

Steps to Health and Justice

Colorado's Plan to Improve Behavioral Health Outcomes and Reduce Reliance on the Criminal Justice System

Colorado faces three major challenges with behavioral health and the justice system: stigma, lack of access to care, and avoidable incarceration.

Jails and prisons have become one of the largest institutions for providing behavioral health services in the state, and people with mental health and substance use conditions are not receiving the treatment they need.

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Our Vision

Contribute to Colorado's effort to be the healthiest state by achieving sustainable systems and strategies that reduce and prevent incarceration and justice-involvement by supporting positive behavioral health outcomes, promoting public safety, optimizing taxpayer dollars, and improving lives.

Our Strategic Goals & Actions

Goal #1: Normalize Behavioral Health Conditions so that stigma is no longer a barrier to support, safety, and treatment.

Goal #2: Ensure equitable access to high quality behavioral health support and treatment in an efficient and timely manner.

Goal #3: Divert and deflect people with Behavioral Health Conditions from inappropriate justice-involvement and avoidable incarceration while balancing public safety through appropriate supports, interventions, and treatment.

Action #1: Improve data systems in order to better match populations to interventions to better outcomes.

Action #2: Improve collaboration and coordination to promote cooperative solutions among executive branch agencies, counties, judicial districts, municipalities, behavioral health systems, and service providers.

Our Future Budget Priorities

- Deploy evidence-based best practices
- Dismantle silos across systems
- Scale innovative and community-based initiatives
- Align budgets
- Establish specific mental health and pro-social behavior health performance outcomes
- Expand the usage of peer-to-peer programming
- Adopt 2Gen approaches
- Expand the number of beds available for mental health and substance use services
- Expand jail-based services that are high-quality and person-centric
- Improve data quality and sharing between jurisdictions and providers
- Invest in new technologies that modernize systems
- Further other supports for social determinants like housing, employment, education, and economic opportunity.

Goal #1: Normalize Behavioral Health Conditions so that stigma is no longer a barrier to support, safety, and treatment

<i>Sub-Goals</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
Support, educate, and train public safety decision-makers so that they consider the Behavioral Health Condition(s), the severity of the crime, and achieving the best outcomes for the individual and the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase training and education opportunities between intervening professionals and consumers • Increase Justice Coordinating Committees around Colorado, increasing opportunities for collaboration between intervening professionals
Support, educate, and train health care providers and policy makers in developing empathy and understanding of behavioral health and justice-involvement to achieve better outcomes for the individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase training and education opportunities for health care providers about the impact of justice-involvement and the justice system • Increase training and education opportunities for policy makers about the impacts of justice-involvement and Behavioral Health Conditions
Support and educate the public in developing empathy and understanding for individuals with justice-involvement and Behavioral Health Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deploy public awareness campaigns that destigmatize Behavioral Health Conditions and justice-involvement • Promote the usage of person-first language

Goal #2: Ensure equitable access to high quality behavioral health support and treatment in an efficient and timely manner

<i>Sub-Goals</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
Improve behavioral health outcomes using high quality and evidence-based support and treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement evidence-based behavioral health programming that improves long term health and well-being • Conduct ongoing evaluations of programs to ensure fidelity to evidence-based models and programming
Coordinate state agencies, county administrators, and community partners in order to execute an efficient delivery system that ensures timely and equitable access to services and aligns funding streams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize behavioral health funding across the state to prioritize outcomes and service delivery systems that support the needs of local populations and unique community needs • Create care transition processes between justice facilities and community providers that ensure timely access to care

Goal #3: Divert and deflect people with Behavioral Health Conditions from inappropriate justice-involvement and avoidable incarceration while balancing public safety through appropriate supports, interventions, and treatment

<i>Sub-Goals</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
Optimize points of service for people in behavioral health crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce reliance on emergency departments and acute care services for people in behavioral health crisis • Increase capacity and utilization of community-based behavioral health and crisis services
Focus on upstream interventions and make investments in systems that reduce reliance on correctional facilities for adults and juveniles with Behavioral Health Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce Colorado prison, jail, detention, and commitment admissions and lengths of stay of those with mental health and substance use conditions • Reduce recidivism from Colorado Department of Corrections and Division of Youth Services of those with Behavioral Health Conditions