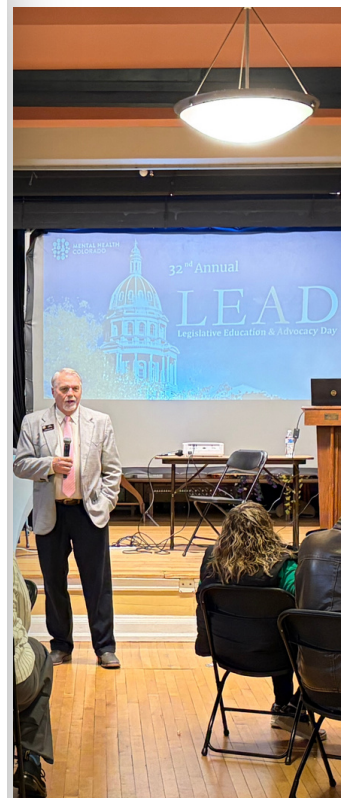




MENTAL HEALTH
COLORADO

2026 Legislative Report & Scorecard

President's Letter

Every year, Mental Health Colorado enters the legislative session with a simple but ambitious goal: help build a Colorado where every person has the support they need to thrive before they experience a crisis. This year, we made meaningful progress toward that objective.

Together with advocates, providers, lawmakers, and people with lived experience, we helped pass legislation that will strengthen mental health protections for Coloradans across our state. That includes Senate Bill 26-060, "Alyssa's Youth Concussion and Mental Health Protection Act," which will provide mental health education for youth sports coaches and strengthen awareness of the mental health impacts of concussions.

We also advanced legislation to establish stronger safeguards around online sports betting, protect Coloradans from the misuse of AI in psychotherapy, and expand access to non-opioid pain treatment options. Each of these new laws reflects the reality that mental health touches every part of our lives, from the technologies we use to the systems we rely on for health care to the environments where our children learn, play, and grow.

At the same time, Colorado continues to face enormous challenges. Too many are still falling through the cracks of fragmented systems that intervene only after someone has already experienced an emergency. We see this every day in our overcrowded emergency rooms, our homelessness crisis, our strained behavioral health system, and our competency restoration backlog.

We can and must do better.

If we want healthier communities and better outcomes, we need to make smarter investments upstream. That means investing in stable housing, affordable health care, food security, early intervention, and accessible community-based services that support the whole person. Prevention is not only more healthful than crisis response – it is also far more effective and fiscally responsible. We must build a true continuum of care that helps people stay well long before they need a safety net. That work requires persistence, partnership, and a willingness to think differently about how we invest public resources and what we expect of ourselves as a state and nation.

To our advocates, supporters, lawmakers, providers, coalition partners, and families who shared their stories this year: thank you. Your voices continue to move Colorado toward a healthier future. We are proud of the progress we made together in 2026. And we are even more determined for the work ahead.



Vincent Atchity
Vincent Atchity, President & CEO



Legislative Summary

58 staff members & Brain Wave advocates testified in committee hearings

126 letters sent to legislators throughout session urging their support

208 community members registered for the 32nd Annual Legislative Education & Advocacy Day (LEAD) at the Capitol

65 advocates joined us at the Suicide Prevention Day at the Capitol

11 media stories highlighting Mental Health Colorado's priorities



"Sharing my story with legislators was terrifying, but it was the first time I felt like my struggle could actually prevent someone else's. That's power."

Adriana, Brain Wave

Join The Wave!

The Brain Wave is Mental Health Colorado's statewide network of over 1,600 advocates working to pass laws, change practices, and build a movement to promote healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans.

Throughout the 2026 legislative session, Brain Wave members from across the state shared lived experience with lawmakers, testified in committee hearings, participated in advocacy days at the Capitol, and helped elevate policies that promote health & well-being.

By speaking out and taking action, Brain Wave advocates help shape public policy and public opinion on issues impacting mental health, substance use, healthcare access, housing, aging, and family well-being.

Scan the QR Code



Join The Wave

Mental Health Colorado's Priority Bill



Alyssa's Youth Concussion and Mental Health Protection Act

SB26-060: Youth Coaches Mental Health Education & Concussion Awareness Passed

SB26-060 strengthens protections for young athletes by requiring mental health education and concussion awareness training for their coaches. Coaches often serve as trusted adults in young people's lives and are uniquely positioned to recognize signs of distress, trauma, or injury. Expanding education and awareness can help create safer and more supportive environments for Colorado youth.

This bill will be known as "Alyssa's Youth Concussion & Mental Health Protection Act" in honor of a young Colorado athlete whose story highlights the importance of recognizing mental health concerns early and understanding that concussions impact more than just our physical health- they can lead to serious mental health concerns.

Advocate Testimony

"When coaches understand the mental health impact of brain injuries, they become the first people who can recognize that something deeper may be happening to a young athlete. And when we give coaches that knowledge, we are not just protecting players. We are protecting families from the fear and confusion my family lived through."

Montee Ball, Former NFL Running Back, Denver Broncos



STRONG START FOR ALL CHILDREN & SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Children and young people deserve safe, supportive environments that foster healthy development and emotional well-being. From schools and athletic programs to child welfare and juvenile justice systems, the experiences young people have early in life shape long-term health outcomes. By investing in prevention, education, and developmentally appropriate supports, Colorado can help young people build resilience and thrive across the lifespan.

SB26-131: Sports Betting Protections Passed

This bill establishes additional safeguards related to sports betting in order to reduce potential harms to young people and vulnerable populations. Increased access to online gambling platforms has raised concerns about addiction, financial stress, and other harmful health consequences, particularly among adolescents and young adults. This legislation takes important steps toward protecting public health while promoting responsible gaming practices.

Advocate Testimony

“In my family, sports betting has led to impulsive reactions which resulted in significant negative financial consequences, loss of self-esteem, and even dropping out of college. Yet, these family members are still tempted to throw away everything to gambling, especially sports betting. These are not isolated cases—they are part of a growing public health concern.”

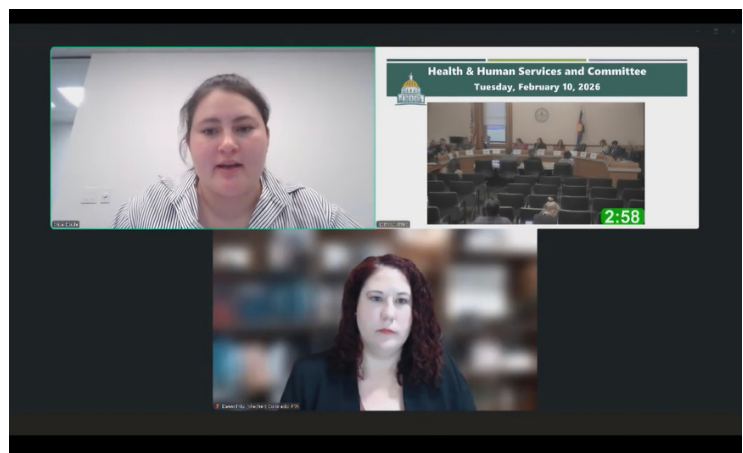
Paula W., Brain Wave

HB26-1024: Raising Age of Voluntary Relinquishment of Child Passed

This bill raises the age at which a newborn child may be voluntarily relinquished under Colorado law from 72 hours post-partum to 30 days, recognizing that families and caregivers may need additional support during times of crisis. Expanding access to safe relinquishment options can help prevent family trauma, reduce harm, and ensure children and caregivers are connected to appropriate supports and services.

HB26-1064: Youthful Offender System Updates Passed

This bill updates Colorado’s Youthful Offender System to better support rehabilitation, developmentally appropriate care, and successful reentry for young people involved in the justice system. Young people experiencing behavioral health challenges need care, education, and restoration rather than pathways that deepen trauma and lead to long-term justice involvement.



WELLNESS IN AGING

Mental health and well-being remain essential throughout every stage of life. Colorado's older adults increasingly face challenges related to workplace discrimination, business shortfalls, isolation, cognitive decline, financial exploitation, and access to care. Supporting wellness in aging means ensuring Coloradans have the resources and protections they need across the lifespan.

HB26-1110: Vulnerable Adult Financial Exploitation Banking Passed

This bill strengthens protections against financial exploitation of vulnerable adults by improving coordination between financial institutions and protective systems. Financial exploitation, often targeting older adults and people with disabilities, has devastating impacts on mental health, stability, and independence. Early intervention and stronger safeguards help protect dignity and well-being.

SB26-004: Expand List of Petitioners for Protection Orders Passed

The bill adds a health-care facility that employs a health-care professional or mental health professional and a co-responder who is part of a co-responder community response to the list of community members who may petition the court for an extreme risk protection order. The bill adds health-care facilities, behavioral health treatment facilities, K-12 schools, and institutions of higher education as institutional petitioners that may petition a court for an extreme risk protection order.

This bill also strengthens pathways for interventions that temporarily reduce access to lethal means to help protect vulnerable individuals, including older adults experiencing abuse, exploitation, harassment, or unsafe living situations. Timely intervention to restrict access to lethal means is an important component of individual, family, and community safety and well-being.

SB26-008: Mental Health Access Lost

This bill sought to expand access to mental health care for adult Coloradans by addressing barriers within the behavioral health system. Although the bill did not pass, the need for timely, affordable, and equitable access to mental health care remains urgent, particularly for older adults and underserved communities who often face long wait times and limited provider availability.



ACCESS TO HOUSING, HEALTHCARE, SUPPORTS & SERVICES

Access to healthcare, stable housing, and community-based supports is fundamental to health and well-being. Too many Coloradans continue to face barriers to health due to the cost of care, workforce shortages, insurance limitations, discrimination, or gaps in oversight and accountability. Expanding access to high-quality, person-centered care helps individuals, families, and communities reach their full potential.

HB26-1195: Psychotherapy Artificial Intelligence Restrictions

This bill establishes guardrails around the use of artificial intelligence in psychotherapy and behavioral health settings. While emerging technologies may offer new tools for care, behavioral health care requires trust, clinical judgment, privacy protections, and meaningful human connection. Safeguards are necessary to ensure technology does not compromise patient safety or quality of care.

HB26-1325: Natural Medicine

This bill establishes the ibogaine research pilot program in the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) to research the safety and effectiveness of using ibogaine to treat mental health conditions and substance use disorders. As interest grows in alternative pathways to health, it is critical to prioritize evidence-informed practices, public education, consumer protections, and equitable access to safe, effective medicines.

SB26-113: Require Recovery Residences to Obtain Behavioral Health Administration License

This bill requires recovery residences to obtain licensure through the Behavioral Health Administration, increasing accountability and oversight for recovery housing providers. Safe and stable recovery environments are essential for individuals navigating challenges related to substance misuse.

HB26-1002: Provider Participation in Health Insurance

This bill will enhance provider participation in health-care provider networks, requiring carriers to admit prelicensed providers into the carrier's network and to reimburse prelicensed providers for services rendered when provided under the supervision of a mental health provider, substance use disorder provider, or psychiatric nurse. Expanding provider participation can reduce wait times, improve continuity of care, and strengthen healthcare access statewide.

HB26-1305: Licensing of Behavioral Health Facilities

This bill allows psychiatric inpatient health-care facilities to operate under a main hospital's license if certain conditions are met. The bill requires that the main hospital under which the psychiatric inpatient health-care facility is licensed demonstrates that the necessary conditions are met in its application for licensing.

HB26-1115: Prepaid Wireless Telecom Services Modifications

This bill ensures that prepaid wireless services, including certain free prepaid services supported by federal programs, are consistently included in existing 911, 988, and Telephone Disability Access (TDA) charge requirements. The bill also improves administrative clarity, reporting, and compliance so that these critical systems are sustainably funded. Reliable access to crisis services and emergency supports remains a critical component of community health and safety.

END HEALTH-BASED DISCRIMINATION

Every Coloradan deserves to be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect, regardless of their health status, disability, identity, or involvement with healthcare or justice systems.

Discrimination and unfair treatment create barriers to safety, belonging, and well-being.

HB26-1043: Transport Network Company Discriminatory Practices

This bill addresses discriminatory practices within transportation network companies to help ensure equitable access to transportation services. Reliable transportation is essential for accessing healthcare, employment, housing, and community connection, particularly for people with disabilities and health conditions.

HB26-1322: Civil Actions for Conversion Therapy Survivors

This bill allows survivors of conversion therapy to pursue civil action against providers who caused harm through these discredited practices. Conversion therapy has been widely linked to increased risks of depression, anxiety, substance use, and suicide among LGBTQ+ individuals. Protecting survivors and preventing further harm supports healthier communities for all Coloradans.

HB26-1134: Fairness & Transparency in Municipal

This bill clarifies that municipal court defendants have a right to counsel, and that municipal defense counsel have the same notice requirements, case information, and opportunity to meet with their clients as do state-level defense counsel. Court involvement can have lasting impacts on housing, employment, financial stability, and overall health, particularly for individuals already facing systemic inequities and their families. Improving transparency and accountability helps strengthen our system of justice and reduce unnecessary harm.

REDUCE POTENTIAL HARM FROM DRUGS & ALCOHOL

Substance use has been part of the human experience throughout history, and effective policy must prioritize health, safety, education, and harm reduction over punishment and discrimination. Colorado can reduce the harms associated with drugs and alcohol by expanding access to evidence-based care, improving prevention strategies, and supporting approaches grounded in public health.

SB26-006: Parity for Non-Opioid Pain Management Drugs

This bill improves access to non-opioid pain management options by requiring insurance parity for safer alternatives to opioids. Expanding access to effective pain management options can help reduce dependence on opioids while supporting patient choice and long-term health outcomes.

Advocate Testimony

“Managing acute or chronic pain often means being prescribed opioid medications, drugs that carry significant risks of addiction, overdose, and long-term harm. Expanding access to safer alternatives is an important step in preventing substance use disorders before they begin.”

Amanda H., Brain Wave



DECRIMINALIZE HEALTH CONDITIONS

Too often, the pathways that open up most readily in response to unmet health needs in our communities lead to recurring crises, criminalization, and incarceration.

Through our national Course Corrections initiative, Mental Health Colorado continues to work toward disentangling mental health and criminal justice by advancing policies rooted in prevention, access to housing, healthcare, recovery, and community support. By expanding pathways to care, Colorado can reduce costly and ineffective justice involvement for people with unmet health needs and improve health outcomes, strengthen communities, and make better use of public funding.

HB26-1039: Adding Municipal Jails to County Jail Oversight Passed

This bill expands jail oversight provisions to include municipal jails, helping improve accountability, transparency, and health protections for individuals in custody, including protections for pregnant people. People involved in the criminal justice system often experience unmet health needs, and oversight is critical to protecting safety and dignity.

Advocate Testimony

“By mandating standards for municipal jails, limiting holding periods, and strengthening protections for pregnant individuals, this bill takes Colorado another step toward a safer, more humane response to traumatized individuals who have unmet health needs and may be struggling to survive.”

Neolani M., Brain Wave

SB26-149 Pathways for Individuals with Mental Health Disorder Passed

Under current law, if a defendant is found incompetent to proceed and the defendant will not be restored to competency in the foreseeable future, the court is required to dismiss charges against the defendant and the defendant, in limited circumstances, may be referred for certification for short-term treatment through a civil court process. **The bill maintains the requirement for the court to dismiss the charges against a defendant if the defendant's highest charged offense is among certain misdemeanor offenses, and the bill maintains certification for short-term treatment as an option for the defendant.** However, the bill authorizes the district attorney or county attorney (prosecution) to notify the court that the prosecution seeks civil commitment or an enhanced protective placement of a defendant if the prosecution can prove by clear and convincing evidence that the defendant:

- Has a mental disability or developmental disability;
- Committed an act of that, in the absence of any mental disability or developmental;
- Disability, would constitute homicide, a crime of violence, or a felony that constitutes unlawful sexual behavior, and the act is or was charged in a criminal case in Colorado in which competency was raised; and
- Poses a substantial risk of serious harm to others.



Bills We Opposed

Mental Health Colorado opposes legislation that is discriminatory or would increase barriers to care, deepen criminalization, or undermine the health, safety, dignity, and rights of Coloradans. Policies rooted in unnecessary system involvement often worsen health outcomes and create additional trauma for individuals, families, and communities.

HB26-1285: Admission to Mental Health Residential Facility Defeated

This bill proposed restricting individuals required to register under the Colorado Sex Offender Registration Act from accessing residential mental health care within 1,000 feet of a school.

Mental Health Colorado supports access to care for all who need it. This proposal would have limited access to care without evidence that residential proximity restrictions reduce recidivism. We believe prevention, accountability, and treatment are more effective investments in community safety.

SB26-112: Court Actions Related to Failure to Appear in Court Defeated

Mental Health Colorado opposed this bill because punitive responses to missed court appearances disproportionately impact people with health needs, and experiencing substance use conditions, housing instability, or poverty. Criminalizing behaviors related to health and survival deepens instability and exacerbates harm rather than improving public safety or accountability.





Legislative Scorecard

The following scorecard highlights how Colorado senators and representatives voted on key priority legislation during the 2026 legislative session. These bills reflect our mission to pass laws, change practices, and build a movement that promotes healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans.

Lawmakers who scored highly on this year's scorecard demonstrated strong support for policies that promote well-being, ensure access to housing, healthcare, supports and services, and end health-based discrimination.



H O U S E

Representative	SB26-060	SB26-131	HB26-1195	HB26-1325	SB26-113	Score
Bacon, J. (D)	E	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Barron, C. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	X	60
Boesenecker, A. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Bottoms, S. (R)	X	E	✓	E	E	50
Bradfield, M. (R)	✓	E	✓	E	✓	100
Bradley, B. (R)	X	✓	✓	X	X	40
Brooks, M. (R)	X	X	✓	X	X	20
Brown, K. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Caldwell, J. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	80
Camacho, S. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Carter, M. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Clifford, C. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
DeGraaf, K. (R)	X	✓	✓	X	X	40
Duran, M. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
English, R. (D)	✓	✓	E	✓	✓	100
Espenosa, C. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Feret, L. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Flanell, A. (R)	X	X	✓	✓	X	40
Froelich, M. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Garcia, L. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Garcia Sander, L. (R)	X	X	✓	✓	X	40
Gilchrist, L. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Goldstein, L. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Gonzales, R. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	X	60
Hamrick, E. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Hartsook, A. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	X	60
Jackson, J. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Johnson, D. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	X	60
Joseph, J. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Keltie, R. (R)	X	X	✓	X	X	20
Lieder, S. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Lindsay, M. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Luck, S. (R)	X	✓	✓	X	X	40

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

HOUSE

Representative	SB26-060	SB26-131	HB26-1195	HB26-1325	SB26-113	Score
Lukens, M. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Mabrey, J. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Marshall, B. (D)	X	✓	✓	X	✓	60
Martinez, M. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Mauro, T. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
McCluskie, J. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
McCormick, K. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Nguyen, K. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Paschal, A. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Philips, J. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Richardson, C. (R)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
Ricks, N. (D)	✓	✓	E	✓	✓	100
Rutinel, M. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Rydin, G. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Sirota, E. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Slaugh, S. (R)	X	X	✓	✓	X	40
Smith, L. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Soper, M. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	X	60
Stewart, K. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Stewart, R. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Story, T. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Suckla, L. (R)	X	X	✓	✓	X	40
Taggart, R. (R)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Titone, B. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Valdez, A. (D)	E	✓	E	✓	✓	100
Velasco, E. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Weinberg, R. (R)	X	✓	✓	X	✓	60
Willford, J. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Winter, T. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	80
Woodrow, S. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Woog, D. (R)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	80
Zokaie, Y. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100

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

SENATE

Senator	SB26-060	SB26-131	HB26-1195	HB26-1325	SB26-113	Score
Amabile, J. (D)	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	80
Baisley, M. (R)	X	X	✓	X	X	20
Ball, M. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Bridges, J. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Benavidez, A. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Bright, S. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	80
Carson, J. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	X	60
Catlin, M. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	80
Coleman, J. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Cutter, L. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Danielson, J. (D)	E	E	✓	✓	✓	100
Daugherty, L. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Exum, T. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Frizell, L. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	80
Gonzales, J. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Hinrichsen, N. (D)	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	80
Jodeh, I. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Kipp, C. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Kirkmeyer, B. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	80
Kolker, C. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Lindstedt, W. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Liston, L. (R)	✓	X	X	✓	✓	60
Marchman, J. (D)	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	80
Mullica, K. (D)	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	80
Pelton, B. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	X	40
Pelton, R. (R)	✓	✓	✓	X	X	60
Rich, J. (R)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Roberts, D. (D)	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	80
Rodriguez, R. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Simpson, C. (R)	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	80
Snyder, M. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Sullivan, T. (D)	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	80
Wallace, K. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Weissman, M. (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Zamora Wilson, L. (R)	X	X	X	X	X	0

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

Take Action

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Get Involved

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