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**Lobby Day Draws Attention to Bill Expanding Training and Resources for Youth Mental Health Challenges in Schools**

**DENVER, CO** – Today, advocates from the Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council (CBHC) who represent behavioral health providers from across the state, are at the capitol to demand action on priority mental health bills, one of which is SB 20-001. The bill, introduced this week by Senator Rhonda Fields (D-Aurora), would expand professional development opportunities via the Colorado Department of Education for school personnel related to youth behavioral and mental health issues. It has widespread support from a coalition of organizations including the Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council, Healthier Colorado, Mental Health Colorado, and One Colorado.

Frank Cornelia, CBHC's Deputy Director & Chief Strategy Officer, speaking on behalf of the coalition said:

*"The Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council, Healthier Colorado, Mental Health Colorado, and One Colorado applaud Senator Rhonda Fields (D-Aurora) for her introduction this week of SB 20-001, a bill to expand behavioral health training for K-12 educators. Teachers and school personnel are on the frontlines of the growing youth mental health crisis and this bill will give them the tools and resources they need to address this challenge."*

Cornelia went on to say, "The coalition also thanks Senator Julie Gonzales (D-Denver), and Representatives Susan Beckman (R-Arapahoe), Dafna Michaelson Jenet (D-Adams), Emily Sirota (D-Arapahoe, Denver), and Kevin Van Winkle (R-Douglas) for sponsoring SB 20-001. We call on their colleagues in the legislature to support this vitally important piece of legislation."

SB 20-001 would establish optional behavioral health training programs for educators, administrators, and non-certified school personnel in the state of Colorado. School personnel who choose to enroll in these programs would receive evidence-based instruction aimed at

improving school culture and creating a safe and secure environment for all students. This legislation calls on the Department of Education to select an evidence-based program that trains educators on:

- Identifying behavioral and mental health challenges and substance use disorders;
- Improving youth behavioral and mental health challenges, as well as social and emotional health;
- Suicide prevention;
- Bullying prevention;
- Encouraging positive bystander behavior and providing best practices for non-escalation situations;
- De-escalation of crisis situations;
- And identifying resources for behavioral, mental health, and substance use disorder treatment.

**Additional lobby days planned by the coalition include:**

Feb 24: One Colorado Lobby Day

Feb 26: Mental Health Colorado Suicide Prevention Day

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The [Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council](#) (CBHC) is the statewide membership organization for Colorado's network of community behavioral health providers. CBHC member organizations contract with the State of Colorado and work together to provide comprehensive behavioral health and psychiatric services to every region of the state. CBHC members provide or contract for direct services in a wide variety of settings in hundreds of service delivery sites across the state. CBHC provides a network of skilled therapeutic and community resources to meet the behavioral health needs of all Colorado residents and their families so that all can have equal and full access to a quality of life. Throughout Colorado, thousands of individuals, once isolated and disabled by mental health and substance abuse problems, are now leading productive, satisfying lives.

[Healthier Colorado](#) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to raising the voices of Coloradans in the public policy process to improve the health of our state's residents. We believe that every Coloradan should have access to quality mental and behavioral health services that are affordable and integrated on equal footing with physical health within our health system. We pursue policy change on mental and behavioral health that improves Coloradans' quality of life, avoids premature death, and prevents adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

The people of Colorado are our constituency, and Healthier Colorado aims to make meaningful improvements throughout our state's diverse communities.

[Mental Health Colorado](#) is the state's leading advocate in promoting mental health, ending stigma, and ensuring equitable access to mental health and substance use services. Mental



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Health Colorado is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization and an affiliate of Mental Health America. Our efforts range from the Capitol to the classroom.

One Colorado is the state's leading advocacy organization dedicated to advancing equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Coloradans and their families. We effectively advocate for LGBTQ Coloradans and their families by lobbying the General Assembly, the executive branch, and local governments on issues like safe schools, transgender equality, relationship recognition, and LGBTQ health and human services.