



April 11, 2022

Honorable U.S. Congressman Jason Crow
1229 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Crow:

On behalf of Colorado Hospital Association (CHA), I write to express support for the community project funding request from Children's Hospital Colorado's (Children's Colorado) for the **Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative**.

CHA is the leading voice of the Colorado hospital and health system community. Representing more than 100 hospitals and health systems throughout the state, CHA serves as a trusted, credible, and reliable resource on health issues, hospital data and trends for its members, media, policymakers, and the general public. Through CHA, Colorado's hospitals and health systems work together in their shared commitment to improve health and health care in Colorado.

Child and youth mental health needs in Colorado have reached a crisis point. Across the Children's Hospital Colorado pediatric system, emergency visits for a mental health crisis are up 73% over the same time period two years ago. This proposal will infuse critically needed funding to help recruit and retain behavioral health clinicians to be able to expand access to care across outpatient, inpatient and emergency settings. Approval of this behavioral health workforce community project funding request would enhance Children's Colorado's ability to quickly expand access to culturally responsive child and youth mental health services as well as the provision of high-quality clinical experiences for unlicensed behavioral health providers who are in the process of securing state licensure.

Children's Colorado is an anchor in the Aurora community and is increasingly changing the way pediatric health care delivery works, through investments in clinical care, education, research and the social determinants of health. Children's Colorado is a longstanding leader in delivering high-quality pediatric behavioral health care services in the state, and we are confident in their stewardship of federal funds to help support initial administrative costs in order to implement and grow these programs sustainably into the future. CHA fully supports this request, and we urge you to give it full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

Katherine Mulready
Senior Vice President & Chief Strategy Officer



*The Federation of Families
for Children's Mental Health*

~
Colorado Chapter

April 12, 2022

Congressman Jason Crow
1229 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Crow:

On behalf of the Federation of Children's Mental Health – Colorado Chapter, we would like to offer our support for the congressionally directed spending program proposal submitted by Children's Hospital Colorado. As a Family-Run organization that represents families and caregivers of children with mental health issues, we support efforts to expand access to more mental health providers and to prioritize family-centered care including the supports that come with culturally and linguistically responsive care.

The Federation of Families helps families and their children to navigate through the complicated mental health system in Colorado through education, support, advocacy and mental health promotion. At the Federation, we are acutely aware of the child and youth mental health crisis that is gripping countless communities and families across our state.

We support systemic efforts that invest in mental health workforce pathway models that can meet both immediate and long-term goals, as proposed in the Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative. This proposal will help incentivize and recruit bilingual mental health trainees and clinicians pursuing licensure so that they are equipped with the evidence-based practices necessary to support children, youth and families.

It is imperative that mental health clinicians provide inclusive, culturally appropriate and high-quality care. Expanding access points to bilingual providers as well as more social workers and professional counselors will not only ensure that thousands of patients per year can have their mental health needs met but we also believe this workforce proposal will embed critical training, supervision and family-centered components that can contribute to improved behavioral health outcomes among children and youth.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We appreciate the opportunity to provide this letter of support and we urge you to give the Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/

Marjorie Grimsley
Interim Executive Director
303 455-5928 (Home Office)
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April 7, 2022

Dear Congressman Crow:

On behalf of the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, and the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, we are pleased to support Children's Hospital Colorado's (Children's Colorado) community project funding request for the **Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative**.

We are proud to partner with Children's Colorado to change the way pediatric health care delivery works, through clinical care, education, research, and the social determinants of health. Approval of this critically needed child and youth mental health workforce community project funding request would enhance Children's Colorado's ability to strengthen access to child and youth behavioral health services by expanding the provision of culturally responsive care through the expansion of a bilingual stipend program and by providing high-quality clinical experience and training for unlicensed psychotherapists who are in the process of securing state licensure.

Over one in three Colorado youth report feeling sad or hopeless for two or more weeks and suicide is a leading cause of death among young people ages 10-24. In May 2021, Children's Colorado announced a state of emergency for youth mental health and several months later, the Children's Hospital Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists declared a national emergency for children's mental health. It is evident that there are critical and immediate behavioral health workforce needs that must be bolstered to meet the tremendous demand for behavioral health needs among young people. The Child and Youth Mental Health Workforce Pathway Initiative will serve a cross-functional purpose by increasing both recruitment and retention of mental health practitioners to serve children, youth, and families.

The mission of the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus is to lead with innovation, agility, and excellence, so that we can improve humanity by preventing illness, saving lives, educating health professionals and scientists, advancing science, and serving our communities. We value providing the finest team-based healthcare, science, and education in the world by being collaborative architects that respond quickly to the changing needs of society and engage and honor the community around us through lenses of diversity, equity, and inclusivity. Children's Colorado has a long-standing reputation for responding to the needs of our local, regional, and national needs and engaging with the communities served. This project aligns with those priorities, and we are proud to partner with Children's Colorado to collaborate on this proposal.

The University of Colorado School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry on the Anschutz Medical Campus are confident that Children's Colorado has the proven ability to effectively lead and manage project implementation and fiscal oversight. We fully support this request and urge you to give it full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,



C. Neill Epperson, M.D.

Robert Freedman Endowed Professor and Chair | Department of Psychiatry
Professor | Department of Family Medicine
Executive Director | Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Depression Center
University of Colorado School of Medicine | Anschutz Medical Campus
1890 North Revere Court, Rm 4014 | Aurora, Colorado | 80045
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April 8, 2022

Congressman Jason Crow
1229 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Crow:

On behalf of Mental Health Colorado, I am writing to offer support for the Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative, a community project funding request submitted by Children's Hospital Colorado. Mental Health Colorado is a statewide advocacy organization that works on behalf of every Coloradan who experiences a mental health or substance use condition each year. We engage policymakers, providers, the public and the press to promote mental well-being, ensure equitable access to mental health and substance use care, and end discrimination.

As you are likely aware, Colorado is facing workforce shortages and long waits for kids in need of mental health services. Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that between March and October 2020, emergency department visits for mental health emergencies rose by 24% for children ages 5-11 years and 31% for children ages 12-17 years. In addition, emergency department visits for suspected suicide attempts increased nearly 51% among girls ages 12-17 years in early 2021 compared to the same period in 2019. The experience is similar in Colorado, where providers like Children's Hospital Colorado have experienced a 73% increase in patients seeking emergency mental health services between 2019 and 2021. Addressing provider shortages in outpatient settings can support more accessible care and earlier interventions, potentially reducing the demands on emergency and crisis services.

The Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative proposal will help expand access to multidisciplinary teams that are personalized to meet the needs of children, youth and their families. It is critical for mental health services to be culturally appropriate, offered in multiple languages and delivered by a diverse mental health workforce. In addition to the benefits of recruiting and retaining bilingual mental health providers, more children, youth and families will receive family-centered care. In addition, social workers and counselors are critical members of the healthcare team that can provide not only mental health supports to the family, but they are also highly knowledgeable in facilitating referrals to appropriate community-based services and programs. Investing in an expansion of these roles is critical for meeting the needs of children, youth and families.

As partners in responding to the current challenges in the mental health system in Colorado, we offer our support of the Children's Hospital Colorado workforce pathway proposal, and we urge your fair consideration. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vincent Atchity", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end.

Vincent Atchity
President & CEO



Colorado Alliance for School Health

April 11, 2022

Congressman Jason Crow
1229 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative

Dear Congressman Crow:

On behalf of the Colorado Alliance for School Health, we offer our support for the congressionally directed spending program proposal submitted by Children's Hospital Colorado and the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

The Colorado Alliance for School Health (Alliance) aims to transform how healthcare and education partners collaborate to support physical and behavioral health for youth and young people across Colorado. We believe that schools and the education system are an integral part of behavioral health prevention and intervention.

The Alliance has spent the past two years listening to students, staff, and education leaders about what they need. The most common theme we have heard centers on the lack of behavioral health workforce to fill existing needs. The Alliance supports systemic efforts, such as the Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative, that will enhance the behavioral health workforce in Colorado.

Since our inception in 2016, the Alliance has consistently been advocating for more behavioral health resources in our communities, and for an equitable distribution of those resources. This initiative aims to achieve both. Most behavioral health professions require substantial post-graduate internships which can span several years and are a barrier for young professionals who cannot afford to work for free. The Pathway Program will help to provide paid internships for masters-level prepared clinicians which will incentivize more people to choose this profession. Additionally, the Bilingual Incentive Program will provide the ability for youth to receive behavioral health care in their primary language and solves an important access issue, affording more inclusive, culturally appropriate care.

The members of the Alliance thank you for your consideration of our comments. We urge you to support the Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative.

Respectfully,

Members of the Colorado Alliance for School Health

American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter
Colorado Association for School-Based Health Care
Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council
Colorado Children's Campaign
Every Child Pediatrics

coallianceforschoolhealth.org

13123 East 16th Avenue, Box 080 | Aurora, CO 80045

April 8, 2022

Congressman Jason Crow
1229 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Crow:

As parents and caregivers of young people with mental health needs, and as members of the Family Advisory Council for the Pediatric Mental Health Institute at Children's Hospital Colorado, we would like to offer our support for Children's Hospital Colorado's Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative proposal. At the core of our work on the Family Advisory Council, we work in partnership with the hospital leadership, healthcare providers and staff to enhance access to equitable, family-centered care.

According to the Substance Use Administration and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), advancing health equity involves ensuring that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible, including behavioral health. As part of delivering quality services, this also involves addressing social determinants, such as economic and housing stability, insurance status, proximity to services, and culturally responsive care – all of which have an impact on behavioral health outcomes.

Advocating for equitable care is a critical component of our role on the Family Advisory Council, as we speak up to enhance the patient-family experience at Children's Hospital Colorado. The Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative will honor the hospital's ongoing commitment to advance family-centered care by expanding access to bilingual mental health providers and growing the field of highly qualified social workers and counselors. These roles are vital in the delivery of behavioral health services for young people and will help strengthen the multidisciplinary approach to care management at Children's Hospital Colorado, while also ensuring quality, evidence-based training and clinical experiences for trainees.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this letter of support and we urge you to give the proposal your full and fair consideration.

Respectfully,

Bill Mowle, Parent Co-chair
Debra Paul, Parent Representative, Boulder
Meighen Lovelace, Parent Representative, Vail
Nakisha Grant-Perry, Aurora Parent Representative
Lauren Thrower, Parent Representative, CO Springs
Chad Pennick, Parent Representative, Denver

Julia Barnes, Faculty Co-chair, Aurora
Shelby Chapman, Director of Patient-Family Experience, Commerce City
Abby Grant, Patient Advocate, Denver
Samantha Read, Patient Relations-Operations Coordinator, Westminster



April 7, 2022

Honorable U.S. Congressman Jason Crow
1229 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Crow:

On behalf of Healthier Colorado, I am pleased to support the community project funding request from Children's Hospital Colorado's (Children's Colorado) for the Child and Youth Mental Health Workforce Pathway Initiative. Healthier Colorado is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that seeks to provide every Coloradan with the opportunity to live a healthier life through policy-oriented solutions.

As leaders in state health policy advocacy, we have proudly collaborated in recent years with Children's Hospital Colorado on solutions to respond to the state's youth mental health crisis, including efforts to address the critical mental health workforce shortages. Currently, there are 49 of 64 counties in Colorado without a child and adolescent psychiatrist. The Kaiser Family Foundation notes that only 35% of the need is currently being met in Colorado due to mental health professional shortages.

The Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative will serve as a career pathway for bilingual mental health providers across many disciplines including psychiatry, psychology, nursing and advanced practice professionals. The proposal will also equip unlicensed behavioral health clinicians, who are seeking licensure in social work and professional counseling, with the skills needed to use evidence-based therapeutic treatment with children and families. The goal of this proposal is to expand care and improve linguistic and cultural responsiveness in mental health services for children and families living in Aurora, Colorado and the broader metro area. Funding to support this recruitment and retention workforce program will also help foster more equitable and family-centered care for children and youth.

Children's Hospital Colorado is an anchor in the Aurora community and is increasingly changing the way pediatric health care delivery works, through partnerships in clinical care, education, research and the social determinants of health. I am confident in their stewardship of federal funds in this proposal to help support initial implementation costs and to be able to grow these programs sustainably into the future. We respectfully urge your full and fair consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Jake Williams
Executive Director

April 8, 2022

Congressman Jason Crow
1229 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Crow:

As members of the Pediatric Mental Health Institute Youth Action Board at Children's Hospital Colorado, we are excited to support the organization's Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative proposal to expand access to bilingual mental health providers and to grow the number of social workers and counselors in the health system.

Every year since 2013, up to 18 young people from across the Denver metro area have served on the Youth Action Board to raise awareness about and helped destigmatize mental health issues. The goal is to help engage the community and stakeholders in improving mental health services. Now more than ever, young people need to have access to family-centered and culturally responsive mental health services. Teens are still coping with the trauma and uncertainty from the past two years of the pandemic, and support from caregivers and mental health providers is greatly needed.

This proposal is relevant for young people because the Youth Action Board believes it is critical that mental health services are provided in their preferred language if English is not their primary language. This helps build trust and understanding between the young person and their provider. Currently, there are frequent and often lengthy wait times to see youth mental health providers across the metro-area so we are supportive of efforts to make sure that there are more social workers and clinicians working in youth mental health.

Thank you for considering our support for this proposal.

Sincerely,

Hadley Hageseth
Leah Goodman
Josh DuPree



Colorado Child & Adolescent Psychiatric Society

7555 W Amherst Ave #27723
Denver, CO 80227
303.692.8783
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April 8, 2022

Honorable U.S. Congressman Jason Crow
1229 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Crow:

On behalf of the Colorado Chapter of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (CCAPS), we are writing to offer support for the **Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative**, a community project funding request submitted by Children's Hospital Colorado. The goal of the proposal is to develop recruitment and retention pathways that can help expand access to highly trained pediatric mental health providers.

As you may recall, in the fall of 2021, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital Association declared a national emergency for children's mental health. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted physical isolation, ongoing uncertainty, fear and grief, contributing to two years of unprecedented demands for child and youth mental health care among pediatric providers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that between March and October 2020, emergency department visits for mental health emergencies rose by 24% for children ages 5-11 years and 31% for children ages 12-17 years. In addition, emergency department visits for suspected suicide attempts increased nearly 51% among girls ages 12-17 years in early 2021 compared to the same period in 2019.

The Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative proposal will help expand access to multidisciplinary teams that are personalized to meet the needs of children, youth and their families. It is critical for mental health services to be culturally appropriate, offered in multiple languages and delivered by a diverse mental health workforce. In addition to the benefits of recruiting and retaining bilingual mental health providers, more children, youth and families will receive optimal family-centered care. In addition, social workers and counselors are critical members of the healthcare team that can provide not only mental health supports to the family, but they are also highly knowledgeable in facilitating referrals to appropriate community-based services and programs. Investing in an expansion of these roles is critical for meeting the needs of children, youth and families.

As partners in responding to the children's mental health crisis, CCAPS fully supports the Children's Hospital Colorado proposal and we urge your full and fair consideration. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Beau Carubia, MD
President, Colorado Child & Adolescent Psychiatric Society

Colorado Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



April 12, 2022

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Honorable U.S. Congressman Jason Crow
1229 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Crow:

On behalf of the Colorado Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), I am writing to offer support for the Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative, a community project funding request submitted by Children's Hospital Colorado. The goal of the proposal is to develop recruitment and retention pathways that can help expand access to highly trained pediatric mental health providers.

In the fall of 2021, the national AAP, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists, and the Children's Hospital Association declared a national emergency for children's mental health. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted physical isolation, ongoing uncertainty, fear and grief, contributing to two years of unprecedented demands for child and youth mental health care among pediatric providers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that between March and October 2020, emergency department visits for mental health emergencies rose by 24% for children ages 5-11 years and 31% for children ages 12-17 years. In addition, emergency department visits for suspected suicide attempts increased nearly 51% among girls ages 12-17 years in early 2021 compared to the same period in 2019.

The Child and Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Pathway Initiative proposal will help expand access to multidisciplinary teams that are personalized to meet the needs of children, youth and their families. It is critical for mental health services to be culturally appropriate, offered in multiple languages and delivered by a diverse mental health workforce. In addition to the benefits of recruiting and retaining bilingual mental health providers, more children, youth and families will receive optimal family-centered care. In addition, social workers and counselors are critical members of the healthcare team that can provide not only mental health supports to the family, but they are also highly knowledgeable in facilitating referrals to appropriate community-based services and programs. Investing in an expansion of these roles is critical for meeting the needs of children, youth and families.

The Colorado Chapter of the AAP is a frequent partner with Children's Hospital Colorado on pediatric training, educational outreach and program development. We can attest to their standards and capabilities to manage this proposed program. Our organization fully supports this proposal, and we urge your full and fair consideration. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Edward C. (Ted) Maynard MD FAAP
Chapter President