

Mission

Mental Health America of Colorado is the recognized leader, collaborating to promote mental health, expand access to services and transform systems of healthcare.

Vision

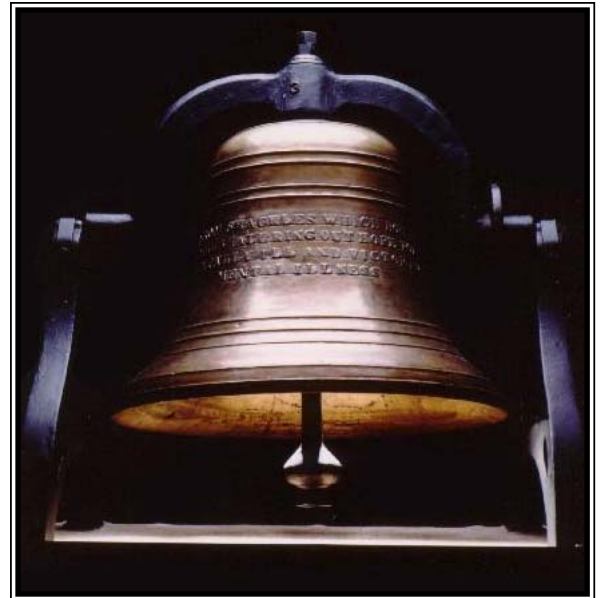
We envision a healthy Colorado free of stigma and discrimination where every person has full access to high quality services for all mental health and substance abuse conditions.

History

Mental Health America of Colorado (MHAC), established in 1953, is Colorado's leading nonprofit educator and advocate working to eliminate the stigma of mental illnesses and increase access to mental health treatment.

MHAC is the Colorado affiliate of Mental Health America, located in Alexandria, Virginia. Created in 1909, Mental Health America is the oldest and largest nonprofit in the nation addressing mental health needs and issues.

The Mental Health Bell, symbolized in our logo, was cast in 1953, when Mental Health America issued a call to asylums across the country for their discarded chains and shackles. They melted down these inhumane bindings and recast them into a sign of hope. The 300-pound Bell serves as a powerful reminder that the invisible chains of misunderstanding and discrimination continue to bind people with mental illnesses. Today, the Mental Health Bell rings out hope for improving mental health and achieving recovery from mental illnesses.



The inscription on the Bell reads:

***“Cast from shackles which bound them,
this bell shall ring out hope for the
mentally ill and victory over mental illness.”***

Prevention

Prevention is a core value of all our education, outreach and advocacy work. Mental health conditions do not discriminate. One in five people will be affected by a mental health issue this year. We believe in preventing mental health conditions before they have a lasting impact on the quality of life of Coloradans.

Education

Our education programs provide Coloradans with the opportunity to understand more about the challenges of mental health conditions and empower people to create journeys of recovery.

Our programs are inclusive, diverse and extend across the state. The education programs we provide help people discover a way forward, increase understanding of the struggles that our neighbors might be facing and promote health and wellness.

Outreach

Since 1986, we have recruited volunteer mental health professionals through the Pro Bono Outreach Program to provide free mental health services to low-income and uninsured individuals in the Denver metro area. In 2010, we expanded our services to low-income and uninsured or under-insured individuals and families. The Counseling & Referral Solutions Program screens and refers potential clients to free mental health services from Pro Bono volunteers or to more appropriate community resources that will help meet their needs.

Advocacy

Our advocacy and grassroots efforts bring people together who share a common concern for the quality of mental health care in Colorado. Our collective experiences identify the real issues faced by people living with mental health conditions. We promote effective solutions and positive, lasting change at all policy levels.

These programs make a very real difference to health care policies adopted by state government, to workplace attitudes and procedures and to the individuals in our state who struggle with mental health conditions.



Prevention

MHAC:

- Provided 683 mental health screenings for depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder and posttraumatic stress disorder.
- Distributed the *Preventing Suicide in Colorado Progress Achieved and Goals for the Future* report at five statewide community events, resulting in media and public awareness about the state of suicide prevention in Colorado.

Education

Over 300 people attended Speakers Bureau presentations, which educated business leaders, parents, teachers and the general public about mental health and wellness.

Outreach

Pro Bono Outreach Volunteers provided 7,451 client hours of mental health services and consultation resulting in over \$745,100 dollars in free services.

Nearly 1,300 families, children, homeless and elderly persons received free mental health services through the Pro Bono Outreach Program.

Advocacy

MHAC:

- Helped over 3,000 consumers, family members and mental health professionals access information about mental health services in person over the phone or through the website.
- Educated 270 individuals at Legislative Education & Advocacy Day, empowering them to be effective advocates for mental health policy.
- Motivated 1,900 people to be actively involved in policies that impact mental health issues.

Valuable services Invaluable results

“We have a resident in our program who had just entered housing and was dealing with symptoms of depression and coping with a desire to walk away from his apartment to become homeless again.

We connected him to one of our MHAC volunteers who has been able to offer him support, education, and additional coping strategies that are helping ease his transition from homelessness into housing.”

~ Pro Bono Host Site Liaison

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