Colorado awarded $2 million grant for behavioral health crisis services during COVID-19

April 21, 2020 (DENVER) — The Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) has received a $2 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to shore up behavioral health crisis services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The money is part of SAMHSA's allocation from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.

The COVID-19 public health emergency has restricted or modified in-person behavioral health services as providers accommodate federal and state public health measures. With this grant, OBH will help connect Coloradans affected by COVID-19 with proper behavioral health care. This includes children, adolescents and adults who have serious emotional disturbances, serious mental illness, and substance use disorders. OBH applied for the grant on April 10 and received the maximum award amount for states.

“With this funding boost, we want individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 to have behavioral health care available to them,” said OBH Director Robert Werthwein. “We are grateful for SAMHSA’s quick work on this grant, which will allow us to implement our plan as soon as possible and expand access to treatment during these difficult times.”

With the $2 million, OBH will increase bed capacity and coordinate transportation for COVID-positive patients stepping down from medical settings to inpatient or residential-level behavioral health services. Locations for the beds will be finalized in the next few weeks, with beds available as early as this spring. Additionally, OBH will work with existing Colorado programs to increase peer support for frontline health care workers.

The funding comes as more Coloradans are tapping into Colorado Crisis Services (https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__colorado.us3.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3D44d99e91254ef7d2bb23b5e03-26id-3D0ef7a78b5e-26e-3Db175b66bed&d=DwMFaQ&c=sdnEM9SRGFuMt5z5w3AhsPNahmNicq64TgF1JwNR0cs&r=j4g_RNv-IeGBxGT5Or1_tcUoSVZbuyBhKv3YBU19fjQ&m=PSG-lAd3WHBsR2ZwMmbAJE__DfetAynZoPuz6EULw1g&s=HhxsZcM6U7xdpZ0Uc9VWxdOPxsfKgqlFIglHUYUXUqA&e=). The hotline has experienced record highs for services this spring, with last month seeing a nearly 50% increase in calls and texts compared to March 2019. So far crisis line staff estimate more than 60% of calls this month relate to COVID-19 concerns. Colorado Crisis Services also includes crisis walk-in centers, crisis stabilization units, mobile units and respite providers throughout the state.

Visit this webpage (https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__colorado.us3.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3D44d99e91254ef7d2bb23b5e03-26id-3D2efd7212a4-26e-3Db175b66bed&d=DwMFaQ&c=sdnEM9SRGFuMt5z5w3AhsPNahmNicq64TgF1JwNR0cs&r=j4g_RNv-IeGBxGT5Or1_tcUoSVZbuyBhKv3YBU19fjQ&m=PSG-lAd3WHBsR2ZwMmbAJE__DfetAynZoPuz6EULw1g&s=xpaX62VNlWRAzfFFBiXJdjEA9AhCeGxjPT-i5tST1v4&e=) for more information on OBH’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Read OBH's grant proposal here (https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__colorado.us3.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3D44d99e91254ef7d2bb23b5e03-26id-3Ddccdd1cdb3-26e-3Db175b66bed&d=DwMFaQ&c=sdnEM9SRGFuMt5z5w3AhsPNahmNicq64TgF1JwNR0cs&r=j4g_RNv-IeGBxGT5Or1_tcUoSVZbuyBhKv3YBU19fjQ&m=PSG-lAd3WHBsR2ZwMmbAJE__DfetAynZoPuz6EULw1g&s=dbhjTB-MyUwjpMH04ODXOfwf-wJ-uMN-JAD1K8C1iqk&e=).

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Recent

Colorado families with school-aged kids to again receive P-EBT food benefits (/press-release/colorado-families-with-school-aged-kids-to-again-receive-p-ebt-food-benefits)

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Press Release

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Coloradans who receive additional food assistance through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits through the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 will see those…

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Press Release

Colorado begins planning for 9-8-8 suicide prevention number (/press-release/colorado-begins-planning-for-9-8-8-suicide-prevention-number)

CDHS's Office of Behavioral Health is planning for the rollout of 9-8-8, a new, nationwide, three-digit phone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline that will launch by the summer of…

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Press Release

The Colorado Department of Human Services connects people with assistance, resources and support for living independently in our state. Colorado has a state-supervised and county-administered human services system. Under this system, county departments are the main provider of direct services to Colorado's families, children and adults. For more information about our organization, visit the CDHS organizational structure page (/about-cdhs/organizational-structure).

Our mission

Together, we empower Coloradans to thrive.

Our vision

To serve Coloradans through bold and innovative health and human services.

Our values

People-first approach. Balance. Accountability. Transparency. Ethical. Collaboration.

Our motto

We're the people who help people.

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