



CBHC 2026 Policy Platform — Protecting the Programs and Services People Need to Thrive

As Colorado faces a structural budget shortfall and new federal cuts under H.R. 1, CBHC's 2026 Policy Platform focuses on protecting the behavioral health safety net—the programs and services that keep Coloradans healthy, stable, and connected to care. Protecting what works and preventing further erosion of coverage and access is our top priority.

Amid fiscal constraints, Colorado must reaffirm its commitment to priority behavioral health populations—individuals with the most intensive and complex care needs, many covered by Medicaid or uninsured. Funding for these populations must be protected and strengthened, not diverted toward lower-acuity or commercially reimbursed care.

As demand grows and budgets tighten, CBHC's 2026 priorities focus on stability, partnership, and access—advancing a sustainable behavioral health system that is predictable, accountable, and equitable across every Colorado community.

Improve Client Experience by Streamlining Systems and Strengthening Care Coordination

A fragmented system adds cost and confusion for clients and providers alike. CBHC is focused on simplifying processes, reducing redundancy, and ensuring that people can move seamlessly between levels of care.

CBHC is committed to advancing policies that:

- Expand access to qualified providers by requiring commercial insurers to credential and reimburse candidates for licensure.
- Reduce administrative barriers that delay care and increase provider burden, ensuring that documentation and approval processes are streamlined and clinically appropriate.
- Ensure Colorado's alignment with the ASAM 4th Edition guidelines supports program sustainability, reduces administrative burden, and minimizes negative impacts on client care and service expectations across communities.
- Ensure policies allow flexibility to maintain safe environments for staff and clients when managing high-risk situations, including the ability to triage and refer individuals to a higher level of care in coordination with the BHASO or RAE when needed.
- Enhance coordination and accountability across systems—including crisis, civil-commitment, justice, and hospital settings—to strengthen the continuum of care, reduce duplication, and close gaps between inpatient and community-based treatment.

Preserve Access to Critical Safety-Net Programs and Services

As budgets tighten, protecting Colorado's safety-net programs is essential to maintaining access for individuals who rely on public systems of care. CBHC's priorities aim to stabilize funding, preserve infrastructure, and strengthen accountability across the behavioral-health continuum.

CBHC is committed to advancing policies that:

- Pursue federal opportunities—including submission of a successful Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Demonstration application—to strengthen Colorado's safety-net system through predictable funding, improved accountability, and long-term sustainability.
- Support equitable implementation of Colorado's Rural Health Transformation Program to ensure that behavioral-health needs are fully reflected in funding priorities and distribution plans across rural and frontier communities.
- Ensure the Provider Stabilization Fund is fully disbursed and leveraged to maximize federal-match opportunities.

Protecting Health Coverage for Eligible Populations

Coverage continuity is the foundation of access to care. CBHC supports policies that keep Coloradans insured, reduce administrative churn, and ensure that new federal and state eligibility requirements do not create barriers for those most in need of behavioral health services.

CBHC is committed to advancing policies that:

- Minimize coverage loss ("churn") in Medicaid resulting from documentation barriers, frequent eligibility redeterminations, and work requirements—ensuring that appropriate exemptions are applied for individuals considered *medically frail*, including those with disabling mental disorders or substance use disorders as defined by federal guidance.
- Strengthen Colorado's Health Insurance Exchange to maintain access for low- and moderate-income Coloradans and protect coverage continuity for individuals transitioning between Medicaid and commercial insurance.
- Promote continuous coverage and early intervention as cost-effective strategies that reduce crisis utilization, prevent unnecessary hospitalization, and improve long-term recovery outcomes.

As Colorado confronts economic constraints and rising demand, CBHC's priorities remain rooted in stability, partnership, and compassion. By protecting programs that work, improving coordination across systems, and keeping care within reach for those who need it most, the state can sustain a behavioral-health system that supports the wellbeing of all Coloradans.

For more information, contact:

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