



### Policy Goal #1: Increase the availability of mental health services for children and adolescents

Colorado ranks 33rd in the nation for youth mental health. The state's youth have higher rates of binge drinking than youth across the nation. Prevention and early intervention for mental health concerns ensure children and adolescents are healthier and avoid problems later in life.

- We are advancing legislation that expands the school health professionals grant program so schools can provide direct therapy, use telehealth technology, and partner with community providers to provide behavioral health services. We are asking for an additional \$5 million for the grant program.
- We are working to increase funding for school mental health professionals.



### Policy Goal #2: Enforce laws requiring insurance companies to provide equal coverage for mental and physical care

State and federal laws require insurance plans to provide coverage for mental health and substance use treatment that is equal to the coverage provided for a physical illness. Yet private and public insurance providers often deny coverage for needed mental health or substance use treatment.

- We are pursuing legislation to strengthen and enforce laws requiring insurance companies and Medicaid to provide equal care and coverage for mental health and substance use disorders.



### Policy Goal #3: Ensure people with severe mental illness and substance use disorders receive additional support

People with the most severe mental health and substance use disorders often need extra help finding and remaining in care; this includes help with housing, jobs, and transportation. Many people with a severe mental illness or substance use disorder have a high risk of ending up in jail or prison if they do not receive the right services.

- We are pursuing legislative solutions to make sure people with mental health or substance use disorders aren't put in jails or prisons because of their disorder, and that individuals have access to adequate treatment while they are in jail and as they transition back to the community.
- We are advancing legislation to ensure people can create advance psychiatric directives that instruct treatment providers about how the individual should be treated in a mental health crisis that impairs their ability to make decisions for themselves.
- We are urging the legislature to expand the availability of housing support services for individuals who are homeless and have substance use or mental health disorders.



#### Policy Goal #4: Expand mental health and substance use treatment capacity

Colorado does not have adequate mental health and substance use service capacity for everyone who needs care. This leads to long wait times or people going out of network or out of state for care. Expanding capacity would enable Colorado to provide the right level of treatment, at the right time, to anyone in need of care.

We are championing legislation that will:

- provide state funds to expand the capacity for treatment of substance use in underserved areas of the state
- track availability of mental health and substance use services for Coloradans in crisis
- fund care navigators to help people access substance use treatment



#### Policy Goal #5: Ensure women receive mental health and substance use services during and after pregnancy

For many women who struggle with a mental health or substance use disorder, pregnancy presents an opportunity for treatment and recovery. But for women who are severely depressed or addicted, shame and fear may create barriers to seeking help.

- We are spearheading legislation to expand substance use treatment options for pregnant and parenting women up to one year post-partum.



#### Policy Goal #6: Reduce the suicide rate in Colorado

Colorado ranks among the top ten states in its rate of suicide. Suicide is the leading cause of death for Coloradans between ages 10-24, and one in 15 students have attempted suicide in the past 12 months.

- We are leading the fight for extreme risk protection orders that allow law enforcement to temporarily remove weapons from individuals at significant risk to themselves or others. These "red flag laws" have been shown to save lives while protecting due process rights.
- We are leading efforts to further fund zero suicide programs statewide.