



**MENTAL HEALTH  
COLORADO**

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

## September 2024

### **‘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 preparation for Mental Illness Awareness Week (10/6 - 10/12) themed 'My Mental Health At Work,' Mental Health Colorado is excited to share 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. Contact Ashley Perales to learn more about using the toolkit to

support well-being in your workplace, [aperales@mentalhealthcolorado.org](mailto:aperales@mentalhealthcolorado.org).

**[Click Here to Access the Toolkit](#)**

**Celebrating Our Impact: 2023-2024 Annual Report Now Available**



**We're excited to share the release of our 2023-2024 Annual Report, highlighting a year of transformative advocacy, innovative initiatives, and community impact.** From championing historic legislation to expanding our support for LGBTQ+ communities and developing new training programs for care providers, your support

has made all the difference. Together, we're paving the way for a healthier future for all Coloradans.

[\*\*Read the Full Report Here\*\*](#)

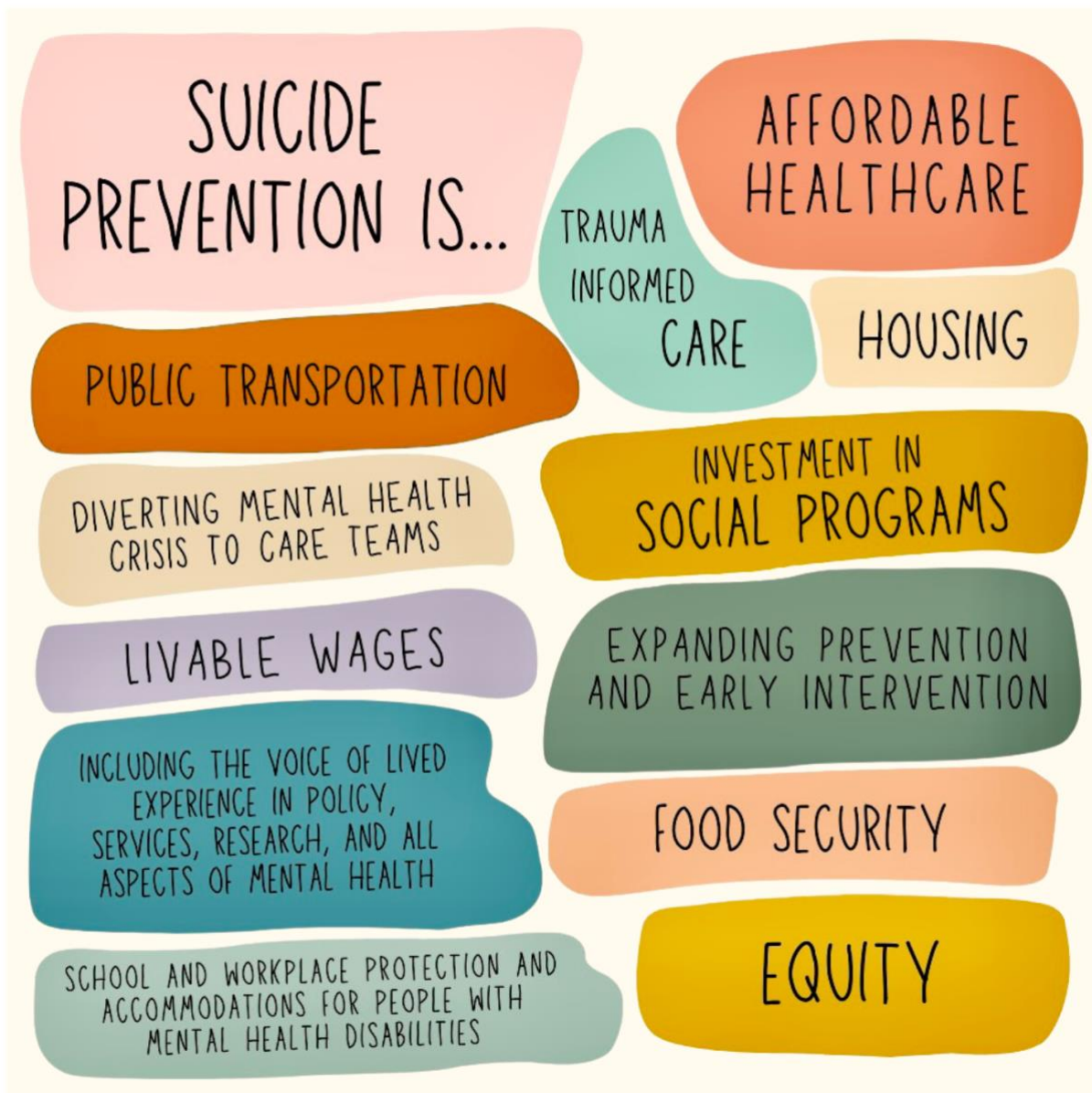
## **Suicide Prevention Awareness Month**

September is an opportunity to raise awareness about a critical public health issue impacting Colorado. In Colorado, suicide remains a leading cause of death, particularly among young people. In 2022 alone, our state tragically lost over 1,300 lives to suicide. This reality underscores the importance of our ongoing work at Mental Health Colorado, where we are passing laws, changing practices, and building a movement to promote healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans.

**One of Mental Health Colorado's key contributions has been our advocacy for the establishment of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.** Launched in 2022, this three-digit number provides anyone in mental health distress or experiencing a crisis with immediate access to trained professionals who can offer support and intervention. It is free, confidential, and available 24/7. By simplifying access to help, 988 is a lifeline for those in need of urgent mental health care, and it serves as an essential resource to prevent suicide across our state.

### **How You Can Get Involved:**

- **Share Resources:** Spread the word about the 988 Lifeline and Colorado Crisis Services (1-844-493-8255 or text TALK to 38255) in your community. Let others know that help is just a phone call or text away.
- **Get Trained:** Learn how to support someone in crisis by participating in a suicide prevention training program like Mental Health First Aid or QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer).
- **Donate:** Support our mission by donating to Mental Health Colorado, ensuring we can continue advocating for life-saving policies and expanding access to vital health services.



**Together, we can make a difference.** By taking action, sharing resources, and supporting one another, we can help create a future where every Coloradan has the support they need during times of crisis. *If you or someone you know is struggling, please know that help is available. Text/call 988 or contact the Colorado Crisis Services at 1-844-493-8255 or text TALK to 38255.*

**In The News**



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*The Prowers Journal | 9/10/24 | Barbara Crimond*

## **Mental Health Colorado welcomes former Prowers County Commissioner Wendy Buxton-Andrade as Vice President of Government Affairs**

Today, Mental Health Colorado, the state's leading advocacy organization for people experiencing mental health and substance use conditions, announced that Wendy Buxton-Andrade, a former Prowers County Commissioner, will join the organization as its Vice President of Government Affairs.

"Wendy has long been a prominent champion for the health of Coloradans, and we are very fortunate to add her to our leadership team," said Vincent Atchity, President and CEO of Mental Health Colorado. "Wendy brings valuable perspective and over a decade of experience as a county commissioner advocating for better mental health and substance use services in Colorado communities. We look forward to working alongside Wendy to promote healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans."

[\*\*Read More Here\*\*](#)

### **Brain Wave Policy Corner**



**With the upcoming election, many people feel anxious about the future.** One empowering step is to register to vote. A second step is to vote responsibly and thoughtfully from the top of the ballot to the bottom. A third step is to encourage others to register and vote, too. The act of voting is a powerful tool for feeling a little bit better.

By making a plan to vote and researching candidates and ballot issues, we perform a sacred civic duty. We exercise a responsibility and cultivate a sense of agency and empowerment. By voting, we affirm that we have come of age and can be trusted to set a course for a better future.



[Learn More / Register Here](#)

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

- 1. New Mental Health Parity Rule:** The Biden-Harris Administration issued a final rule that aims to ensure mental health and substance use care coverage is on par with physical health care. This rule affects 175 million Americans with private health insurance, addressing issues like inadequate provider networks and high out-of-pocket costs. The rule mandates health plans to evaluate their practices, such as prior authorizations and out-of-network payment, to improve access and affordability for mental health services ([The White House](#)).
- 2. Historic Investment in Integrating Mental Health into Primary Care:** The administration has committed to expanding mental health and substance

use disorder treatment within primary care settings at HRSA-supported health centers, which serve over 31 million people. This expansion aims to provide comprehensive behavioral health services through school-based centers, teleconsultations between pediatricians and psychiatrists, and new rural access points for opioid use disorder treatment ([HHS.gov](https://www.hhs.gov)).

**3. Final Rule Strengthening Mental Health Parity:** Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and the Treasury released new rules that enhance the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act. These rules prohibit more restrictive nonquantitative treatment limitations on mental health benefits compared to medical benefits, aiming to improve health equity and strengthen provider networks to expand access to mental health care ([HHS.gov](https://www.hhs.gov)).

**4. National Strategy for Suicide Prevention:** The administration launched the 2024 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, the first comprehensive federal action plan on suicide prevention. The strategy outlines actions to address gaps in services for at-risk populations, increase support for survivors of suicide loss, and develop a mobile crisis locator for 988 crisis centers ([SAMHSA](https://www.samhsa.gov)).

**5. Behavioral Health Funding Opportunities:** Nearly \$50 million has been allocated to strengthen mental health services nationwide. The funding supports initiatives such as youth suicide prevention, expanding access to behavioral health services, and integrating behavioral and physical health care. It also includes programs to train mental health providers and enhance services in high-need communities ([HHS.gov](https://www.hhs.gov)).

## **Tribute Fundraising Gala** *Impact By The Numbers*

Last year, at our 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Tribute Fundraising Gala, we raised over \$150,000 to support our mission to pass laws, change practices, and build a movement to promote healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans. Thanks to the generous support of sponsors and donors, we made a significant impact across the state!

<p><b>Passing Laws</b></p>	<p>720,000+ people</p>	<p>In the 2024 legislative session, we supported SB24-055: Agricultural &amp; Rural Behavioral Health Care, which creates a working group to discuss access to care for the more than 720,000 farmers, ranchers, and other individuals involved in agriculture and rural communities in Colorado.</p>
<p><b>Changing Practices</b></p>	<p>100,000+ people</p>	<p>Over the past year, MHC staff and volunteers presented at 25 community events, including Colorado Rapids' Mental Health Night and Suicide Prevention Day at the Capitol. These efforts raised awareness and connected folks to essential health supports and services.</p>
<p><b>Building a Movement</b></p>	<p>51,000+ people</p>	<p>Through our outreach efforts, we have increased newsletter subscriptions to more than 51,000 readers like you- dedicated to staying informed about the health and well-being of Coloradans across the lifespan!</p>

**At this year's gala, we hope to reach our fundraising goal of \$200,000, and with your help, we know this is possible!**

There's still time to get last minute tickets or to show your support with a donation to directly benefit our programs and initiatives aimed at promoting the health and well-being of Coloradans across the lifespan. We are excited to share this special evening with so many of our friends, allies and supporters.

**[Secure Your Tickets Here](#)**

## Events

**SAVE THE DATE: Pride in Public Health Summit – Rescheduled!**



# PRIDE IN PUBLIC HEALTH SUMMIT

**Thursday, 2/6/25 & Friday, 2/7/25**  
**Anschutz Health Sciences Building** (1890 Revere Ct, Aurora, CO 80045)  
*\$30 per person*

**[Click Here for Tickets](#)**

*Registration includes parking and meals.*

In partnership with the Colorado School of Public Health, Envision: You will be helping to organize this one-day event bringing together educators, students, activists, providers, advocates, community leaders, and many more to **explore the intersections of the LGBTQ+ community and public health, mental health, and wellness**. Click through to register for the Summit (only \$30!), become a sponsor, or submit an abstract for presentation opportunities!

If you took any of these actions for the previous Summit dates, Summit representatives will be in touch with you soon about your options for the new dates!

# 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.

[Register Here](#)



### **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**

**A special thank you to Rocky Mountain Health Plans, our 2024 Elite Sponsor!**



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**Our mailing address is:**

Mental Health Colorado  
303 East 17th Avenue  
Fourth Floor  
Denver, Colorado 80203  
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