

Transforming Behavioral Health: An Overview of Colorado's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA)



This information is based on a concept of the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) as of September 2021. This BHA model will continue to evolve with additional feedback from stakeholders, direction from the Governor's Office, and through final authorization from the General Assembly through future legislation. Any resource implications will be considered as part of the annual budget process.

We are putting people first

As outlined in House Bill 21-1097, the creation of a Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) will result in a statewide vision, strategy and actions to ensure **Coloradans have access to behavioral health services**. It will be the lead entity, collaborating across state agencies, to ensure there is a **transparent and accountable system** in place that results in **better outcomes for Coloradans**.

Why do we need a BHA?

One million Coloradans are in need of behavioral health services. Based on the public testimonies from hundreds of people across the State, there are numerous barriers to behavioral healthcare. The current system is described by consumers as having inconsistent quality, cultural disparities, challenging access, poor accountability, unaffordable to many, disconnected and difficult to navigate.

The BHA represents one of Colorado's many steps towards **strategic investments in improving the behavioral health system in the state**. It will take time to address the myriad challenges in our current system; however, the BHA will be instrumental in achieving the vision to have a **comprehensive, equitable, accessible, affordable, and effective continuum of behavioral health services** that meets the needs of all Coloradans in the right place, at the right time, to achieve whole person health and wellbeing.



What do we envision the BHA will do for Colorado?

- Lead the **coordination of behavioral health efforts** across agencies by creating shared goals, improving collaboration, driving accountability and transparency for a person-centered, **outcome-oriented behavioral health system** for ALL Coloradans.
- Provide an opportunity to **streamline our overall system** so that we are smarter about investing our dollars and more responsive to the needs of Coloradans.
- Elevate the **voice of individuals and family members** with lived experience of behavioral health in Colorado.
- Improve **transparency, cross-sector data, and stronger accountability** of the system.
- Address **behavioral health disparities** with equity central to the mission of the BHA.
- **Problem solve** and implement solutions through **collaboration** and effective relationships.
- Engage the **entire behavioral health system, including the commercial system** from prevention to recovery and continue to shift intervention "upstream" to impact health early on.
- Enhance and focus on **whole person care** and improve the quality of care for complex populations.
- Strive to be a **diverse, inclusive and equitable** entity in vision, strategy and operations.

We Anticipate Collaboration Across All Payers, State Departments & Sectors

This work is only successful when we focus on coordinating care to treat the whole person. The BHA will build and sustain a behavioral health system that will work **across payers, state departments and sectors**. The BHA will partner with all Colorado state departments to ensure there is a collaborative and networked approach along the behavioral health continuum from **prevention to treatment and recovery**. A critical area of cross-agency collaboration will be the BHA relationship with Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) as the state Medicaid agency, and the Division of Insurance (DOI), as the regulator of private insurance. The BHA will also work with local governments, intermediaries, providers, and other key partners to generate solutions and build shared accountability for outcomes for Coloradans.

What is the recommended BHA model?

The recommended governance model of the BHA is based on statewide research and engagement and includes:

- BHA Commissioner, appointed by the Governor and a member of the Governor's cabinet
- BHA staff positions that will manage the core functions of the BHA
- Cabinet members and state leadership in branches of government, implementing behavioral health efforts reflective of the demographic and geographic populations of Colorado
- Advisory Council & Workgroups that support consumers and local and statewide stakeholders in providing guidance and direction to the BHA

Where will the BHA be housed?

C.R.S.27-60-201 (HB 21-1097) specifically states that on or before July 1, 2022, the BHA will be established within the Colorado Department of Human Services. As the BHA becomes fully operational, it will remain part of CDHS until a permanent location is determined by the General Assembly on or before November 1, 2024.

What happens now?

The plan for Implementation is underway and is expected to be a multi-year, phased project, including ongoing stakeholder engagement. An implementation plan to establish the BHA will be submitted to the General Assembly on or before November 1, 2021.

How did we get here?

Significant reform is happening in Colorado with the goal of making behavioral health care accessible, affordable and equitable for all Coloradans. Visit the links below for more information on Colorado's reform efforts to date.

- [BHA change management webpage](#)
- [BHA change management HMA project dashboard](#)
- [Behavioral Health Reform webpage](#)
- [Behavioral Health Reform Task Force's Blueprint for Reform](#)

Stay informed & involved

The State is committed to ensuring stakeholders are kept informed and involved in the implementation process. The BHA webpage will be consistently updated to keep Coloradans up to date on BHA activities. Bookmark this [page](#) and check back often!

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