

# Mental Health America of Colorado



Broker Change



Reduce Stigma



Improve Lives

**Dedicated to Impacting Mental Health in Colorado**



**2013 Annual Report**



# Mental Health America of Colorado's Strategic Plan

## **Broker Change:** to establish equal footing for mental health/substance use disorders in the public health arena.

- Make mental health the public health concern of this decade.
- Educate elected officials at all levels of government about the value of investing in mental health/substance use disorders treatment and programs.
- Continue to support the integration of physical and mental health.
- Ensure elected officials, public health departments and others are aware of the important intersection between mental health and physical health.
- Increase awareness about MHAC's Education/Outreach mental health presentation program.

## **Reduce Stigma:** to civilize the conversation regarding mental health/substance use disorders to promote an open and welcoming society.

- Make person-first language standard throughout public written and oral discourse.
- Educate the community around different mental health topics.
- Decrease stigma and increase access in communities that have traditionally been underserved.
- Prepare and implement a three-year phased and researched public awareness and monitoring campaign.

## **Improve Lives:** to position Colorado as a national leader in addressing issues regarding mental health/substance use disorders.

- Proactive in mental health legislation for the 2015 Colorado legislative session.
- Ensure implementation of mental health parity in the Affordable Care Act.
- Monitor the impact of the Affordable Care Act on current programs offered by MHAC.
- Increase the number of youth served by MHAC.
- Develop additional statewide partnerships.



# Strategic Plan, Growth, & Improved Lives

Dear Friends:

What an important and amazing year Mental Health America of Colorado (MHAC) had in 2013! We grew our programs, made a positive difference in people's lives, and spent invaluable time developing a new three-year strategic plan that perfectly positions MHAC to broker change, reduce stigma, and improve lives. MHAC is proud to be a strong advocate, educator, and collaborator around mental health - we had a fantastic year fulfilling Colorado's behavioral health needs and are poised to impact the entire mental health spectrum.

In 2013, our Pro Bono Counseling & Referral Program continued to provide much needed free counseling services in Colorado. Today, there is still a great need for free and low-cost mental health services - even in the face of the recently enacted Affordable Care Act. Coloradans in need of mental health services continue to engage MHAC's 27-year-old program in record numbers. In 2013, 148 MHAC volunteers donated \$1,422,400 worth of pro bono counseling to 1,711 clients, and a total of 3,828 volunteer hours were logged.

MHAC provided many other key mental health resources to our community. Check Your Head continues to have a strong presence in the Denver metro area, and served 173 students through its innovative, six-week program that encourages students to identify their mental health needs, communicate about them, and develop constructive resolutions for the challenges they face.

Seven Speakers' Bureau presentations were delivered to more than 76 people through this important MHAC education & outreach program. MHAC also certified 111 people in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA - often described as "CPR for the Mind") through 5 Adult and 2 Youth MHFA Trainings. MHFA is recognized as an essential mental health crisis tool, and is quickly growing throughout the United States. Colorado ranks 3rd highest in the number of certified mental health "first aiders" in the US.

To continue transforming systems of health care, MHAC's Public Policy & Strategic Initiatives team hosted town hall meetings, grassroots trainings, Affordable Care Act presentations, mental health caucuses, and was active in the state legislature.

MHAC continues to value its role as an incubator for new programs that can grow into independent and vital nonprofit organizations. In 2013 the Colorado Mental Wellness Network achieved 501(c)(3) nonprofit status and Metro Crisis Services submitted a bid to be the state's mental health crisis hotline.



**Donald J. Mares**  
MHAC President & CEO




**Marty Waters, LCSW**  
MHAC Board of Directors Chair



## Public Policy Gains Ground

### MHAC Helps Broker Behavioral Health Crisis Response System

During the 2013 Colorado legislative session, MHAC helped craft and pass historic mental health and substance use disorder crisis response legislation. The heartbreaking tragedies here in Aurora and Newtown, Connecticut had generated almost unprecedented attention toward mental health, and we seized this vital opportunity to advance our mission of ending stigma and civilizing conversations. We informed policymakers and the general public that less than 5% of violent crimes against others are committed by people who have a mental illness, and that the vast majority of firearms deaths in Colorado—over 75%—are suicides. Our public conversations and relationships with legislators and leaders in the executive branch helped us set a positive agenda: dramatically increasing funding for evidence-based systems of care that help individuals who are most in need, especially those who are experiencing a mental health or substance use disorder crisis.

The result of MHAC's collaborative leadership was Senate Bill 13-266, which added over \$20 million per year to Colorado's budget to create a statewide coordinated behavioral health crisis response system. The system is actually based in large part on the findings of MHAC's 2006 investigation into creating an alternative to the use of metro Denver-area emergency rooms as de facto mental health crisis centers. That study had ultimately led to the creation of Metro Crisis Services, which is now responsible for the 24-hour statewide hotline component of the new crisis response system. The other pillars of the newly funded system are regional crisis stabilization centers, short-term respite housing services, and a public information campaign to promote the system which will include stigma-fighting messages.

Just as important as the funding, which helps build this new crisis system, is the type of care it will provide. MHAC made sure that the authorizing legislation specified that all services provided through this system are trauma-informed, meaning that environments where people receive care are set up to be sensitive to the needs of Coloradans who have personal histories of trauma, from physical abuse to stigma-related PTSD. The bill also includes a requirement that peer specialists—people who have experienced mental health and substance use disorders and are trained to help others with similar experiences—be an essential component of providing care. Peers offer invaluable expertise throughout the continuum of care, and are particularly helpful during and after a crisis.

MHAC is focused on building a health care system in Colorado that is focused on the prevention of mental health crises long before they occur, but we are also committed to ensuring the crisis response system lives up to its promise. It will fill a vital role in emergency health care, and has the potential to save and improve countless lives.





## Check Your Head Stands Tall at Manual H.S.



Check Your Head took big steps forward in 2013 with the debut of an intense residency at Manual High School, with co-facilitators Alex Gardener and Bianca Mikahn heading up dance and spoken word mental health workshops twice a day - five days a week. The youth have responded with high enthusiasm and the on-location staff continue to provide wonderful opportunities to maximize the partnership.

MHAC's Check Your Head program is an innovative school-based curriculum that encourages middle and high school students to explore issues such as self-identity, conflict resolution, depression, tolerance, and more. This MHAC program helps young people identify their mental health needs, communicate their needs to others, and find constructive resolutions to the challenges they face.

## MHFA: "CPR for the Mind"

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is commonly referred to as CPR for the Mind. It's quickly becoming recognized as an invaluable tool and skill-set for people from all walks of life (teachers, coaches, co-workers, first responders, medical personnel, etc.). In 2013, a record number of individual were trained as mental health "first aiders." MHAC is a licenced provider of the training.

While most people know how to respond to a medical emergency with CPR/First Aid, few have the same knowledge or comfort level with how to react when someone has a mental health emergency. MHFA trains community members to notice when someone is exhibiting signs or symptoms of a mental health crisis and teaches them how to intervene. The training has been shown empirically to improve the public's knowledge of mental health as well as to connect more people to mental health treatment.



## MHAC's Speakers Bureau

"Words of Wisdom", "Gained Perspective", "Expert Insight" - all are accurate headlines when it comes to what MHAC's Speakers Bureau delivers. In 2013, this important community education program delivered informative presentations to individuals and groups throughout Denver and Pueblo. MHAC's Speakers Bureau is improving lives and reducing stigma one presentation at a time.

## Pro Bono Counseling & Referral Improves Lives

MHAC's Pro Bono Counseling & Referral Program has served the people of Colorado since 1986. With significant presence in the Denver metro area, Pueblo, and Glenwood Springs - this program fills a great need for free mental health services.

"Having a professional available to discuss my mental health challenges and provide guidance on ways of dealing with those challenges is extremely helpful. What makes the experience even more amazing is that I was able to receive the help I needed while being unemployed and not having the means to afford the help I so desperately needed," - *Pro Bono Counseling and Referral Program client.*



### 2013 by the Numbers

**\$1,422,400**

free counseling services in  
Denver and Pueblo

**3,828**

Pro Bono Counseling  
volunteer hours

**111**

people certified in  
Mental Health First Aid

**280**

participants in Legislative  
Education & Advocacy Day

**76**

people educated through  
MHAC's Speakers Bureau

**173**

students in  
Check Your Head



# Thank You!

We gratefully acknowledge the gifts made between January 1 and December 31, 2013. Thank you for your generous support! Because of you, Mental Health America of Colorado is able to broker change, reduce stigma, and improve lives.

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Bert Furmansky, MD, MPA	Jim Taucher, CPA
Margaret Garbe	Cindy Morss Truitt, PhD
Cy & Lyndia Harvey	

# 2014 MHAC Staff

Donald J. Mares | *President & CEO*  
Leslie Bailey | *Administrative Assistant*  
Amanda Chaney | *Intake & Referral Coordinator*  
Laura Cordes | *VP of External Affairs & Chief Operating Officer*  
Beth Danilson | *Special Events & Corporate Relations Coordinator*  
Jamie Gulick | *VP of Programs & Community Resources*  
Moe Keller | *VP of Public Policy & Strategic Initiatives*  
Tiffany Lloyd | *Pro Bono Program Coordinator*  
Michael Lott-Manier | *Assistant Director of Public Policy & Strategic Initiatives*  
Bianca Mikahn Shaw | *Trainer*  
Betty Nufer | *Pro Bono Outreach Coordinator - Pueblo*  
Mike Robbins | *Individual Donor Relations & Communications Coordinator*  
Tim Webb | *Manager of Programs & Community Resources*

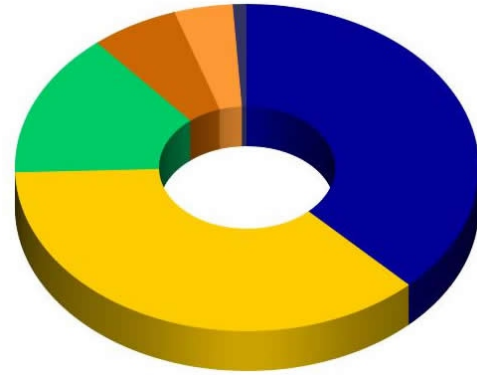
# Contact



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[www.mhacolorado.org](http://www.mhacolorado.org)

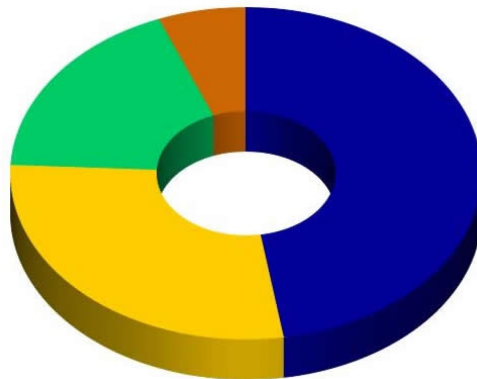
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# Revenue - \$1,058,755



- Special Events | 37%
- Foundation Grants | 36%
- Individual Giving | 14%
- Interest Income | 6%
- Corporations | 4%
- Government Grants | 1%

# Expenses - \$1,022,007



- Programs & Community Resources | 47%
- Public Policy & Strategic Initiatives | 28%
- Development | 18%
- Administration | 7%

# Our Mission

Mental Health America of Colorado serves the people of Colorado by collaborating with strategic partners to promote mental health, expand access to services and transform systems of healthcare.

# Our Vision

A healthy Colorado free of stigma and discrimination, where every person has full access to high quality services for all mental health and substance use disorders.

# Our Core Values

Visionary Leadership, Collaboration, Inclusiveness, Diversity, Dignity, Respect, Access, Excellence, Recovery, Resiliency