CBHC’s 2019 Legislative Platform

It’s a pivotal time for mental health and substance use disorder service providers in Colorado. At the local level, communities are clamoring for more services, even as new investments and partnerships increase availability of crisis services and other interventions. At the federal level, partisan politics keeps the topic of health care at the fore, and yet there is strong bipartisan agreement on the need to confront our nation’s opioid epidemic. At the state level, it seems change is constant. The state’s ACC Phase II has dramatically changed how we pay for and manage behavioral health services. The crisis system, only recently established as a statewide coordinated system, will be re-procured – with significant changes to the current system proposed. Substance use disorder (SUD) care has benefitted from several investments, most notably SB-202 funding which has seen increases each year since it was authorized in 2016.

With so much change occurring, it’s easy to get caught reacting to it all. The challenge before CBHC and our member organizations is to keep our focus on the future and to continue to drive toward our vision that all Coloradans, regardless of circumstance, have access to quality behavioral health services so they can live and work in the community of their choice surrounded by their natural supports.

Policy Priorities

• Streamline behavioral health facility licensure and designation – ensure that regulations support the integrated services needed for people experiencing both mental health and substance use disorder;
• Increase access to SUD services, including medication assisted treatment (MAT), withdrawal management (detox), and outpatient treatment services;
• Monitor the roll-out of ACC Phase II – ensure that HCPF is holding each RAE accountable to the program values designed based on stakeholder feedback;
• Continue to decriminalize mental health and substance use disorders by providing more opportunities to support law enforcement and first responders to redirect people to community treatment rather than the justice system;
• Expand opportunities for behavioral health workforce recruitment and retention;
• Expand community-based restoration services for individuals who have been found incompetent to proceed; and
• Pursue policies that advance the uptake of Mental Health First Aid by all professions serving the public.

Budget Priorities

• To ensure community non-profit providers are competitive in workforce salaries, recruitment and retention options, pursue a targeted rate increase for state-contracted community behavioral health providers;
• Decrease fragmentation of funding, thereby increasing efficiency and reducing unnecessary administrative burden;
• Increase flexible funding for community providers to sustain and expand locally responsive services beyond the four walls to address health where people live, work and play (e.g. schools and other community-based locations);
• Increase SB-202 funding to expand SUD services and treatment capacity across the state; and
• Seek additional funding to expand access to Mental Health First Aid training statewide.

If you have any questions about our plans for the 2019 legislative session, please contact Frank Cornelia, Director of Government & Community Relations, at fcornelia@cbhc.org or at 720-573-9371.