next decade, which [leaders say will be used on an ambitious, multipronged effort](#) to improve health outcomes in 10 Northern New Mexico counties.

From now until July, when Anchorum plans to release its more detailed funding roadmap and start writing checks, Parks and her colleagues are hitting both the road and the books.

Site visits around the region. Meetings with all sorts of organizations. Hours of reviewing reports and research. The foundation is even bringing in a geographic information systems specialist to help keep track of the plethora of data points.

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The Anchorum Health Foundation received \$500 million following its predecessor's divestment of Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center. "This transaction will make us the largest foundation in New Mexico," said Jenny Parks in a recent interview. "So we feel a huge responsibility to get it right." [Gabriela Campos/The New Mexican](#)

## 'A very exciting time'

Anchorum Health Foundation was created after nonprofit Anchorum St. Vincent transferred [its half-ownership share](#) of the Santa Fe hospital to Texas-based Christus Health last year. The transaction will give to a new entity, led by President and CEO Jerry Jones.

While some of the \$500 million the foundation is set to receive under the deal will be invested to ensure the long-term health of the organization, Parks said it plans to issue about \$30 million in grants in its next fiscal year, which starts in July, then about \$20 million per year for the next nine years.

"It's a very exciting time to be here," said Parks, who joined the foundation Jan. 8.

Parks, who lives in Santa Fe, started her career as an attorney and working for a real estate development company in Austin, Texas. She later moved back to New Mexico — where she had graduated from high school years earlier — to take a job at the [Trust for Public Land](#). She eventually joined what was then the [New Mexico Community Foundation](#) and in 2015 took over as president and CEO of the [LANL Foundation](#), overseeing the organization's efforts to bolster education in the region during a nine-year period when it grew from 14 employees to 33.

She met and married her husband — Grove Burnett, co-founder of both the [Western Environmental Law Center](#) and the [Vallecitos Mountain Retreat Center](#) — in New Mexico, and their son is about to graduate from Santa Fe High School. The couple own acequia-irrigated land about 20 miles from Ojo Caliente, where they grow hay and keep their horses.

In other words, said Sayuri Yamada, chair of the Anchorum Health Foundation board, Parks knows the lay of the land.

“She does have those experiences with creating partnerships with the communities in Northern New Mexico. She has the experience of building programs,” Yamada said. “I think she was just the perfect fit.”



Longtime physician Dr. Frantz Melio is vice president of health strategies for the new Anchorum philanthropy group, Anchorum Health Foundation. Melio said one of the first actions the group has taken as it prepares to give out \$500 million over the next decade is a new health survey of the 10-county area it will serve.

Courtesy photo

## ‘A whole bunch of data’

Anchorum’s approach for its half-billion-dollar decade includes a measured pace and a high value on partnerships.

Its vision to build healthy communities includes a focus on 10 counties: Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, Colfax, Guadalupe, Harding, Los Alamos, Mora, San Miguel, Taos and Union.

The whole idea is that health is more than what happens inside a hospital. Instead, the foundation is looking to address the social factors that influence health, like education or access to housing or food.

To that end, Parks and the Anchorum crew are looking at U.S. Census data. They're partnering with [New Mexico's county and tribal health councils](#), which do public health work at a hyper-local level and gather detailed community health assessments. They're also looking at the University of New Mexico's research.

Additionally, Anchorum is working with third-party group [Newpoint Healthcare](#) to conduct a new health survey of the 10-county area, which Dr. Frantz Melio, a longtime physician and Anchorum's vice president of health strategies, said should be ready within the next several months.

"That will give us a pretty significant starting point to determine what the needs are," Melio said.

## Building on existing work

Anchorum Health Foundation may be a new organization, but it's not starting its work from scratch.

The foundation has been working for some time on funding efforts to bring more skilled nursing resources to Santa Fe. Melio said two projects are in the works: a traditional nursing home-like facility that would have about 80 beds, and another facility that would follow the "Green House" model of residential care — a smaller facility with a more homey feel.

Parks said she's also getting herself up to speed on Anchorum's partnerships with local organizations. She's visited [Gerard's House](#) in Santa Fe, which provides grief support for kids and adults, and [St. Elizabeth Shelters](#). She's toured [Growing Up New Mexico](#), an early child education organization that hosts a whole plethora of programs.

“I have been in philanthropy and nonprofit work in Northern New Mexico a long time, so I do know a lot of the people and a lot of the issues,” Parks said. “But it’s also new for me, because I’m learning more about health care and a little bit more about the health ecosystem than I ever have before.”

Anchorum leaders say those partnerships, along with other data the foundation is compiling, will help keep the foundation in touch with what’s happening on the ground so they can adapt and be flexible.

“I want to be careful that we don’t [get to the point that] five years from now, [we] have spent a lot of money and don’t really have anything to show for it,” Parks said. “Like, we haven’t really turned a corner on anything or moved the needle or had an impact on the systems that we want to see improve in New Mexico.”

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## Takeaways

The Anchorum Health Foundation, now the largest foundation in the state, is hashing out a plan for how to spend its money in coming years to improve health outcomes in Northern New Mexico.

Jenny Parks, senior vice president of strategic philanthropy, and other leaders say partnerships with on-the-ground providers are key to making sure the money makes a difference.

The foundation plans to focus its efforts on 10 counties: Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, Colfax, Guadalupe, Harding, Los Alamos, Mora, San Miguel, Taos and Union.

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Reporter