

VOTE YES ON SB-195

Make Our Behavioral Health System Accountable for Colorado Children, Youth, and Families

*Sen. Rhonda Fields (D) and Bob Gardner (R)
Reps. Tracy Kraft-Tharp (D) and Lois Landgraf (R)*

Colorado is in a state of urgency for child and youth behavioral health:

- In 2017, suicide was the leading cause of death for children ages 10-24 in Colorado.
- In 2017, 31.4% of Colorado youth reported feeling sad for two or more weeks in the past twelve months.
- Childhood and adolescence are critical periods of risk for the onset of a mental health disorder. Nationally, half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 and three quarters begin by age 24.

Problem: In Colorado, children and youth with behavioral health needs miss early intervention services, receive duplicated support, and need more costly treatments in the long run as a result of fragmentation of child and youth behavioral health services across the state and local governments. Key programs that could better serve children and youth of all ages and needs are either not present in Colorado or lack the needed coordination, accountability, and flexibility to most effectively serve our state's young people.

Solution: Colorado needs a behavioral health system that is accountable for Colorado children, youth, and families. Senate Bill 195 would move forward a set of programs to better identify child and youth behavioral health needs early in life, implement comprehensive "wraparound" care coordination services to get kids the right care at the right time, and start to build out ways to blend funding across agencies to more comprehensively support behavioral health needs.

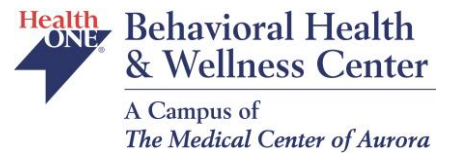
More specifically, Senate Bill 195 would:

- **Standardize screening and assessments to identify potential behavioral health concerns earlier in life, so that children and youth can enjoy better long-term health outcomes.** Colorado currently does not have this standardized approach to screening and assessment, which can lead to missed early identification and referral services.
- **Implement cost-effective, "Wraparound" services for eligible children.** Wraparound is a structured approach to service planning and care coordination for individuals with complex needs. Investment in this model *results in per capita cost savings* through reduced use of expensive facility-based care and can lower the number of out-of-home placements.
- **Resolve the challenges of a fragmented behavioral health delivery system by designing an integrated funding pilot to improve access to services.** State agencies, in partnership with stakeholders, would develop a test model for blending and braiding funding *between local governments and state agencies* that can, in future years, be centralized across system structures for children and youth served by multiple systems.

In concert with forthcoming executive action from the Governor and the Colorado Department of Human Services, these policies will help drive consistency, alignment, and integration across entities, while preserving existing collaborative behavioral health efforts and upholding local authority and customization. **This combined approach can deliver better outcomes and cost savings for taxpayers. Please vote YES on SB-195!**

*Questions or need more information?
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Supporters



Family Agency Collaborative/
Colorado Cultural Consortium