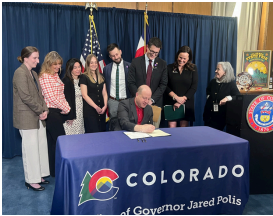




MENTAL HEALTH  
COLORADO

# 2025 LEGISLATIVE REPORT & SCORECARD





# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Every year, Mental Health Colorado advocates for policies that promote healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans. By engaging with our policymakers, we work to ensure that every Coloradan has equitable access to the high-quality care and support they need to prevent and address mental health and substance use conditions.

This year, our mission faced serious hurdles at the legislature. Facing a \$1.6 billion budget deficit and looming threats to Medicaid funding, our state lawmakers were incredibly limited when it came to making key investments in our mental health and wellness. But even in the face of these financial constraints, progress was made.

We are proud to have supported House Bill 1002 and Senate Bill 45, both of which were passed and signed into law by the Governor. House Bill 1002 takes a major step toward parity in health care by standardizing the definition of “medical necessity” for mental health and substance use care, ultimately reducing insurance denials of mental health claims. This law will broaden access to care and remove a key barrier for those seeking coverage for mental health care. Senate Bill 45 is a key initial step toward a long-term transformation of our health care system by creating a study and report on the costs and benefits of a universal, single-payer health system in our state. While universal health care in Colorado may be a lofty goal, it's critical to envision a future where all Coloradans have the support they need to thrive and continue taking steps, no matter how small, toward that future.

Looking forward, we know many of the most pressing challenges facing Coloradans remain unresolved. Colorado continues to grapple with the devastating impact of the opioid crisis, and the policy response too often echoes the failed punitive approaches of the past. Our youth are still facing alarming rates of mental health distress. And a growing number of older Coloradans are aging without the health supports and community protections they need to thrive.

All of this is unfolding against a backdrop of deepening political division that drives us further apart and creates tensions that negatively impact our collective mental wellbeing. And yet, we continue to see a hopeful throughline: the persistent and growing bipartisan recognition that mental health matters.

There is always more work to be done, and given the challenges we face, finding ways to come together and collaborate will be instrumental. At Mental Health Colorado, we're committed to advocating for the health and dignity of all people, and we look forward to continuing that work.



*Vincent Atchity*

**VINCENT ATCHITY, PRESIDENT & CEO**



# LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

- 31 times Mental Health Colorado staff testified in committee
- 112 advocates who attended Legislative Education & Advocacy Day (LEAD) at the Capitol
- 120 advocates who participated in Suicide Prevention Day at the Capitol
- 18 media stories about Mental Health Colorado's agenda bills

## ADVOCATE WITH US

The Brain Wave is Mental Health Colorado's statewide network of advocates. Nearly 2,000 Brain Wave members across the state help illustrate the barriers to care that Coloradans face by sharing lived experience with lawmakers, the media, and community partners. As a Brain Wave member, your voice shapes public policy and public opinion.

**JOIN THE BRAIN WAVE**





# STRONG START FOR ALL CHILDREN

We develop brains and behaviors at a rapid pace, not fully maturing until as late as our mid-20s. Preventative care and healthy learning environments are central to ensuring healthy minds and bright futures.

## **HB25-1135: Communication Devices in Schools**

Sponsors: Representatives Meghan Lukens and Mary Bradfield; Senators Janice Marchman and Lisa Frizell

This bill mandates that by July 1, 2026, all charter and public schools adopt and implement policies outlining rules and exceptions for student communication device possession and use during the school day.

## **HB25-1274: Healthy School Meals for All Program**

Sponsors: Representative Lorena Garcia; Senators Dafna Michaelson Jenet and Katie Wallace

To boost local economies and enhance meal quality, this bill encourages schools to purchase more food from Colorado. Through increased support to schools, Colorado students will have access to fresh ingredients and less processed foods.

## **HB25-1287: Social Media Tools for Minor Users & Parents**

Sponsors: Representatives Jarvis Caldwell and Meghan Lukens; Senators Byron Pelton and Dafna Michaelson Jenet

This bill would have established key safeguards and requirements for social media companies in order to protect Colorado minors using their platforms. This bill died in the House Appropriations Committee.

## **SB25-027: Trauma-Informed School Safety Practices**

Sponsors: Senator Janice Marchman; Representatives Junie Joseph and Ryan Gonzales

This bill requires the Office of School Safety to convene a work group by September 1, 2025 to develop trauma-informed best practices for school safety drills. The group must provide recommendations for training school personnel, conducting drills, and responding to safety incidents, which will be submitted to key state education officials and committees by June 2026.

## **SB25-064: Safe2Tell Handle with Care Notice** **FAILED**

Sponsors: Senators Janice Marchman and Lisa Frizell; Representative Chad Clifford

This bill would have mandated the Safe2Tell program to provide a handle-with-care notice to a school when a student has had an adverse childhood experience that involves a peace officer response.



# SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Strong, healthy families - created networks of supportive partnerships - are vitally important to strong, healthy individuals. Education, childcare, stable housing, meaningful employment, and access to health care are all essential to family well-being.

## **SB25-118: Health Insurance Prenatal Care No Cost Sharing** **AGENDA BILL**

Sponsors: Senators Jeff Bridges and Iman Jodeh; Representatives Katie Stewart and Jamie Jackson

This bill ensures prenatal care is included in health insurance policies for maternity care without cost-sharing.



## ACCESS TO HOUSING, SUPPORTS & SERVICES

Having a place to call home is an essential element of good mental health across the lifespan. Access to supports and services prolongs life and enhances mental health outcomes.

### **HB25-1002: Medical Necessity Determination Insurance Coverage** **AGENDA BILL**

Sponsors: Representatives Kyle Brown and Lindsay Gilchrist; Senators Judy Amabile and Byron Pelton

This bill clarifies that the health benefits coverage for the prevention of, screening for and treatment of behavioral, mental health and substance use disorders must be no less extensive than the coverage provided for any physical illness.

### **SB25-042: Behavioral Health Crisis Response Recommendations** **AGENDA BILL**

Sponsors: Senators Lisa Cutter and Judy Amabile; Representatives Mary Bradfield and Regina English

This bill requires the Department of Public Safety, in collaboration with the Behavioral Health Administration, to convene a stakeholder group to identify existing resources and model programs that communities throughout Colorado utilize when responding to behavioral health crises, including, but not limited to, co-responder programs, alternative response programs, and mobile crisis response programs.

### **SB25-045: Health-Care Payment System Analysis**

Sponsors: Senators Janice Marchman and Karen McCormick; Representative Andrew Boesenecker

This bill commissions a study by the Colorado School of Public Health to analyze draft model legislation for implementing a single-payer, nonprofit, publicly financed and privately delivered universal health-care payment system for Colorado that directly compensates providers.



## REDUCE POTENTIAL HARM FROM DRUGS & ALCOHOL

Drugs and alcohol have been a part of our landscape throughout history. From childhood onward, we thrive if we can reap their benefits while reducing their potential for great harm.

### **HB25-1293: Drug Overdose Education & Opioid Antagonists in Schools** **AGENDA BILL**

Sponsors: Representatives Jamie Jackson and Rose Pugliese; Senator Byron Pelton

This bill aims to reduce youth overdoses by setting high school education standards regarding drug overdose risks, identification of drug overdose events and drug overdose prevention and response tactics through the Colorado State Board of Education.



# DECRIMINALIZE MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Too often, law enforcement is our first and only response to people's need for mental health and substance use care. Disentangling mental health and criminal justice will improve health outcomes, save taxpayer dollars, and enhance community well-being.

## **HB25-1129: Department of Corrections Peer Behavioral Health Services Reentry Program**

Sponsors: Representatives Gretchen Rydin and Lorena Garcia; Senators Judy Amabile and Matt Ball

This bill aims to reduce youth overdoses by setting high school education standards regarding drug overdose risks, identification of drug overdose events and drug overdose prevention and response tactics through the Colorado State Board of Education.

## **HB25-1147: Fairness & Transparency in Municipal Court**

**VETOED**

Sponsors: Representatives Javier Mabrey and Elizabeth Velasco; Senators Judy Amabile and Mike Weissman

This bill would have set fairer sentencing practices in municipal court systems by aligning incarceration sentences for municipal violations to the equivalent state-level sentence.

## **SB25-041: Competency in Criminal Justice System Services & Bail**

Sponsors: Senators Dafna Michaelson Jenet and Judy Amabile; Representatives Mary Bradfield and Regina English

For defendants in the criminal justice system experiencing a mental health crisis, this bill allows the Colorado Department of Human Services to continue to provide services, including partnering with organizations to find permanent supportive housing, for up to 90 days after a person's case is dismissed due to incompetence.

## **SB25-190: Offender Release from Custody**

**AGENDA BILL**

Sponsors: Senators Matt Ball and Julie Gonzales; Representatives Jennifer Bacon and Matt Soper

This bill defines extenuating circumstances in which an individual is released from jail and sets protocols for release in a timely manner, connecting individuals to service providers and more. This bill also expands those eligible for a special needs parole to allow individuals experiencing debilitating health conditions.



## END HEALTH-BASED DISCRIMINATION

Having a place to call home is essential to good mental health across the lifespan. Access to health care, supports and services prolongs life and enhances mental health outcomes.

### **HB25-1058: Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity Defense**

Sponsors: Representatives Mary Bradfield and Regina English; Senators Dafna Michaelson Jenet and Judy Amabile

This bill establishes procedures for sanity examinations in criminal cases involving a plea of not guilty by reason of insanity, allowing flexibility in examination locations and prohibiting custody solely for the examination if the defendant is out on bond. It also prohibits visible restraints or prison attire during recorded examinations and repeals the use of narcoanalytic interviews and polygraph tests in such evaluations.

### **HB25-1138: Protect Victims in Civil Sex Misconduct Suits**

Sponsors: Representatives Meghan Lukens and Rose Pugliese; Senators Barbara Kirkmeyer and Lindsey Daugherty

This bill prohibits a victim's sexual conduct with a defendant from being used as evidence in civil proceedings and prohibits the use of a victim's appearance, speech, or lifestyle to suggest that they consented, aren't credible, or weren't harmed. Before such evidence can be introduced, the bill requires a pretrial motion to prove it is relevant, and limits discovery to relevant issues.

### **HB25-1176: Behavioral Health Treatment Stigma for Providers**

Sponsors: Representative Rebekah Stewart; Senators Cleave Simpson and Dafna Michaelson Jenet

This bill addresses the stigma surrounding behavioral health treatment for medical professionals in Colorado by modifying the medical licensing application and renewal processes.



## WELLNESS IN AGING

From childhood to old age, the quality of our lives depends on our mental health. Every phase of life brings its own challenges and opportunities for continuing mental growth and development.

### **HB25-1082: Qualified Individuals' Death Certificates**

Sponsors: Representatives Ron Weinberg and Kyle Brown; Senators Rod Pelton and Dafna Michaelson Jenet

This bill expands the definition of a "qualified individual" authorized to certify causes of death to include physicians, physician assistants, advanced practice registered nurses, and institutional chief medical officers. It also requires these individuals to register with the electronic death registration system before signing death certificates. This will expedite post-mortem planning, alleviating distress for survivors.



# LEGISLATION WE OPPOSED

This year, Mental Health Colorado advocated against policies that sought to harm Coloradans and their families, criminalize people with substance use conditions, and prevent Coloradans from getting the health care they need.



## **HB25-1068: Malpractice Insurers Gender-Affirming Care Minors** **BILL DEFEATED**

The bill would have allowed medical malpractice insurers to take punitive actions, such as increasing premiums or canceling policies, against healthcare providers or facilities that offer gender-affirming care to minors under 18. It also would have prohibited insurers from accepting state funds for malpractice policies that cover such services.

## **HB25-1145: Trafficking Minor for Abortion or Transgender Care** **BILL DEFEATED**

This bill would have made it a class 2 felony to transport a minor from out of state into Colorado to help them access an abortion or gender-affirming health care. Under the bill, individuals, corporations, or government agencies could have been charged with human trafficking of a minor for facilitating these services.

## **SB25-044: Synthetic Opiates Criminal Penalties** **BILL DEFEATED**

This bill would have made manufacturing, distributing, or possessing with intent to distribute fentanyl, carfentanil, benzimidazole opiates, or their analogs a level 1 drug felony, removing weight- and circumstance-based penalty distinctions. Starting July 1, 2025, simple possession of these substances would have become a level 4 drug felony, repealing provisions for reduced penalties due to reasonable mistake of fact or sentence reductions upon completing probation or community programs.

## **SB25-047: Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law** **BILL DEFEATED**

This bill would have reinstated Senate Bill 06-090, requiring local governments to cooperate with federal immigration authorities, mandating peace officers report individuals suspected of being unlawfully present in the U.S., and withholding state grants from non-compliant local governments. It contrasted with current law, which prohibits courthouse arrests for immigration purposes, sharing personal information with immigration authorities, and contracting with private entities for immigration detention services.



# HOUSE

REPRESENTATIVE	SB25-118	HB25-1002	HB25-1293	SB25-042	SB25-190	SCORE
Armagost, R. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
<b>Bacon, J. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Barron, C. (R)	X	✓	✓	X	✓	60
Bird, S. (D)	✓	✓	E	✓	X	75
Boesenecker, A. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
Bottoms, S. (R)	X	E	✓	X	✓	50
Bradfield, M. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
Bradley, B. (R)	✓	X	E	✓	✓	75
Brooks, M. (R)	X	X	✓	X	✓	40
Brown, K. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
Caldwell, J. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
<b>Camacho, S. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Carter, M. (D)</b>	✓	<b>E</b>	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Clifford, C. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
DeGraaf, K. (R)	X	X	E	X	✓	25
<b>Duran, M. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>English, R. (D)</b>	<b>E</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Espenozza, C. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
<b>Feret, L. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Froelich, M. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Garcia, L. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Garcia Sander, L. (R)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Gilchrist, L. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
<b>Gonzales, R. (R)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>20</b>
<b>Hamrick, E. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Hartsook, A. (R)	X	✓	✓	E	✓	75
<b>Jackson, J. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Johnson, D. (R)	X	✓	✓	X	✓	60
Joseph, J. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
Keltie, R. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	80
Lieder, S. (R)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
Lindsay, M. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
Lindstedt, W. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80

✓ = Voted Yes   X = Voted No   E = Excused   V = Vacant   **Bold** = 100% Score

# HOUSE

REPRESENTATIVE	SB25-118	HB25-1002	HB25-1293	SB25-042	SB25-190	SCORE
Luck, S. (R)	X	X	X	X	✓	20
<b>Lukens, M. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Mabrey, J. (D)</b>	✓	✓	<b>E</b>	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Marshall, B. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Martinez, M. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
Mauro, T. (D)	✓	✓	✓	E	X	75
<b>McCluskie, J. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
McCormick, K. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
Paschal, A. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
Philips, J. (D)	✓	E	✓	✓	X	75
Pugliese, R. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
Richardson, C. (R)	X	X	✓	X	✓	40
Ricks, N. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
<b>Rutinel, M. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Rydin, G. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Sirota, E. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
<b>Smith, L. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Soper, M. (R)	X	✓	✓	X	✓	60
<b>Stewart, K. (D)</b>	✓	<b>E</b>	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Stewart, R. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
<b>Story, T. (D)</b>	✓	<b>E</b>	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Suckla, L. (R)	✓	X	✓	X	✓	60
<b>Taggart, R. (R)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Titone, B. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Valdez, A. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
<b>Velasco, E. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Weinberg, R. (R)	X	X	✓	X	✓	40
<b>Willford, J. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Winter, T. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
Woodrow, S. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
Woog, D. (R)	X	X	✓	✓	✓	60
Zokaie, Y. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80

✓ = Voted Yes   X = Voted No   E = Excused   V = Vacant   **Bold** = 100% Score

# SENATE

SENATOR	SB25-118	HB25-1002	HB25-1293	SB25-042	SB25-190	SCORE
<b>Amabile, J. (D)</b>	✓	<b>V</b>	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Baisley, M. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
Ball, M. (D)	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	80
<b>Bridges, J. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Bright, S. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
Carson, J. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
Catlin, M. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
<b>Coleman, J. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Cutter, L. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Danielson, J. (D)</b>	✓	<b>E</b>	✓	✓	<b>E</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Daugherty, L. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Exum, T. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Frizell, L. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	E	75
<b>Gonzales, J. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Hinrichsen, N. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Jodeh, I. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Kipp, C. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Kirkmeyer, B. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
<b>Kolker, C. (D)</b>	<b>E</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Liston, L. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
Lundeen, P. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
<b>Marchman, J. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Michaelson Jenet, D. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Mullica, K. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Pelton, B. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
Pelton, R. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
Rich, J. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
<b>Roberts, D. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>E</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Rodriguez, R. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
Simpson, C. (R)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	80
<b>Snyder, M. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Sullivan, T. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Wallace, K. (D)</b>	X	✓	✓	<b>V</b>	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Weissman, M. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>
<b>Winter, F. (D)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>100</b>

✓ = Voted Yes   X = Voted No   E = Excused   V = Vacant   **Bold** = 100% Score





# TAKE ACTION

**DONATE**

**VOLUNTEER**

**CONNECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

 [@CO\\_MentalHealth](https://twitter.com/CO_MentalHealth)  [/mentalhealthCO](https://facebook.com/mentalhealthCO)

 [@mentalhealthcolorado](https://instagram.com/mentalhealthcolorado)  [/mentalhealthCO](https://linkedin.com/company/mentalhealthCO)

**ADVOCATE WITH US**

