



MENTAL HEALTH
COLORADO

Opening Minds.
Changing Lives.

Annual
Report

2019



mentalhealthcolorado.org

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Colorado is saying “yes” to mental health. After 65 years of leading the fight for the prevention and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders, in 2018 Mental Health Colorado achieved the most significant accomplishments in our history.

We led the fight for mental health parity—holding insurers accountable to the law that says they must treat mental health equal to physical health. We helped four counties secure \$67 million annually for the prevention and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders. We created the School Mental Health Toolkit to bring mental health resources and training to all 178 school districts in Colorado.

We achieved significant policy wins. We championed legislation that created an office to help Coloradans navigate the insurance system—a model already being used in other states. We proposed and persuaded the legislature to assemble a team of transition specialists to help Coloradans in crisis find the treatment and housing they need.

Much of our work involves changing laws. But our success depends on changing lives. Your support has enabled us to bring mental health professionals to more schools, genuine insurance coverage to more families, and life-saving services to those in need.

Shortly after the end of the year, our former President and CEO Andrew Romanoff stepped down after four years at the helm. We are grateful to him for his visionary leadership, which saw us evolve from a program-based organization to a champion for the one million Coloradans who experience a mental health or substance use disorder each year.

While we take time to celebrate Mental Health Colorado’s leading role in addressing Colorado’s mental health needs in 2018, we know we can’t let another 65 years pass before every Coloradan has access to high-quality, affordable mental health or substance use disorder treatment. Our dedicated staff are working on an ambitious agenda for 2019.

The Mental Health Colorado team is led by interim President and CEO Nancy VanDeMark, whose leadership and 30-plus years of experience have proven invaluable. In partnership with our board of directors, this outstanding staff and volunteer coalition has charted a clear path forward. As it always has been, our “true north” will remain focused on results for our friends, families, co-workers, and all who suffer from mental health and substance use disorders.

As we embark on what promises to be a productive 2019, know that the staff and volunteers who make up the Mental Health Colorado family are deeply grateful to all our friends and supporters who stand with us and say “yes” to mental health.



Aaron M. Hyatt
Chair, Board of Directors
Mental Health Colorado

ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH COLORADO

Mental Health Colorado is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization and affiliate of Mental Health America. We are leading the fight for the one million Coloradans who face a mental health or substance use disorder each year. We believe all Coloradans deserve affordable, high-quality mental health care.

We engage policymakers, providers, the public, and the press to promote early intervention, expand access to affordable services, and eradicate stigma and discrimination. While we are headquartered near the state Capitol in Denver, our efforts span all of Colorado's 64 counties.



2018 AT A GLANCE

From the Capitol to the classroom, Mental Health Colorado's advocacy efforts paid off in 2018.

Here are just a few highlights:

- » **We secured nearly \$10 million** in additional state funding to get critical services to those who need it.
- » **We released the School Mental Health Toolkit**, a comprehensive guide for promoting school-based mental health and wellness programs.
- » **We helped four Colorado counties**—Denver, Larimer, San Miguel, and Summit—pass ballot measures that will bring in an estimated \$67 million annually for the prevention and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders in their communities.
- » **We nearly doubled our Brain Wave**—totaling more than 700 grassroots advocates statewide.
- » **We provided 5,862 free**, anonymous mental health and substance use screenings through our website.

POLICY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mental Health Colorado’s advocacy delivered critical wins during the 2018 legislative session—securing nearly \$10 million for critical mental health and substance use services.

We led the fight for mental health parity and persuaded the legislature to create a statewide Behavioral Health Care Ombuds Office, which will help Coloradans understand and navigate their rights regarding insurance coverage for mental health and substance use disorders. Insurance companies are now required to disclose how they are complying with state and federal parity laws.

Mental health parity laws require insurers to treat mental health and substance use disorders equal to physical health. Evidence shows parity isn’t being enforced. Coloradans go out of network seven times more often for mental health treatment than they do for physical care.



Each year,
35,000

Coloradans are placed on an emergency hold. But when those 72 hours are up, many never get the care they need. This legislation aims to end the cycle of crisis.

We championed legislation to help Coloradans transition back into the community following a mental health or substance use crisis. People who have been placed on mental health or substance use emergency holds can now be referred to specialists for help accessing treatment, housing, and other necessary services.

We led the effort to reauthorize the Child Mental Health Treatment Act, which ensures parents won’t have to give up custody to get treatment for their children. We also succeeded in getting this legislation permanently into statute so that it no longer requires a periodic renewal by lawmakers. Mental Health Colorado Advocacy Director and former state Senator Moe Keller identifies the law as the most significant legislative accomplishment of her career.

The reauthorization of the bill removed a sunset provision in the original law and tripled the program budget so that more children will be able to access critical services.

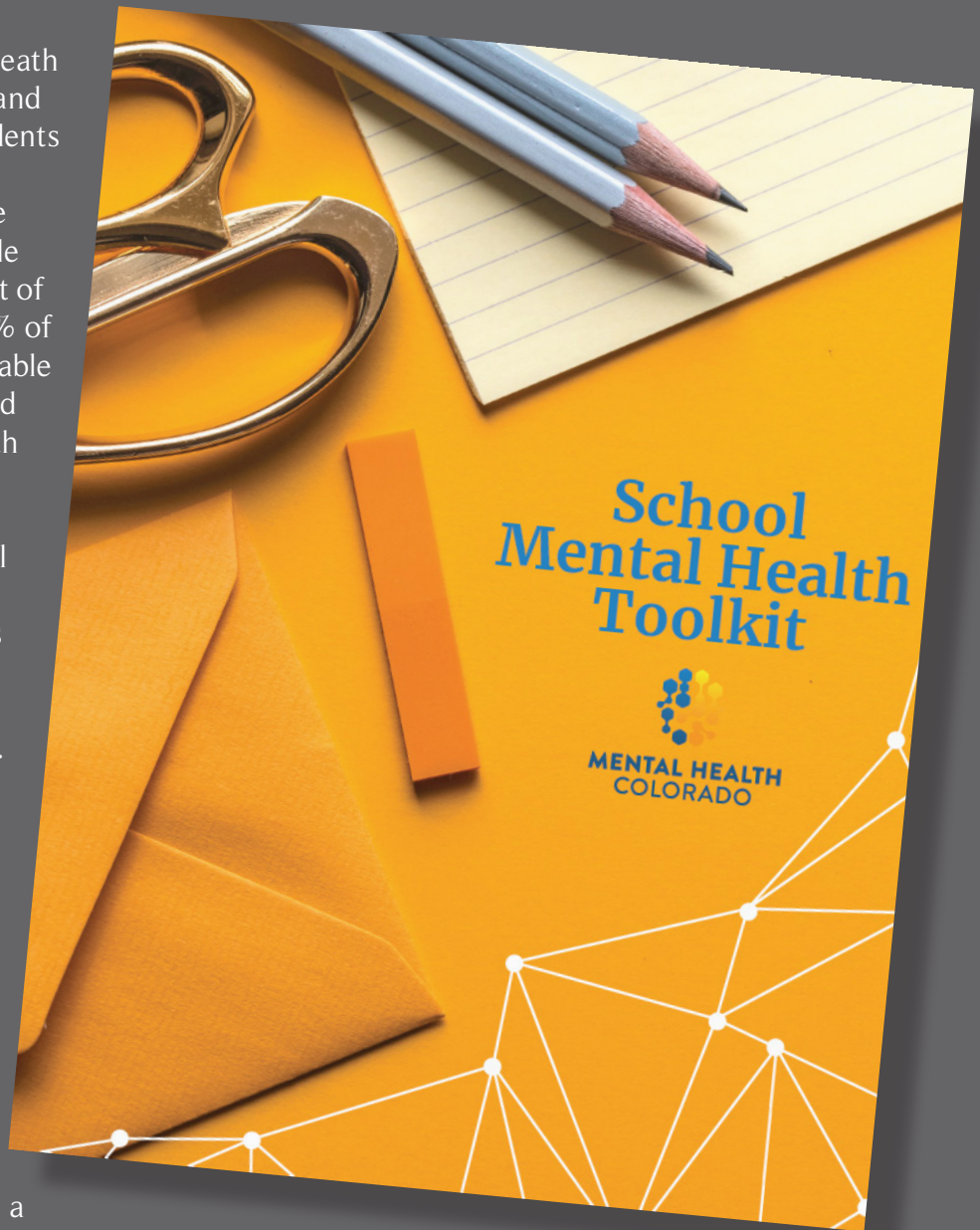
Beyond our legislative victories at the Capitol, we provided technical assistance on ballot initiatives in Denver, Larimer, San Miguel, and Summit Counties. Together with Eagle County, which passed a similar measure in 2017, these five communities will collect nearly \$70 million a year to support the prevention and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders.

A FOCUS ON KIDS

Suicide is the leading cause of death for Coloradans ages 10 to 24, and 17% of Colorado high school students have seriously considered suicide. Evidence shows students are more likely to get help when it's available at school—where they spend most of their waking hours. Yet nearly 70% of Colorado's school districts are unable to meet the national recommended ratios for students to mental health professionals.

We created the School Mental Health Toolkit, a free guide for school and community leaders to promote school-based mental health. The toolkit is a one-stop shop for educators and advocates. It lays out best practice strategies to enhance social and emotional learning, identify and address the early signs of mental health and substance use disorders, and reduce the risk of suicide.

Former Attorney General Cynthia Coffman awarded a \$2.8 million grant to Children's Hospital Colorado and Mental Health Colorado to launch a statewide initiative to improve children's mental health, including implementation of our School Mental Health Toolkit. Nineteen school districts have already adopted the School Mental Health Toolkit as a framework for mental health services in their schools.



“What Mental Health Colorado is doing and what our vision is for social and emotional learning and mental health align seamlessly.” – Jon Widmier, director of student services for Jefferson County School District, who added that our toolkit saved him months of effort in developing a comprehensive approach to incorporating mental health services in their school district.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Mental Health Colorado’s statewide network of advocates—the Brain Wave—brings lived experience and professional expertise that informs our advocacy efforts. By sharing their lived experience with lawmakers and the media, Brain Wave members help illustrate the barriers to care that Coloradans face. Their voices shape public policy and public opinion.

“Mental illness can be a very scary thing, but if you’re motivated to be a part of something bigger than yourself, that trumps fear.”

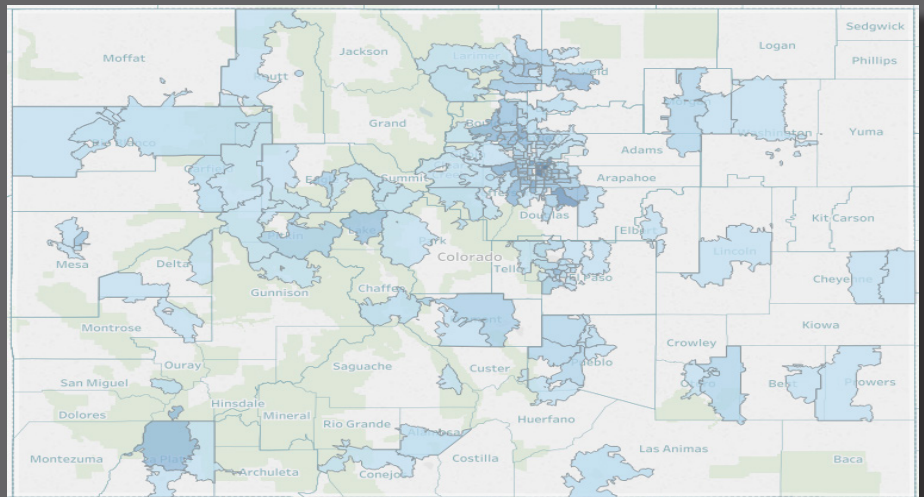
– Evan Silverman,
Denver Brain Wave member



In 2018, Brain Wave members dedicated nearly **500 hours** of volunteering for Mental Health Colorado.

Brain Wave members called, wrote, and met with legislators, testified at the Capitol for Mental Health Colorado bills, supported local ballot initiatives, and broke down stigma by sharing their stories with the media. Many members are also implementing our School Mental Health Toolkit in their districts.

At the end of 2018, our Brain Wave totaled 717 members—nearly doubling the previous year. We have Brain Wave members in every state legislative district and in 42 counties.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2019

Building on our successes in 2018, Mental Health Colorado is pushing an ambitious agenda in 2019. We are working with the General Assembly and the governor to:

- » **Fund the Zero Suicide framework**, training health care professionals to spot the early warning signs of suicidal ideation. Health systems that have implemented the framework have seen an 80% reduction in suicides among patients in their care, according to the Office of Suicide Prevention.
- » **Strengthen the enforcement** of mental health parity laws, requiring insurers to provide coverage for treatment of mental health and substance use disorders that is equal to physical care.
- » **Create a statewide** bed-tracking system, enabling Coloradans in crisis to find the nearest available psychiatric or substance use facility.
- » **Adopt a “red flag” law**, allowing judges in certain circumstances to order the temporary removal of weapons from individuals in crisis. A Duke University study of a similar Connecticut law found that for every 10 to 20 protection orders, one suicide was prevented.
- » **Expand the School Health Professional Grant Program**, placing nurses, counselors, social workers, and psychologists in more schools.
- » **Increase access to housing** and supportive services for individuals with serious mental health or substance use disorders.
- » **Reduce overreliance** on the criminal justice system as the state’s safety net by increasing the capacity of the mental health and substance use treatment systems to serve individuals with the most severe problems.
- » **Expand access** to substance use treatment for pregnant and postpartum women and individuals living in rural and frontier parts of the state.
- » **Assist people** with substance use disorders in accessing care through a 24-hour care navigation system and increased funding to expand treatment in rural and frontier counties.

In response to overwhelming demand from local leaders throughout the state, Mental Health Colorado is developing a resource guide for local governments and advocates to improve mental health and substance use services in their communities. We will continue to guide local advocates through the process of drafting ballot initiatives for mental health funding.

We are creating a mental health and addiction recovery guide with funding from the Office of Behavioral Health to help Coloradans and their loved ones navigate the process of seeking and obtaining care. We continue to prioritize the needs of young Coloradans; coming Spring 2019, the Early Childhood Mental Health Toolkit will help support social and emotional development during the critical period from birth to age 5.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

2018 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION					
ASSETS		Unrestricted		Restricted	Total
	Cash and Equivalents	\$ 2,245,295		\$ 784,719	\$ 3,030,014
	Donations Receivable	\$ 1,139,642			\$ 1,139,642
	Other Receivable	\$ 7,196			\$ 7,196
	Property and Equipment, net	\$ 46,497			\$ 46,497
	Intangible, net	\$ 35,811			\$ 35,811
	Beneficial interest in assets held by others			\$ 168,856	\$ 168,856
	TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 3,474,441		\$ 953,575	\$ 4,428,016
LIABILITIES					
	Current Liabilities – payable/accrued	\$ 47,964			\$ 47,964
	TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 47,964			\$ 47,964
NET ASSETS					
	Operating	\$ 464,962			\$ 464,962
	Reserves	\$ 2,961,515			\$ 2,961,515
	Net assets – donor restricted			\$ 953,575	\$ 953,575
	TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 3,426,477		\$ 953,575	\$ 4,380,052
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		\$ 3,474,441		\$ 953,575	\$ 4,428,016

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT (CONTINUED)

	2018 STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES					
			Unrestricted		Restricted	Total
Revenue						
	Donations and Grants		\$ 3,265,644		\$ 800,000	\$ 4,065,644
	Special Events/ Programs		\$ 423,102			\$ 423,102
	Other		\$ 36,454		\$ 5,494	\$ 41,948
	Released from Restriction		\$ 151,700		(\$ 151,700)	
	TOTAL REVENUE		\$ 3,876,900		\$ 653,794	\$ 4,530,694
Expenses						
	Program		\$ 925,604			\$ 925,604
	Management and General		\$ 97,877			\$ 97,877
	Fundraising		\$ 267,963			\$ 267,963
	TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 1,291,444			\$ 1,291,444
Change in Net Assets			\$ 2,585,456		\$ 653,794	\$ 3,239,250
Net Assets Beginning of Year			\$ 841,021		\$ 299,781	\$ 1,140,802
Net Assets End of Year			\$ 3,426,477		\$ 935,575	\$ 4,380,052

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