



Support SB19-222: Improving Access to Behavioral Health Services for Individuals At-risk of Institutionalization

Sens. Lee and Story / Reps. Landgraf and Esgar

When we allow our most vulnerable citizens to go to jail because they cannot access treatment, we fail these people, their families, and the taxpayers. In Colorado, one out of five adults with a mental illness reported that they were unable to access treatment. As a result, people with a serious mental illness end up in jail and parents are forced to give up custody of children in order to get treatment.

SB19-222 will ensure we have a behavioral health safety-net system that will not turn people away because they are hard to serve, have a co-occurring condition, or are involved in the criminal or juvenile justice systems.



Ensure availability of a Behavioral Health Safety-Net System

The bill requires the state, with approval from county commissioners, law enforcement, and advocates to:

- Establish the essential behavioral health services that must be accessible in each region of the state.
- Identify access and other service standards to be met by the safety-net system.
- Create a funding model to ensure the viability of the safety-net system.

The bill requires that the Safety-Net System must serve people regardless of:

- Payer source
- Intensity of need
- Involvement in criminal justice, juvenile justice, or child welfare systems
- Recent discharge from the Mental Health Institutes
- Need for involuntary treatment or certification
- Other co-occurring diagnoses such as substance use, medical problems, or developmental disabilities

The legislation states that existing behavioral health providers are key elements to the safety-net system.



Requires the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) to:

- Develop measurable outcomes for Regional Accountable Entities to prevent Medicaid clients with serious behavioral health disorders from being jailed.
- Adopt creative solutions to incentivize new providers to accept Medicaid clients.



Increase equity to non-metro areas of our state

This legislation makes our state’s taxpayer funded civil inpatient beds accessible to residents statewide. It will revise the admissions criteria to state-run inpatient beds to say admission to be based on clinical need, not where people live or their payer source.



Supporters



Summit County