

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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National Report Could Help Improve Healthcare In Colorado *Mental Health System Hopes Report Will Spark Change*

DENVER – Colorado’s community mental health system embraces a new national report that calls for greater funding, integration, and prevention to improve mental health care across the nation. In fact, it hopes that Colorado can become a national role model for change.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) released its new report card that grades the states’ performance in this area. It ranked Colorado above the national average, but suggested several areas for improvement in every state. As the report suggests, we can’t afford to overlook the importance of mental health funding and integration across the nation.

Although the community mental health systems across Colorado are serving record numbers with fewer public resources, thousands of people still need help, but cannot get it. These unmet mental health needs are costing taxpayers in many ways across multiple systems, including costly encounters with courts, corrections, and emergency rooms.

“According to the report, Colorado serves two populations extremely well – the severely and persistently mentally ill adult and the emotionally disturbed child,” said George DelGrosso, Executive Director of the Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council. “Those groups often receive Medicaid and state General Fund money. For many others, there’s little to no help available, especially for those without health insurance.”

Our veterans and many others also are underserved due to system fragmentation. For these families and thousands of others, we need to integrate mental health, substance abuse, and medical services for better access, outcomes, and efficiency. Coupled with an emphasis on prevention, early intervention, and more educational efforts we can work more effectively with the state and our communities to serve even more of our friends, families and co-workers.

“If we hope to serve the unmet mental health needs in Colorado, we must address this serious health concern sooner rather than later,” DelGrosso explained. “The evidence in NAMI’s report card emphasizes the importance of state and federal funding for community mental health services. It’s an investment that pays for itself in many ways. Colorado can become a role model for national change.”

CBHC is a nonprofit membership organization that represents Colorado's statewide network of community behavioral healthcare providers (including 17 community mental health centers, two specialty clinics, and five behavioral health organizations). Members contract with the State of Colorado and others to provide comprehensive, community-based behavioral and psychiatric services to more than 90,000 people across the state. CBHC members provide a network of skilled therapeutic and community resources to meet the mental health need of individuals and families. Thousands of people, once isolated and disabled by mental illness, are now leading productive and satisfying lives thanks to Colorado's award-winning community mental health system. For more information, visit www.cbhc.org.

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