

Send date: Tuesday, 4/30

Subject line: Your April Updates from Mental Health Colorado

---



*Your voice for healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans*

**April 2024**

**We're excited to welcome Envision:You to Mental Health Colorado!**



Earlier this month, [Mental Health Colorado \(MHC\)](#) and [Envision:You](#) announced that our two organizations are joining forces in the effort to promote healthier minds across the lifespan for all and to expand access to culturally affirming health care. Envision:You is now an initiative of Mental Health Colorado as of April 12! Both of our organizations share a deep commitment to improving mental health outcomes and fostering a supportive environment for the LGBTQ+ community. Mental Health Colorado brings extensive experience in statewide advocacy and resource access with a 70-year history, while Envision:You has offered specialized expertise in addressing the unique mental health challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ population since its founding in 2018.

“We are thrilled to be welcoming Envision:You into Mental Health Colorado and look forward to benefitting from their expertise, passion, perspective, and lived experience as a part of our growing team of allies,” said **President and CEO of Mental Health Colorado Vincent Atchity**. “In such divisive and difficult times, when we are facing a growing mental health crisis exacerbated by the circumstances of our times and by increasing barriers to care, we are always looking for opportunities to streamline and strengthen our efforts in coordination with allied organizations. We are committed to promoting and protecting the health and well-being of all Coloradans, and we understand that our vision for healthy communities cannot be realized by communities that do not promote and protect the health of our LGBTQ+ allies, friends, and family members. We look forward to all that we will achieve together for people’s greater well-being.”

The Envision:You brand will continue as an initiative of Mental Health Colorado under the leadership of Brad Barfield (they/he), supported by Mental Health Colorado's leadership team. Steven Haden, founder and CEO of Envision:You, will move into the role of Executive Vice President of Community Programs and Partnerships at Mental Health Colorado.

According to **Envision:You founder Steven Haden**, "the acquisition of Envision:You by Mental Health Colorado marks a pivotal moment in our journey towards enhancing support for the LGBTQ+ community across Colorado. With Mental Health Colorado's extensive network and resources, we are poised to expand our programming and reach, ensuring greater access to vital mental health services for individuals within the LGBTQ+ community. Together, we will amplify our advocacy efforts, championing improved health policies and increased funding for LGBTQ+ health initiatives. This partnership not only offers additional benefits and growth opportunities for our team but also reinforces our commitment to making a positive impact for all Coloradans."

---

## **Change is the Only Constant: Staff Transition**

Lauren Snyder, Mental Health Colorado’s Vice President of Government Affairs, has announced that after almost six years with the organization, she’ll be leaving her position come May 15<sup>th</sup>.

Lauren has dedicated six years to our mission and organization, tirelessly advocating for Coloradans with mental health and substance use conditions and their families. Lauren has played a pivotal role in Mental Health Colorado’s and our allies’ efforts to pass vital pieces of legislation that have broken down barriers; fought against discrimination; devised new structures and organizations to support the creation of an equitable health system; and increased access to comprehensive, culturally competent mental health and substance abuse care for all.

“Lauren has been a tremendous colleague and asset to our mission and organization—and to the health of all Coloradans,” said Vincent Atchity, President and CEO. “I know that she will remain an

important champion for the well-being of Coloradans in her new role as Deputy County Manager in Lake County"

For our part, we look forward to continuing the important work of Mental Health Colorado. We will accept this change as an opportunity to bring in new ideas, lived experience, and perspectives as we search for a new member of our team. We expect to post the position next week.

---

## **April has been an exciting month for Mental Health Colorado's policy priorities!**

SB24-117 'Eating Disorder Treatment & Recovery Programs' has passed 3<sup>rd</sup> reading.

SB24-117

### **Eating Disorder Treatment & Recovery Programs**

Concerning protections for individuals with an eating disorder, and, in connection therewith, requiring an eating disorder treatment and recovery facility to hold an appropriate designation and requiring the behavioral health administration to regulate the use of involuntary feeding tubes.



---

## **Get Your Tickets Now!**

**This June, join us for an evening of unmasking discrimination at our 4th Annual Unmasked Masquerade Party!** Together, we'll gather with partners and advocates to celebrate community and raise funds for our mission of ending the discrimination associated with mental health and substance use conditions.

---

**Date:** June 8, 2024

**Time:** 6:00 PM

**Location:** Haven in the Pines, 463 E. Happy Canyon Rd., Castle Rock, CO

The evening promises to be a vibrant affair filled with music, spotlight speakers, delicious food, and engaging activities. We would be honored to have you and your network join us as we celebrate resilience, raise awareness, and unite to make a positive difference in the lives of those affected by mental health challenges.

[Follow this link to secure your ticket now!](#)

*If you have any questions or require further information, please don't hesitate to reach out to Ashley at [aperales@mentalhealthcolorado.org](mailto:aperales@mentalhealthcolorado.org).*

---

## In The News



The Denver Post | 4.14.24 | Meg Wingerter

### [“I don’t think she was a lost cause”](#): How one Colorado overdose victim fell through the cracks

“The Denver area needs more ‘housing first’ options, which get people off the street even if they aren’t ready to stop using drugs immediately, said Atchity, of Mental Health Colorado. Offering wraparound services where people live increases the odds they’ll agree to start treatment and be able to stick with it, he said.

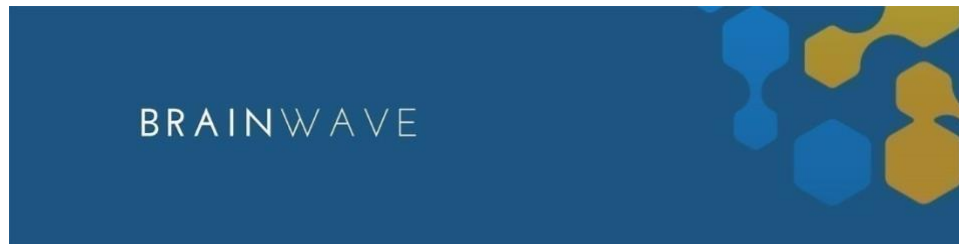
‘Nobody gets well when they don’t know where they’re going to sleep tonight,’ he said... If treatment isn’t available or a person doesn’t want it, they at least need a safe place to go through withdrawal, and somewhere to stay with support to help them

avoid returning to drug use, Van Stedum said. Housing-first developments typically offer behavioral health care and case management, but the number of apartments available doesn't come close to meeting the need for them, she said."

[Read More Here](#)

---

## The Brain Wave Policy Corner



### What's Happening in Colorado:

The 2024 Legislative Session is ending in just over a week. Many bills still need to complete the legislative process. You can keep track of what bills are being signed into law by Governor Polis after session concludes here. [Look at the 2024 Bill Tracker here.](#)

The Colorado Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) is excited to announce the launch of its new OwnPath Learning Hub, a comprehensive online resource designed to provide free educational courses for behavioral health professionals, crisis and peer professionals, and interested individuals. The Learning Hub was created in response to Senate Bill 21-137. [Explore the Learning Hub Here.](#)

The Department of Health Care Policy & Financing submitted an amendment to Colorado's existing 1115 waiver seeking authorization to expand coverage for certain populations including:

- \*Serious mental illness and serious emotional disturbance (SMI & SED) inpatient care effective July 2025 (This is IMD Exclusion Waiver we advocated for this Legislative Session!)

- Criminal justice reentry services effective July 2025

- Continuous eligibility coverage for children 0-3 years effective January 2026

- Continuous eligibility coverage for adults released from Colorado Department of Corrections facilities effective January 2026

---

–

### **A View from Washington, D.C.**

The Department of Health & Human Services' Office of Inspector General found access to mental health continues to be a challenge, especially for those covered by Medicare and Medicaid. The new report, "A Lack of Behavioral Health Providers in Medicare and Medicaid Impedes Enrollees Access to Care," found that there are shortages of providers that actively serve Medicare and Medicaid enrollees and that those who do represent one-third of the total workforce despite the demand. Additionally, the report revealed that most enrollees saw their provider in-person, traveling long distances to see them. [Read the full report here.](#)

The Biden Administration released the 2024 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, the first-ever federal action plan focused on suicide prevention. The National Strategy provides concrete recommendations for addressing gaps in the suicide prevention field including actions such as identifying ways to address substance use and suicide risk together in the clinical setting, funding a mobile crisis locator for use by 988 crisis centers, increasing support for survivors of suicide loss and others whose lives have been impacted by suicide, and evaluating promising community-based suicide prevention strategies. [Read the full strategy here.](#)

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) affirmed its commitment to hold nursing homes accountable for providing safe and high-quality care for the nearly 1.2 million residents living in Medicare- and Medicaid-certified long-term care facilities by issuing the Minimum Staffing Standards for Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities and Medicaid Institutional Payment Transparency Reporting final rule. [Read the final rule here.](#)

---

### **Advocacy Opportunities**

Thank you to everyone who wrote Legislators requesting them to prioritize and fund our Legislative Agenda bills! With your advocacy, our bills have been funded and are in the final stages of the legislative process. This is your last chance to help ensure our priorities are signed into law! **Will you help us get our bills across the finish line?**

**(Take Action Button)**

---

### **Upcoming Events**



# **VOLUNTEER NIGHT**

## **GET INVOLVED & GET CONNECTED**



**Tuesday, 5/7/24**  
**4-6pmMT**

<https://bit.ly/49w9J7R>

**The Village Work, Wellness & Event Center**  
7173 S. Havana St. #600, Centennial, CO 80112

On Tuesday, May 7th, from 4:00- 6:00 PM, we will gather at The Village in Centennial for an evening of action! Join us to learn about our volunteer opportunities, connect with like-minded individuals, and participate in group projects to help support our mission. Volunteer Night is your chance to make a direct impact!

[Signup Today!](#)

---



### Care Not Cuffs Monthly Dispatch

Please join us for Care Not Cuffs Monthly Dispatch on **May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5pm MT for a presentation and discussion on the history of mental illness, deinstitutionalization, and the rise of mass incarceration with Anne E. Parsons, PhD.** Additional details to follow!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for April's Monthly Dispatch – in case you missed **BEAT Meth's presentation on addressing methamphetamine addiction in Colorado**, you can find the recording [here!](#)

You can register for our May Monthly Dispatch and all upcoming webinars [here](#).

---

Call Your Mother Fundraiser

---

Envision:You's 2024 Garden Party

---

**Do you shop at King Soopers?**



**[If so, CLICK HERE!](#)**

*Every time you shop at King Soopers, a portion of your purchase can benefit Mental Health Colorado.*