CBHC
Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council
2017 Legislative Session Review
Dear Members,

As you know, 2017 marks CBHC’s 50th year serving Colorado’s community-based behavioral health providers. Despite this amazing milestone, it is not the longevity that we are most proud of – it is our success over time in ensuring that our members have the resources they need to deliver the quality services their communities value, and in promoting sound policy so that they can deliver those services in the most efficient and effective manner possible. With those goals in mind, and with your input, we entered the 2017 Legislative Session with three primary areas of focus:

1) Advancing the role of CBHC member organizations in the State’s plan for Phase II of the Accountable Care Collaborative (ACC)
2) Decriminalizing Mental Illness in Colorado
3) Ensuring Adequate Funding for Services

We believe you will be proud of the work we accomplished together this year and we are excited to share our 2017 Legislative Review to highlight those victories. On behalf of the entire CBHC team, thank you for your contribution to making our 50th year truly remarkable.

Sincerely,

Doyle Forrestal, CEO

ADVANCING THE ROLE OF CBHC MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS IN ACC PHASE II

Without a doubt, no other current state-level reform has as much potential to impact Colorado’s current community-based behavioral health system than the next phase of the Accountable Care Collaborative. CBHC and our members continued to engage state policymakers throughout 2016 and prepared to work with legislators in 2017 to ensure that the public behavioral health system is protected and equipped to provide those services upon which communities have come to rely.

HB17-1353: IMPLEMENTING MEDICAID DELIVERY & PAYMENT INITIATIVES

To achieve that goal, we focused on taking a lead role in shaping HB17-1353, a bill that defines the ACC in statute and broadly outlines the goals for the program. In addition, the bill authorizes HCPF to implement performance-based payments and requires a report prior to implementation and an annual report following the implementation of these payments. After presenting directly to the JBC and testifying in the House, CBHC was successful in amending the bill to include language that referenced Colorado’s community mental health centers and managed care entities (BHOs), and in recognizing HCPF’s need to build on Colorado’s capitation model for behavioral health.

DECRIMINALIZING MENTAL ILLNESS IN COLORADO

Throughout 2016, three stakeholder groups worked to develop recommendations that address the issues facing Colorado regarding the over-representation of individuals with mental illness in the criminal justice system. CBHC prepared to be lead advocates in ensuring the effective implementation of those recommendations and associated legislation. Recommendations from the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, the Equitas Foundation Course Correction Summit, and the Mental Health Holds Taskforce all agreed on ending the use of jails for emergency mental health holds and establishing an effective and appropriate response to behavioral health crises as a top legislative priority.
SB17-207: STRENGTHENING COLORADO’S STATEWIDE RESPONSE TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISES

Described as “landmark legislation” by Disability Law Colorado in Senate Committee testimony, this historic bill decriminalizes mental illness in Colorado by ending the use of jails for individuals experiencing behavioral health crises who haven’t been charged with a crime. This bill strengthens Colorado’s statewide crisis response system, and attempts to divert individuals from entering the criminal justice system at the earliest point possible. CBHC and members played an active leadership position on all aspects of this bill, from policy recommendations development to lead advocacy at the Capitol with the legislature. We are especially grateful to CBHC members that served on various committees and task forces that deliberated this issue and to those that traveled to the Capitol to testify on the bill.

In addition to our work on SB17-207, several initiatives aimed to increase the effectiveness and availability of resources for individuals with behavioral health disorders in the criminal justice system. CBHC was involved in several bills that reformed this intersection including, Senate Bills 12, 19, and 21 – all emerging from the Treatment of Persons with Mental Health Disorders in the Criminal Justice System Task Force, as well as HB17-1215, which encourages law enforcement departments to collaborate with community mental health centers on developing co-responder programs.

The CBHC policy team continues as an active stakeholder in these conversations to ensure that our members’ vision is well represented in current and future initiatives.

ENSURING ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR SERVICES

In addition to tracking bills, the legislative session is a critical time when Colorado’s Joint Budget Committee (JBC) and General Assembly sets the state budget and makes decisions on funding priorities. CBHC actively advocates for resources that enable our members to provide services and meet growing demand. In 2017, we worked to advance several budget priorities including two especially important wins:

BUILDING ON SB-202 TO ENHANCE SUD SERVICE PROVISION IN COLORADO

CBHC continued our work with legislators to commit additional resources to SUD prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery services. Building off the momentum and work of the community assessment plans developed by Colorado’s managed service organizations (MSOs), we educated the general assembly about the importance of investing in a full continuum of SUD services. In 2016, the legislature passed a bill to equip the MSOs with resources to perform a statewide assessment of SUD services to understand the needs and gaps in our system. Based on this review, each region developed an action plan to fill those gaps. This year, the JBC approved $6 million to implement those action plans. CBHC co-lead an effort to offer a House amendment to the Long Bill to approve an additional $6 million, for a total of $12 million dollars to help communities begin to meet their SUD care needs.

LONG-ACTING INJECTABLE & OTHER OFFICE-ADMINISTERED DRUGS

CBHC and members have long advocated for the periodic review and updating of the pricing for these drugs to ensure adequate reimbursement for providers who offer them. This year, the JBC voted unanimously to approve this periodic price updating to allow more community providers to deliver them in high-value settings. This decision will ultimately provide reimbursement for these drugs.
**Increase to Medicaid Behavioral Health Services ($11M)**

Based on per-capita rate trends, Colorado’s publicly funded behavioral health field was expecting an influx of need to serve the state’s Medicaid population.

**Funding for Supportive Housing & Rapid-Rehousing ($15.3M)**

Colorado’s housing crisis affects vulnerable populations harshly as individuals need to navigate treatment systems and succeed in treatment during their path towards self-sustainability. CBHC was part of a successful coalition to see this funding added to Colorado’s state budget.

**Funding to Increase Access to Offender Services ($1.44M)**

Implemented by SB07-097, the Offender Mental Health Services Initiative allows community providers to partner with criminal justice systems to deliver services to specialty populations. This year, the JBC approved increasing the funding to carry the program statewide and provide this opportunity to all 17 community mental health centers (CMHC).

**School Health Professional Program ($9.7M)**

The School Health Professional Grant Program is designed to enhance the presence of nurses, psychologists, social workers, and counselors in schools. CBHC joined a coalition to advocate for this increased funding approved by the JBC.

**Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Programs ($2.5M)**

As part of the implementation of key recommendations to decriminalize mental illness in Colorado, the JBC approved funding to develop four pilot LEAD programs in the state, for which CBHC helped advocate.

**Increase in Federal Block Grant Funds ($1.8M)**

To more accurately reflect expenditures and funding under policy changes created by the 21st Century Cures Act, Colorado saw an increase of Federal Block Grant funds for early intervention, prevention, and recovery-based services.

**Long Bill Re-Organization for Behavioral Health**

To address the need for greater flexibility of funding, and to avoid reversion of appropriated funding that goes against legislative intent, the JBC approved a re-organization of the Long Bill items for behavioral health in the Department of Human Services. The consolidation and re-naming of line items will help reduce administrative burden, increase flexibility, and avoid administratively caused reversion.

**Other Notable Funding Successes:**

Thanks to the advocacy and dedication of our champions, partners, and coalitions over $60 million of additional funds will be available next fiscal year for the behavioral health system & our partners to begin meeting the needs of our communities.

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