



Your voice for healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans

May 2025

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

As Mental Health Awareness Month comes to a close, join us in taking a moment to reflect on the past, and act for the future.

Since Mental Health Colorado was founded more than 70 years ago, we've witnessed a profound transformation in our aspirations for mental health care—from isolating asylums to community-based care rooted in dignity, science, and compassion. This shift in understanding was made possible by people like you. Thank you for advancing this progress and being part of the movement.

Yet, there is so much more work ahead. Far too many still face barriers to the care they need. At Mental Health Colorado, we are working every day to eliminate these obstacles—expanding access, advancing policy, and building a future where support for greater well-being is a right, not a privilege.

Whether you're speaking out, seeking care, or supporting others, every action creates a ripple of change. And with your help, we can turn those ripples into waves—passing laws, changing practices, and building a movement to promote healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans.

Right now, your gift to the Healthier Minds Fund will be matched dollar for dollar—only through the end of May. Thanks to our partners at Alpine Bank, your donation will go twice as far to:

- Expand access to mental health screenings, education, and statewide resources
- Equip advocates and families to influence policy and reform systems
- Ensure mental health is treated with the same urgency and care as physical health

Every contribution helps dismantle health-based discrimination and creates a more compassionate, connected, and mentally healthy Colorado.

[Make Your Gift Today]

www.mentalhealthcolorado.org/donate

Help build a Colorado where everyone has the support they need to thrive by making a gift today!

Together for healthier minds,
Mental Health Colorado

Many thanks to our generous 2025 Mental Health Awareness Month sponsors:



On the Ground with Colorado's Mental Health Champions



On May 13th, Mental Health Colorado hosted our 2025 Post-Legislative Session Celebration & Awards—an evening dedicated to honoring the champions of mental health policy. Pictured here are Elisabeth Rosen, Senator Judy Amabile, Attorney General Phil Weiser, Sheriff Jaime FitzSimons, Maureen Cain, and our President & CEO Vincent Atchity. We're grateful for the partnership and progress made this session to support healthier minds across Colorado.

In The News



Medicaid is a lifeline for mental health in rural Colorado

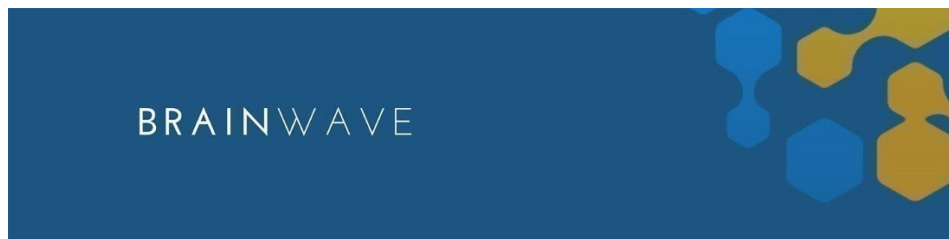
Wendy Buxton-Andrade | 5/3/25 | *The Daily Sentinel*

“Rural hospitals and clinics in our state depend on Medicaid funding to keep their doors open and provide essential care to their communities. Medicaid cuts would threaten the survival of rural hospitals, many of which already operate on razor-thin margins. Nearly half of rural hospitals in the U.S. operate at a loss, and Medicaid accounts for a significant share of their revenue. Ten of Colorado’s rural hospitals are facing the threat of closure, and three of them are in immediate danger, according to the Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform. If federal cuts go through, these already financially strained facilities could be forced to reduce services, eliminate behavioral health positions or close altogether, deepening the mental health crisis in rural communities. Without these facilities, our rural friends and family members, farmers, ranchers and veterans would be left without care when they need it most.”

[Read the Full Article](#)

The Brain Wave Policy Corner

Legislative & Policy Updates on Mental Health in Colorado



1. Behavioral Health Parity Law Enacted

Governor Jared Polis signed House Bill 25-1002 into law, mandating that health insurers provide coverage for behavioral health, mental health, and substance use disorder treatments on par with physical health services. This legislation prohibits insurers from denying care based on a patient's current or future behavioral health or substance use disorder, aiming to eliminate discriminatory practices and improve access to necessary treatments. [Colorado Public Radio](#)

2. Senate Bill 25-042: Behavioral Health Crisis Response Recommendations

Signed into law in March 2025, SB25-042 directs state agencies to compile and share best practices for crisis response programs like co-responder and mobile crisis teams. It also mandates a report on Medicaid reimbursement gaps and allows coverage for certain inpatient mental health stays, aiming to strengthen Colorado’s behavioral health crisis system. [Colorado General Assembly](#)

3. Mental Health Disclosure Rules for Providers

Effective August 1, 2024, Colorado amended its mandatory disclosure requirements for mental health providers. The updated rules necessitate that providers disclose specific information in writing during the initial client contact, ensuring transparency and informed consent. These disclosures apply to a broad range of mental health professionals, including psychologists, social workers, and licensed professional counselors. [National Law Review](#)

4. Supreme Court to Hear Challenge to Conversion Therapy Ban

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear *Chiles v. Salazar*, a case challenging Colorado's 2019 law banning conversion therapy for minors by licensed mental health professionals. The plaintiff argues that the law infringes upon free speech and religious freedom rights. The Court's decision could have significant implications for state regulations on professional conduct and the protection of LGBTQ+ youth. [The Washington Post](#)

5. Behavioral Health Providers Express Concerns Over Medicaid Reimbursement

Some behavioral health providers in Colorado have voiced concerns regarding the state's Medicaid program. After expanding services in response to state requests and with the expectation of higher reimbursement rates, providers report that the promised rate increases are not being realized. This situation has led to financial strain and feelings of betrayal among providers who stepped up to fill critical service gaps. [The Colorado Sun](#)

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Thank Your Legislators!

Passing laws to promote healthier minds across the lifespan takes collective effort—and your advocacy made a difference. Now that some key mental health legislation has passed, it's time to thank the lawmakers who championed these important changes. Visit our Policy Action webpage for sample thank-you messages, legislator contact info, and tips on how to show your appreciation.

[\[CLICK HERE\]](#)

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[Learn About This Year's Legislation](#)

A View from Washington, D.C.



1. Federal Mental Health Parity Rule Faces Potential Rollback

The Trump administration announced plans to rescind a federal rule designed to ensure that Americans with private health insurance have access to affordable mental health services. The Department of Justice indicated that the administration will not enforce the rule and is considering eliminating it entirely. This move has raised concerns among mental health advocates about potential reductions in access to necessary care. [Reuters](#)

2. Kids Online Safety Act Reintroduced

The Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) was reintroduced in Congress in May 2025. The bill aims to address children's privacy and mental health concerns related to social media and internet use. It would require tech companies to exercise a "duty of care" to minimize exposure to harmful content, including material related to eating disorders and bullying. While the bill has bipartisan support, some civil liberties groups have expressed concerns about potential overreach. [Time](#)

3. SAMHSA Releases 2025 National Crisis Care Guidelines

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) published the 2025 National Guidelines for a Behavioral Health Coordinated System of Crisis Care. These guidelines aim to transform behavioral health crisis care systems by establishing a framework for equitable, accessible, and effective responses to behavioral health crises. Key elements include crisis call lines, mobile crisis response teams, and emergency and crisis stabilization services. [SAMHSA Library](#)

4. Mental Health Infrastructure Improvement Act Reintroduced

Lawmakers reintroduced the Mental Health Infrastructure Improvement Act (H.R. 3266) in May 2025. The bill proposes establishing a new federal loan and loan guarantee program within the Department of Health and Human Services to build or renovate mental health and substance use disorder treatment facilities. The legislation aims to address facility shortages and improve access to care. [American Hospital Association](#)

5. Senate Recognizes Mental Health in Agriculture

The Senate passed a resolution designating May 29, 2025, as "Mental Health Awareness in Agriculture Day." The resolution acknowledges the high rates of mental health challenges and suicide among farmers and farmworkers and aims to raise awareness and reduce stigma associated with mental illness in the agricultural industry. [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov)



When Recovery Leads: The Power of Peer Support



HB21-1021's IMPACT: LEADERSHIP OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

Category	Details/Impact
WHAT IT DOES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expands access to Peer Support Professionals—individuals with lived experience who are trained to support others in recovery from mental health or substance use conditions.
WHY IT MATTERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lived experience builds trust, breaks down barriers, and fosters authentic, recovery-oriented relationships in behavioral health care.
SYSTEMS CHANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases availability, training, and compensation for peer professionals—addressing workforce gaps and improving care quality statewide.
REAL RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer support services cut hospitalizations in half, boost self-care, reduce psychotic symptoms, and save Colorado an average of \$5,494 per person.
BIGGER PICTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centering lived experience creates a more compassionate and effective mental health system—where recovery is led by those who've walked the path.

PASSING LAWS, CHANGING PRACTICES, & BUILDING A MOVEMENT

At Mental Health Colorado, we are dedicated to passing laws, changing practices, and building a movement to promote healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans. Over the past few months, we've explored how each of these pillars strengthens our path toward health equity. This month, we're turning our attention to the power of lived experience—and how centering it in health systems leads to more meaningful, lasting outcomes.


With the passage of HB21-1021, Colorado affirmed the value of Peer Support Professionals—individuals in recovery who are trained to help others navigate mental health and substance use challenges. By expanding access, compensation, and training for this essential workforce, we are reshaping care to be more responsive, compassionate, and effective. Peer support services have

been shown to reduce hospitalizations, improve engagement in care, and save the state thousands per person each year.

Centering lived experience isn't just powerful—it's transformational. Next month, we'll spotlight the progress we've made to ensure every Coloradan has access to timely, affordable, and affirming care. Thank you for being part of this work.

Events

Behavioral Health Roadshow with Commissioner Dannette R. Smith

The Colorado Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) is hitting the road! Commissioner Dannette R. Smith is visiting communities across the state to share updates on BHA's work and hear directly from Coloradans about local behavioral health needs. Join us for an evening of resource-sharing, community dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving. These events are open to all. 

Alamosa – Resource Fair & Community Conversation

- **Location:** Alamosa Public Library, 300 Hunt Ave, Alamosa, CO 81101
- **Date:** Wednesday, June 4, 2025
- **Time:** 4:30–6:30 PM

Mancos – Resource Fair & Community Conversation

- **Location:** TBA, Mancos, CO
 - **Date:** Wednesday, June 25, 2025
 - **Time:** 4:30–6:30 PM
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A promotional banner for a webinar. The background is dark blue with yellow accents. On the left, there are three overlapping circular images showing a man in a blue shirt being touched on the shoulder by another person. On the right, the text reads: "Webinar" in a yellow pill-shaped box, "Colorado Psilocybin Therapy Program Launch" in large white font, and "Thursday, July 10 at 12pm MT" in smaller white font. At the bottom right are the logos for the Healing Advocacy Fund and Mental Health Colorado.

Webinar

Colorado Psilocybin Therapy Program Launch

Thursday, July 10 at 12pm MT

Healing Advocacy Fund

MENTAL HEALTH COLORADO

This June, Colorado's state-licensed psilocybin healing centers will begin to provide psilocybin therapy to clients!

On July 10, join Mental Health Colorado and the [Healing Advocacy Fund](#) for a conversation with clinicians at the state's first licensed centers. We will share information about how clients can access care in the state program, along with resources for providers seeking to deepen their understanding of this emerging treatment option.

[>Register here for the July 10 webinar](#)



Mental Health Colorado is proud to be a Community Partner for Psychedelic Science 2025, the world's largest conference on psychedelic medicine, research, and community building — happening June 16-20 in Denver, CO!

Ready to join thousands of scientists, health professionals, advocates, and changemakers from around the world? Use our **promo code MHC15 for 15% off your registration!**

[Register here!](#)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for our 42nd Annual Tribute Fundraising Gala!



A special thank you to our 2025 Elite Sponsor, Rocky Mountain Health Plans, and 2025 Leader Sponsor, Signal Behavioral Health Network!



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