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Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council Advocates for Three Federal Bills During Annual Advocacy Event

Community behavioral health care organizations throughout Colorado will participate June 23-24 in an advocacy event organized by the National Council for Behavioral Health, which represents 3,326 organizations serving over 10 million adults, children and families living with mental illnesses and addictions.

“This important event gives us an opportunity each year to advocate for bipartisan solutions to help providers in our state and throughout the country deliver life-saving treatment and services to people coping with mental illness or substance use disorders,” said Doyle Forrestal, CEO of the Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council.

This year, the event – Hill Day at Home – will occur virtually, with more than 2,500 attendees from all 50 states participating. The impact of the global health pandemic on behavioral health care providers will drive the discussion.

Hill Day at Home will include virtual outreach to members of Congress across the country. This year, as national association of behavioral health providers, we ask that members of Congress support three specific bills:

[Emergency Appropriation of \\$38.5 Billion for Mental Health and Addiction Treatment](#)

COVID-19 has created both an enormous need for mental health and substance use disorder services and a decrease in capacity of frontline providers to treat people in need. Organizations that primarily treat individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders are facing a [financial crisis and are in jeopardy of failing](#). In response, our request to Congress is that they support an emergency appropriation of \$38.5 billion for providers of mental health and addiction treatment services.

[Crisis Stabilization and Community Reentry Act of 2020 \(S. 3312\)](#)

This bipartisan bill creates a new program allowing law enforcement agencies to partner with community behavioral health organizations to provide increased access to mental health treatment and crisis stabilization for incarcerated individuals and promote warm hand-offs to community-based care upon reentry to reduce recidivism. Our ask is that Senators co-sponsor the Crisis Stabilization and Community Reentry Act.

National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 (H.R. 4194)

This bill requires the Federal Communications Commission to designate 9–8–8 as the universal telephone number for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline. We ask that Members in the House of Representatives pass this critical legislation.

In Colorado, there are 17 Community Mental Health Centers which served a total of 228,089 individuals in 2019 alone. Their areas of care, including, but not limited to: outpatient counseling and psychiatric services, crisis and emergency services, case management and connection to care, detox treatment centers, child, youth, and family services, housing supports, vocational services, wellbeing promotion, and community organizing.

As we face the future during these uncertain times, it is more important than ever to ensure that all Coloradans have equal access to behavioral health care, and it starts with the passing of these three important and necessary bills.

ABOUT CBHC

The [Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council \(CBHC\)](#) envisions a state where all people have the opportunity to lead healthy, purposeful lives. Our 23 member organizations represent a statewide network of integrated care providers and care management organizations, including all of Colorado's 17 Community Mental Health Centers, 4 Managed Services Organizations, and 2 specialty health clinics. Together, we strengthen Colorado communities by ensuring innovative care and supporting the health, wellbeing, and safety of all Coloradans.

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