

COLLABORATE
PROMOTE
EXPAND
TRANSFORM

OUR MISSION

Mental Health America of Colorado is the recognized leader, collaborating to promote mental health, expand access to services and transform systems of healthcare.

OUR VISION

We envision a healthy Colorado free of stigma and discrimination where every person has full access to high quality services for all mental health and substance abuse conditions.



“Having a professional available to discuss my problems and provide help or guidance on ways of dealing with them is extremely helpful. What makes the experience I had even more amazing is that I was able to receive the help I needed while being unemployed and not having the means to afford help.”

—Pro Bono Counseling & Referral Program Client

DEAR FRIENDS,

What a transformational year [Mental Health America of Colorado](#) (MHAC) had in 2012! We grew our programs, welcomed three new staff members, and made a positive difference in people's lives and health care systems. 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.

In 2012, our [Pro Bono Counseling & Referral Program](#) celebrated 25 years of providing free counseling services in Colorado. MHAC hosted an event to celebrate the program's impact in Denver, Pueblo, and Glenwood Springs and the wonderful volunteers who serve as counselors in these cities. In 2012, 144 MHAC volunteers donated \$749,200 worth of pro bono counseling to 1,783 clients.

MHAC provided many other key mental health resources to our community. [Check Your Head](#) served over 150 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 problems they face. We received positive feedback from students, teachers, and school administrators and look forward to expanding this program. Twenty-four [Speakers Bureau](#) presentations were delivered to more than 500 people. MHAC certified 137 people in [Mental Health First Aid](#) (MHFA), what we describe as CPR for the mind. We are particularly proud that we forged a new partnership with Colorado College, offering MHFA training to individuals who work directly with students.

To continue transforming systems of health care, MHAC's [Public Policy & Strategic Initiatives](#) team hosted town hall meetings, grassroots trainings, and mental health caucuses and was active in the state legislature. It was a tremendous year for engaging people in the [Affordable Care Act](#). Moe Keller, MHAC's VP of Public Policy & Strategic Initiatives and former state legislator, gave a presentation at Mental Health America's (MHA) national conference in Tulsa, OK. It was so well received that MHA requested that its [2014 national conference be held in Denver](#), with MHAC serving as the affiliate host. Stay tuned for details!

MHAC continues to value its role as an incubator for new programs that can grow into independent and vital nonprofit organizations. In 2012, the [Colorado Mental Wellness Network](#) (CMWN, formerly WE CAN!) began the process of acquiring its own 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, and we are pleased to report that this was recently granted. CMWN is Colorado's only statewide peer-run organization

and we retain close ties as its fiscal agent and proud partner. CMWN will be fully independent in 2013.

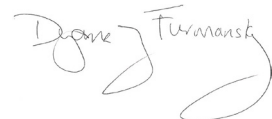
Don Mares was honored to become a Co-Chair of the [Transformation Council](#) alongside Lisa Clements, PhD, Director of the State's Office of Behavioral Health. Through Don and Dr. Clements' leadership, the Council refocused its energy on broad behavioral health issues and improving behavioral health services in Colorado. In conjunction with the Colorado Mental Wellness Network, the Transformation Council is working to enhance peer involvement in recovery.

At our annual [Tribute to Leadership](#) gala in October, MHAC honored four outstanding organizations and one amazing individual that have been leading mental health transformation in Colorado. MHAC recognized the collaboration among [Caring for Colorado Foundation](#), [The Colorado Health Foundation](#), [The Denver Foundation](#), and [The Colorado Trust](#) on the [2011 Status of Behavioral Healthcare in Colorado](#) report. This five-year project provides a crucial roadmap for those working to better the lives of Coloradans who are impacted by mental and behavioral health challenges. [Dr. Carl Clark](#), CEO & Psychiatrist, of Mental Health Center of Denver was acknowledged for his exemplary leadership in the mental health field, both locally and nationally.

MHAC owes its success in 2012 to our Board of Directors, Honorary Board of Directors, staff, supporters, interns, donors, agency partners, and tremendous office and program volunteers. [Thank you](#) for your support as we continue our transformational work in 2013.



Donald Mares
President & CEO

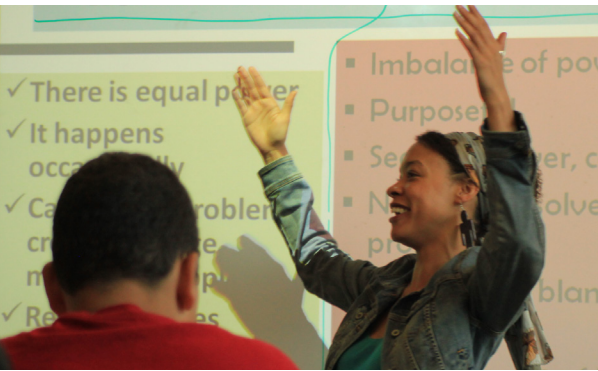


Dyana Z. Furmansky
Chair, Board of Directors



2012 BY THE NUMBERS

4,492	hours of pro bono counseling	137	people certified in Mental Health First Aid, CPR for the mind
503	people educated through Speakers Bureau Presentations	272	participants at Legislative Education & Advocacy Day
100	percent of bills MHAC actively supported that were signed into law	56	legislators attended four mental health caucuses
\$749,200	free counseling services in Denver and Pueblo	14	graduates of Colorado Mental Wellness Network's Leadership Academy



CHECK YOUR HEAD

Bianca Mikahn, classroom trainer, artist, student champion and mental health advocate reflects on Check Your Head (CYH) at I-Team Manor, a Cherry Creek alternative school:

This workshop consisted of high school youth who experienced a variety of legal, social or personal challenges that resulted in attending this unique school. The CYH workshop participants were often labeled as “thugs” or “problem children,” but their exercises and art exemplified sophisticated minds that were interested in positive manifestation.

For their final project, each student was asked to pick a favorite artistic medium

to express their favorite themes from the curriculum. Many students chose poetry, rap and visual mediums with one student choosing to write a story. What this student produced was a moving testimony that brought the whole school together in a moment of honest connection.

The student authored a short story about his winter break, which had been punctuated by a suicide attempt. His family was involved and doing what they could for him, but he was still reeling from the situation and desperate for connection. He said CYH offered him a chance to process in a new way which complemented the traditional methods he had been using. Through his project he was able to offer the truth about his view of life in a safe space, enabling his classmates to identify and support him.

The class rallied around his sharing, and at the end of the workshop a handful of

the older boys waited, walked with him to class, and commended his bravery. Because of CYH, this student no longer felt like it was “him against the world.” He was able to transform this tragic moment into a personal triumph and was cheered on by his classmates. It is moments like this that I realize the true and significant life change that takes place through understanding, mutual support, and continually checking your head.

Check Your Head is a school-based program that encourages middle and high schoolers to explore issues such as self-identity, conflict resolution, depression, tolerance, and more. The program helps young people identify their mental health needs, communicate their needs to others and find constructive resolutions to the problems they face.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

On April 20, 2012, Governor John Hickenlooper signed into law HB 12-1271, a bill reforming Colorado's system for charging juveniles as adults in criminal court. MHAC partnered with the Colorado Juvenile Defender Coalition to garner bipartisan support for this historic piece of juvenile justice legislation. Prior to the bill, district attorneys throughout Colorado were able to charge children as young as 14 as adults without first bringing the case

before an impartial judge. This practice, known as **direct file**, often was used as leverage by prosecutors wishing to strike a plea bargain and avoid a trial. By requiring a hearing to determine whether or not a juvenile should be tried as an adult, the bill allowed for adequate consideration of the mental health of young defendants.

MHAC continues to work with the Juvenile Defender Coalition and other

allies to ensure that children and all people with mental health conditions involved in the criminal justice system are treated fairly and have access to appropriate treatment.

MHAC is a leader in health care reform, ensuring that all Coloradans can access integrated, affordable health services.



“I’ve used [Mental Health First Aid] a multitude of times. The big thing it taught me is that when you talk to someone, you should listen and let them know that there are people who care and are there for them...it’s so invaluable to me.”

–Dave Hasstedt, Mental Health First Aid Responder,
Gates Corporation

THANK YOU

Because of you, Mental Health America of Colorado made great transformations in Colorado. Thank you for your generosity!

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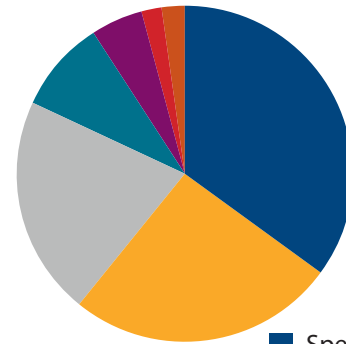
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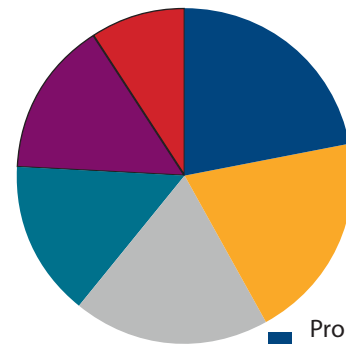
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- Special Events: 35%
- Foundation Grants: 26%
- Government Grants: 21%
- Individual & Corporate Contributions: 9%
- Mile High United Way: 5%
- Earned Income: 2%
- Other: 2%

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\$1,252,809

- Pro Bono Counseling & Referral: 22%
- Colorado Mental Wellness Network: 20%
- Public Policy & Strategic Initiatives: 19%
- Education: 15%
- Development: 15%
- Administration: 9%

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