



*for diverse, competent, and sustainable
Medicaid mental healthcare
combinebh.org*

December 15, 2021

The Honorable Julie McCluskie,
Chair Joint Budget Committee
200 East 14th Avenue, Third Floor Denver, CO 80203

CC : Elisabeth Arenales, Senior Policy Advisor at Office of Governor Jared Polis
Tracy Johnson & Jo Donlin, HCPF
Summer Gathercole, BHA
JBC members
Eric Kurtz, JBC staff

Dear Representative Chairwoman McCluskie,:

COMBINE is a small donor political committee, currently representing over 500 Medicaid mental healthcare providers and clinic directors statewide, organized to support providers contracted by Regional Accountability Entities (RAEs; Anthem, United Healthcare, and Colorado Access) to deliver care. We are solo providers, small clinics, and OBH licensed community mental health clinics, referred to as the IPN, the independent provider network.

In advance of the JBC HCPF hearing on December 16, 2021, we are concerned about a December 15 statement by HCPF Executive Kim Bimistefer regarding provider census and we'd like the committee to know our concern. We have repeatedly expressed concern that the Network Adequacy Reports are inadequate, inaccurate, and late. No legislator should be satisfied with the situation where the simplest statistic, the number of providers, isn't known.

Here's is the statement released by HCPF in "Provider Newsletter" :

----- Forwarded message -----
From: Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing <hcpf_comms@state.co.us>
Date: Wed, Dec 15, 2021 at 9:35 AM
Subject: Provider Association Newsletter December 2021
To: <andrewroselpc@boulderemotionalwellness.org>



Here's text from the Newsletter:

*A Message from the Executive Director
Behavioral Health Transformation*

...

Recent funding increases were largely used to expand behavioral health care access and reimbursements - both critical to meeting the rising demand for behavioral health services. In fact, the Health First Colorado network of behavioral health providers has grown by 18%, or more than 1,500 providers over the last 18 months. (Thank you, RAEs, for this partnership.)

...

Here is another statement by HCPF, reported¹ on 11/29/21 by Jennifer Brown of the Colorado Sun, from Marc Williams, HCPF department spokesperson.

"While some providers are ending their Medicaid contracts this fall, the number of behavioral health providers who take Medicaid has grown statewide in the last year, Williams said. Practitioners in the network reached 8,371 in June, compared with 6,029 in April 2020, he said."

So what are we to believe? Mr Williams presents us with a 39% increase, from 6,029 to 8,371, not the 18% increase reported by Ms. Bimistefer.

Further, using Ms. Bimistefer's statistics, we have a discrepancy that demands explanation.

Here's the math, please bear with the algebra:

¹ Retrieved December 15, 2021 from <https://coloradosun.com/2021/11/29/medicaid-mental-health-claims/>



let x = previous size of provider network. HCPF is saying adding 1500 people increased the network 18%. Therefore...

$x(1.18) = x+1500$ (right? x grew by 18% because 1500 people joined). so...

$$1.18x - x = 1500$$

$$.18x = 1500$$

$$x = 1500/.18$$

So $x = 8,333$ Were there 8,333 providers before and now there are 9,833? Contrast these values with what Marc Williams told Jennifer Brown, 6,029 to 8,371. Not 8,333 to 9,833.

So which is it? If HCPF cannot keep track of the most basic network adequacy statistic, how are they keeping track of the numerator and denominator of the Medical Loss Ratio and other important indicators?

We request that the JBC inquire of HCPF how it tracks the number of providers working for Centers and for non-Center situations.

If you require further information or have additional questions, please contact the committee's Advocacy Director, Andrew Rose, at andy@combinebh.org or 303 225 2708 x100.

In regards,

Lindsay Millspaugh MSW LCSW
Director, Therapist, Higher Sights Counseling
Denver, CO
HigherSightsCounseling.com

Lexi Ellis, MA, LPC
Owner and Therapist, Into Freedom Counseling LLC
Colorado Springs, CO



Kelly Bianucci
Operating Chair
The Child and Family Therapy Center of Denver
Serving the 8-County Denver Metropolitan Area

Alyssa Wermers, LCSW, RPT-S
Owner/Therapist, Alyssa Wermers LCSW PLLC
Longmont, CO

Rachel Regina, LCSW
Owner/Therapist, Empowered Minds
Denver, CO

Andrew Rose LPC
Director, Boulder Emotional Wellness

Niki Saigeon, LCSW
Owner/Provider, Art of Healing, LLC
Colorado Springs, CO

Ari Hoffman MA, LPC
Director, Integrated Care Institute
We provide mental health services for patients, including Medicaid recipients, from South Denver all the way to Brighton

Stephanie Small, LCSW
Owner, Stephanie Small Inc.
Boulder, CO

Faith Halverson-Ramos, MA, LPC, MT-BC
Owner and Therapist at SoundWell Music Therapy, PLLC
Longmont, CO

Li Brookens, LCSW, CGP, WPATH GEI SOC7 Certified Member
Owner, Umbrella Collective Inc
Boulder, CO

Teresa Powers, MS, LPC, RPT, ACS
Owner and Therapist, Therapy EmPowers, LLC
Englewood, CO



Allison Bratsch, LPC, ACS
Owner, Center for Resilience Strategies, Denver, CO

reaca pearl, ma lpc
Healing Through Connection
Gilpin County

Sarah Rose, LPC
Step Into Counseling
Boulder County and telehealth

Toni Huntington, BA
Peer Specialist
Denver County

Judith Gainer, LPC
Private Practice
Colorado Springs CO
El Paso County

Amy Winchester, LPC, ACS
Clinical Supervisor
Boulder Emotional Wellness
Boulder County

Whitney Lockhart, LPC
Empowerment Therapy Services
Arvada, CO

C. Blair Skinner, LMFT
Owner/Director/Therapist
Early Childhood Wellness Place
Broomfield

