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**NATIONWIDE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR COLORADO'S
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS**

**Study strengthens request for a 10% increase to address the community behavioral health workforce
crisis**

Denver, Colorado – March 1, 2019 – A nationwide study conducted by the National Council for Behavioral Health and the Cohen Veterans Network has found that Colorado **falls below the national average when it comes to state funding for mental health services**. The impact of low funding is so drastic that the Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) are facing a workforce shortage crisis.

The study reviewed four primary factors: funding, facilities, providers, and client satisfaction. Its findings ranked Colorado 20th in the nation for overall mental health care. However, Colorado was ranked 4th in the country when it came to client satisfaction based on the quality of care received.

What does this report mean in terms of Colorado's CMHCs?

- 1. Facilities** measures how many mental health facilities and number of patients are being served in a state. Colorado ranked below average on this index, indicating that there are not enough facilities to adequately care for the needs of patients in a timely manner.
- 2. Funding** measures the amount of federal and state resources that are dedicated to mental health funding. **If Colorado's statewide system of CMHCs were given adequate funding, then the gap in facilities and workforce challenges could be remedied.**
- 3. Satisfaction** measures the client's experience once they receive treatment. Colorado ranked well above the average on this index. The satisfaction rate within our state demonstrates the high-level of care and compassion that mental health professionals show to their patients.
- 4. Providers** measures the rate of health professional shortage areas (HPSAs). While Colorado ranks above the national average for providers, it is important to consider the rate of pay for those within our CMHCs, which are all private non-profit organizations.

The state's CMHCs are dedicated to providing the best services while, at the same time, are facing major workforce shortages due to the inability to compete with state mental health providers. For example, psychologists working for the state make, on average, \$98,938 compared to those within our CMHCs who make, on average, \$73,032. **This is a difference of 26% in compensation. This drastic difference makes it incredibly difficult for CMHCs to be competitive when recruiting and retaining workforce.**

Turnover rates for social workers/counselors at CMHCs are at 30% compared to that of state employees at 0% to 25%.

Even more alarming is the fact that over the past 20 years, community provider inflationary increases have fallen so far behind that providers have lost more than 35% of their spending power as compared to the inflation rate across our state. **Additionally, compared to state employee salary survey increases, community providers have lagged by almost 32%.**

Without adequate rate increases, providers in the safety-net system cannot possibly compete with the growing healthcare industry, especially at a time when Colorado communities are clamoring for more services by the very providers whose mission is to serve all Coloradans regardless of their socioeconomic status.

For this reason, the CMHCs, via the Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council (CBHC), are requesting a 10% increase (\$17,084,579) in behavioral health funding to go directly to salary increases for professionals working in community mental health centers. If this rate increase is granted, there will still be a large gap in pay between state employees and those in the non-profit sector, but it will be an excellent start in helping the community safety-net providers to offer competitive salaries to this critical sector of our health care system.

The full study is included for your review and more in-depth statewide statistics are available upon request.

ABOUT CBHC

Our 27-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 Crisis Service Organizations, and 4 Managed Services Organizations, as well as 2 specialty health clinics. Together, we strengthen Colorado communities by ensuring innovative care supporting the health, wellbeing, and safety of all Coloradans.

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