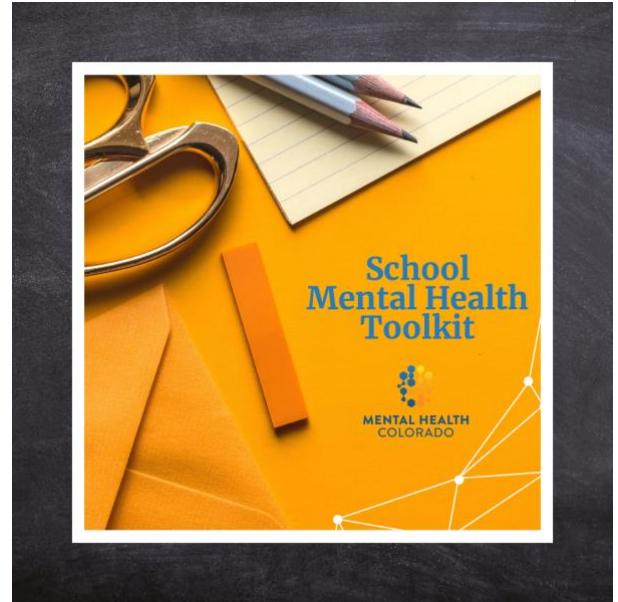


August 2024

Back to School

'Smart' Starts with Healthier Minds



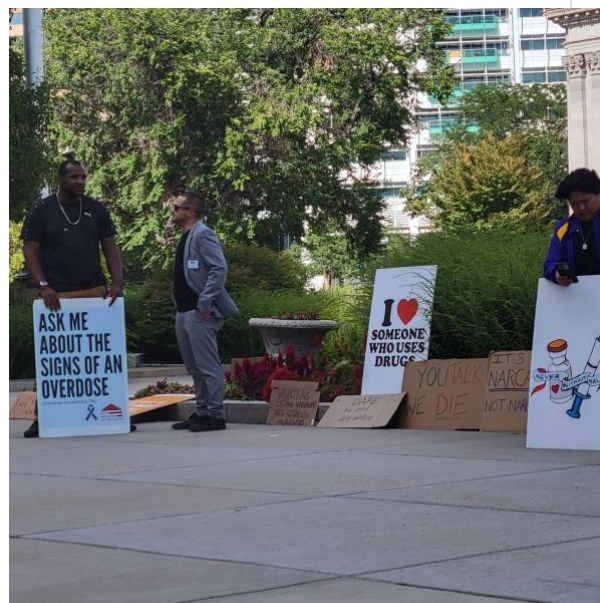
It's important to understand how our capacities for learning and creating are reinforced by our health.

[Check out our School Mental Health toolkit here!](#)

Let's support all of Colorado's students as they embark on new adventures, grasp new concepts, and grow to fulfill their own and our state's potential. Together, we can create a bright and hopeful future for all!

International Overdose Awareness Day
A Culmination of 'Overdose Prevention Centers National Solidarity Week'

Mental Health Colorado stands proudly with the organizations and individuals who work every day to prevent overdose fatalities and save countless lives.



From supervised drug consumption sites to take-home naloxone programs, there is a myriad of ways to reduce risks and vulnerabilities compassionately and healthfully for the people we love who use drugs. **Let's support and advocate for Overdose Prevention Centers because, truly, lives depend on it. #HarmReduction**

#EndOverdose #SupportOPCs #SaveLives #PublicHealth

‘Promoting Well-Being in the Workplace’ Toolkit

Prioritizing workplace well-being increases productivity, improves job satisfaction, curbs burnout, and cuts down on costs. According to the American Psychological Association, 92% of working people think it’s important to work for an organization that values their emotional and psychological well-being. On average, 1 in 4 employees report experiencing burnout symptoms, which leads to reduced productivity, less innovation, and a greater chance of making errors.



In observance of Labor Day, Mental Health Colorado is releasing a toolkit to support the health and well-being of working people, including practical steps to contribute to a healthy work environment.

The “Promoting Well-Being in the Workplace” toolkit provides actionable steps for organizations to foster a healthy workplace by providing access to resources and support, promoting awareness and education, providing training to managers, and allowing flexible work arrangement policies to promote work-life balance.

The toolkit also informs employers and employees of legal protections aimed at preventing health-based discrimination. Safeguards to protect privacy, insurance coverage, and medical leave are essential to promoting the health and well-being of working people and are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act, The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA), and the Family and Medical Leave Act.

[Click Here to Access the Toolkit](#)

Get Tickets to the 41st Annual Tribute Fundraising Gala!



6:00PM | October 12, 2024 | Formal Attire

Grand Hyatt Denver, 1750 Welton St, Denver, CO

We are proud to number Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners, The David & Laura Merage Foundation, and Brownstein, Hyatt, Farber, & Schreck among this year's honorees at Mental Health Colorado's 41st Annual Tribute Fundraising Gala.

Join us as we honor these organizations and all our allies and supporters for their commitment to the health and well-being of Coloradans across the lifespan.

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

Can't make the event? [Donate here](#) to show your support! Every dollar counts toward supporting our mission to promote healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans.

In The News



The Colorado Sun | 8/8/24 | Jennifer Brown

Larimer County's Mental Health Center Lays Off 75 People, Blames Rise in Uninsured and Medicaid Reform

It's hardly surprising that safety-net mental health centers are feeling the loss of Medicaid coverage for 600,000 Coloradans in the span of about a year, said Vincent Atchity, president and CEO of Mental Health Colorado.

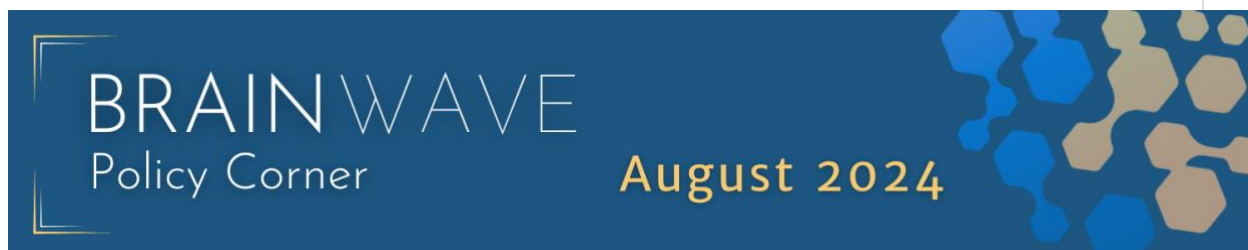
"It's an earthquake that takes a segment out of a highway," he said. "It's a crisis for sure."

Atchity, who advocated for payment reform and more transparency in public spending on community mental health centers, said it's likely there is "some seismic shifting that occurs when a system is flipping itself as much as this."

But it's unclear this early on in the transformation why some mental health centers are "complaining vociferously" about the new payment system while "others are shrugging their shoulders."

[Read More Here](#)

Brain Wave Policy Corner



With the upcoming election, many people feel anxious about the uncertainty of the future. One empowering step is to register to vote. A second step is to encourage others to register too. It gives us the agency to influence future outcomes and support candidates who align with our values and aspirations.



[Find information on how to register to vote here!](#)

A View from Washington, D.C.

Recent updates in national policy and legislation related to mental health reflect a continued push to improve access to care and ensure parity between mental and physical health services. Here are some of the key developments:

1. **Strengthening Mental Health Parity:** The Biden-Harris Administration proposed new rules to enforce the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA). These rules aim to ensure that mental health and substance use disorder benefits are provided at the same level as medical benefits by health plans. This includes evaluating health plans to ensure they don't impose more restrictive measures on mental health services, such as prior authorization or out-of-network fees, compared to physical health services. The proposed rule also addresses loopholes that previously allowed non-federal governmental health plans to avoid compliance with MHPAEA ([The White House, Healthcare Law Insights](#)).
2. **Expanding Behavioral Health Care Access:** The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) finalized policies for 2024 that focus on increasing access to behavioral health care. This includes expanding the categories of essential community providers, such as Substance Use Disorder Treatment Centers and Mental Health Facilities, to ensure they are adequately represented in health plan networks. Additionally, new rules simplify the enrollment process for health coverage, making it easier for those who lose Medicaid or CHIP coverage to transition to Marketplace plans ([HHS.gov](#)).
3. **Legislative Advocacy and Funding:** The Senate Appropriations Committee has passed the fiscal year 2025 budget, which includes significant investments in mental health programs. This budget supports the Collaborative Care Model, which integrates primary and behavioral health care, and increases funding for maternal mental health programs and mental health research initiatives. These efforts indicate strong bipartisan support for continued investment in behavioral health services ([Home, NASMHPD](#)).
4. **Advocacy for Medicare and CHIP Reforms:** The American Psychiatric Association (APA), in collaboration with the American Medical Association (AMA), advocated for reforms to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) and the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA). These efforts are aimed at securing greater financial stability for physicians and ensuring that mental health services are adequately compensated under Medicare ([Home](#)).
5. **988 Crisis Hotline Expansion:** The ongoing implementation of the 988-crisis hotline has seen further developments in August 2024. The National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) continues to work on expanding the resources and support structures tied to the 988 hotline. This includes enhancing crisis response systems across states to provide immediate support for mental health emergencies ([NASMHPD](#)).

Legislative Impact: Turning Numbers into Progress



2024 Legislative Impact

By The Numbers



- 41** Times Staff Testified in Committee
- 34** Times Advocates Testified in Committee
- 51** Advocates at our LEAD 'Day at the Capitol'
- 54** Advocates Participated in the Suicide Prevention Advocacy Day
- 100** Emails sent to legislators advocating for our Agenda Bills

These numbers tell a powerful story of advocacy, commitment, and action. Every testimony, every advocate's voice, and every email sent to legislators has played a critical role in shaping policies that directly affect the health landscape across Colorado.

None of this would be possible without your continued support. Your donations and contributions directly fund the advocacy efforts that make these numbers a reality. With every dollar, we can amplify our voice, reach more people, and create lasting change. Together, we are passing laws, changing practices, and building a movement to promote healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans!

Give now to support healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans.

DONATE

**Volunteer Opportunity:
2024 Psycon Psychedelic Convention**



October 11th & 12th

10:00am - 1:30pm & 1:30pm - 5:00pm

We are seeking volunteers to assist with outreach at the 2024 Psycon Psychedelic Convention at the Colorado Convention Center. Join us to learn and share Mental Health Colorado's commitment to exploring alternative pathways to healing with natural medicines.

All volunteers will enjoy free admission to the convention and time to explore exhibits and seminars outside of their volunteer hours!

[Sign Up to Volunteer Here](#)

Events

School Mental Health Community of Practice

2024-25 School Year

Advancing School Mental Health in Colorado

Join us for the 2024–25 Community of Practice

The Community of Practice brings together school professionals and community members from all regions of Colorado to engage in shared learning, conversation, and collaboration as we advance school mental health best practices that are known to work in our local communities.

Session topics are informed by participant feedback and interest. Participants include school staff and leaders, mental health professionals, community members, and school mental health champions.



VIRTUAL CoP SESSIONS

Dedicated to enhanced learning, networking, and sharing of successes and challenges.

2nd Wednesday of the month

10:00–11:30am

September, October, November,
February, January, April, and May

REGISTER HERE

September Community Meetings with HCPF:

Accessing Youth Mental Health Resources

Mental Health Colorado—in partnership with the Department of Health Care Policy & Financing (HCPF) —is hosting a series of community meetings throughout September to hear directly from those with lived experience in accessing care, supports, and services for children and youth. More specifically, we'll be engaging folks who are interested in learning about the proposed Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) model for children and families receiving Medicaid. The model will serve as a specific approach of providing intensive behavioral health services to children, youth and families to help them meet their needs.

We are seeking individuals who have firsthand experience in this area to join us in these discussions. Your voice is crucial in helping shape the future of care and support services in Colorado.

Meeting Locations and Dates:

- **Wednesday, 9/18** at 10:00am (Grand Junction)
- **Monday, 9/23** at 12:00pm (Colorado Springs)
- **Tuesday, 9/24** at 2:00pm (Denver)
- **Monday, 9/16** at 10:00am (virtual)
- **Friday, 9/27** at 3:30pm (virtual)

Your insights will directly influence how care, supports, and services are delivered in our state. By sharing your experiences, you'll help ensure that the voices of those who need these services are at the forefront of policy decisions.

[RSVP HERE!](#)

A special thank you to Teva Pharmaceuticals for their grant supporting Mental Health Colorado's Tardive Dyskinesia (TD) educational campaign.



Do you shop at King Soopers?

A portion of your purchases can benefit Mental Health Colorado!



