LETTER FROM THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Friends,

In early 2021, I had the incredible opportunity to step into the role of interim executive director at Partners for Children’s Mental Health (PCMH).

It has been an honor to work alongside such passionate and dedicated team members and partners during what was, undoubtedly, a difficult year. The fallout from the pandemic only worsened Colorado’s youth mental health crisis, and we saw an alarming rise in youth struggling with mental health issues and attempting suicide. The headlines were harrowing, but our communities continued to embrace resiliency and hope.

At PCMH, we know our mission is more critical today than ever before. We are experiencing a transformational moment that can be leveraged to positively shape the future of kids in the Rocky Mountain West.

I am proud of all that we have been able to accomplish together in 2021 and am thrilled to present you with PCMH’s first-ever annual report. This milestone alone highlights to me how far we’ve come — and how far we have to go.

As we look to the new year, we are well prepared to build on our successes. I look forward to continuing to create change, together.

Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to improving the lives of Colorado children, youth, and families.

Heidi Baskfield
Interim Executive Director, PCMH
Suicide is the #1 cause of death among Colorado youth ages 10-19 and #2 among Colorado youth ages 20-24.

LGBTQ youth are 4x more likely to attempt suicide than their peers.

The suicide rate among Colorado youth has been increasing.

27% of Colorado students do not have an adult they can go to for help with a serious problem.

In 2021, half of CO children in pediatric ED waiting rooms were experiencing a mental health crisis.

Data sources: CDC WISQARS, Healthy Kids Colorado, The Trevor Project.
Safe school environments and strong student-adult relationships can reduce youth suicide risk.

Youth who have access to culturally competent & evidence-based care are less likely to attempt or die by suicide.

LGBTQ youth in affirming schools had nearly 40% lower odds of attempting suicide compared to LGBTQ youth in non-affirming schools.
CHANGE must happen. That’s why Partners for Children’s Mental Health (PCMH) was created. PCMH operates as a cross-system resource, training, evaluation, and implementation hub in order to increase access to and quality of youth mental health services in Colorado.

**Our Vision**
A future where all children and youth have the mental health care and support they need to thrive.

**Our Mission**
Bring communities together to build a mental health system that better serves all children, youth, and families.

**OUR APPROACH TO CHANGE**

At a statewide level, PCMH is focused on:
- Enabling lasting partnerships and improving coordination across the system
- Gathering and sharing critical data that can inform practice and policy efforts
- Creating consistency and standardization of care models to help providers and families.

In local Colorado communities, PCMH is working to:
- Increase the availability of evidence-based practices
- Improve mental health equity — particularly in rural and low-resourced areas
- Implement suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention initiatives in schools and primary care.
FIVE CORE FUNCTIONS

Engagement & Collaboration
Developing key partnerships and a unified vision around children’s mental health.

Workforce Development
Connecting the workforce to impactful training and consultation to transform the way people work with youth.

Research & Evaluation
Analyzing data to inform practice and policy. Evaluating strengths and needs, implementation processes, and mental health outcomes.

Implementation Support
Providing consultation on implementation and sustainability of evidence-based practices.

Policy & Finance
Influencing children’s mental health initiatives, policy, and legislation.
Key Initiatives

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, 2021 was our most impactful year yet.

**Suicide prevention in primary care**
Offering training and implementation support to help primary care clinics implement a youth suicide prevention care pathway and deliver suicide safer care.

**Suicide safe environments in schools**
Taking a comprehensive approach through training, workshops, and engagement opportunities to help school staff meet the mental health needs of students.

**Gatekeeper training in communities**
Providing suicide prevention trainings in communities across Colorado, aiming to build awareness and reduce stigma.

**High-quality mental health care**
Improving the quality, efficiency, and outcomes of children's mental health services through training on the PracticeWise Managing & Adapting Practice (MAP) system for behavioral health clinicians, particularly in rural and frontier areas.

**Policy and advocacy**
Advocating for and supporting implementation of legislation that improves access to high-quality mental health services for Colorado youth.

**Authentic youth engagement**
Incorporating youth voice as we craft and scale key initiatives, while also building the knowledge and confidence of youth to participate in and lead systems-change efforts.
Key Results

51 trainings held
for 793 Colorado professionals, including primary care providers, behavioral health clinicians, school staff, and community members

9 transformative
mental health bills signed into state law

264 resources
on youth mental health shared through our monthly newsletter

2 youth leaders hired
to lead PCMH’s youth advisory council in its inaugural year

10 meetings
with Behavioral Health Transformational Task Force members to advocate that kids get their fair share of COVID-19 relief funding
OUR REACH: TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

In 2021, we trained Colorado providers, school staff and community members in counties that represent nearly half of the state. We expect to significantly increase our reach in high-need communities in 2022.

Teal counties have had one or more residents attend a PCMH training
Youth Suicide Prevention in Primary Care

For a youth at risk for suicide, a primary care visit may be the only chance to access needed care. In collaboration with experts in the field, PCMH developed a youth suicide prevention care pathway, rooted in the Zero Suicide framework, to help pediatric primary care providers deliver suicide safer care.

PCMH offers trainings and consultation to help clinics implement the care pathway. Providers learn what to do when a patient expresses thoughts of suicide and how to keep them safe until they receive ongoing support. In 2021, we worked to re-engage clinics that paused this work due to COVID-19, and engage new clinics interested in implementing the pathway.

“I am feeling more confident with sending patients who have a moderate risk level home, knowing we’ve adequately discussed safety and follow up.”

– PROVIDER TESTIMONIAL

7 clinics engaged in the program
28 providers trained
~3,000 potential Medicaid-insured youth reached
80% of visits included suicide risk screening after implementation of the pathway
Suicide Safe Environments in Schools

Safe school environments and strong student-adult relationships can reduce suicide risk, but many Colorado schools are challenged by limited resources and confidence to provide appropriate support.

PCMH initially developed an intensive pilot for schools around suicide intervention and postvention, which was set to launch in spring 2020. Due to COVID-19, all schools involved struggled with capacity. To adapt, and help as many Colorado schools as possible, we reworked the intensive pilot into a broader menu of workshops, trainings, and opportunities to engage.

Workshops

PCMH offered two workshop series to guide school administrators and behavioral health staff in developing suicide protocols:

1. **Developing School Protocols: Intervening With Students Experiencing Thoughts of Suicide:**
   A two-session series that reviews best practice guidelines for schools developing and implementing intervention policies for supporting youth who express thoughts of suicide.

2. **Developing School Protocols: Support After a Suicide Loss:**
   A two-session series that reviews best practice guidelines for schools developing and implementing postvention policies after a suicide loss.

94% of intervention protocols workshop participants said the workshop was a valuable use of their time.

100% of postvention protocols workshop participants said the workshop was a valuable use of their time.

2 workshop series facilitated

46 school staff trained
School Trainings: Dialectical Behavioral Therapy

We provided opportunities for school staff to learn skills from Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), a therapeutic approach focused on building skills around mindfulness, stress management, and healthy relationships. We developed a self-paced on-demand course, as well as offered a live five-part series.

“I enjoyed the trainer’s positive approach and knowledge of the subject. I also liked the reminder of how great DBT is and will definitely bring more of the concepts back into my work with students and adults. “

– ATTENDEE TESTIMONIAL

19 individuals completed the full on-demand series, (~95 contact hours of self-directed learning)

199 individuals attended at least one session of the 9 five-part DBT trainings we hosted

98% of attendees said they would recommend the training to a colleague
Support Through a Community of Practice

Throughout the 2020/21 school year, we orchestrated a Community of Practice for school staff, a monthly hour-long session where school staff could gather and share experiences and resources. 44 individuals attended sessions throughout the year.

For the 2021/2022 school year, PCMH partnered with other Colorado school support and behavioral health organizations to organize a larger Community of Practice, with nearly 200 school staff registered to participate.

“I love that you held this space! The frequency and open discussion was incredibly valuable especially as everyone transitioned to remote work... You’re all amazing!”
– COP PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIAL

44 attendees participated in 2020-2021 CoP
200 school staff registered for 2021-22 CoP
Gatekeeper Training in Communities

PCMH offers gatekeeper trainings to increase knowledge and skills related to youth suicide prevention and mental health. When COVID-19 began, we quickly shifted from in-person trainings, to hosting them online when possible. In 2021, we began to reintroduce in-person intensive trainings, while continuing to provide opportunities for participation in Zoom trainings to reach as many Coloradans as possible.

Core gatekeeper training offerings in 2021:

- **Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR):** A 1.5 hour training focused on reducing suicidal behaviors by providing innovative, practical, and proven suicide intervention training.

- **Youth Mental Health First Aid (yMHFA):** A one-day course that prepares participants to recognize symptoms of youth (12-18) mental health problems, offer and provide initial help, and guide youth toward appropriate treatments and support.

- **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST):** An internationally acclaimed two-day workshop in suicide first aid. Participants learn how to recognize signs of suicide risk, effectively intervene, and develop a safety plan to keep someone alive.

“I love the message that ANYONE can and should do this and that what is essentially being done is planting the seeds of HOPE.”

– QPR PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIAL

477 individuals completed a community training

96% of QPR participants said the training improved their understanding of the subject matter

93% of ASIST participants said they felt confident they could help a person at-risk of suicide after the training

91% of yMHFA respondents agreed the training was helpful and informative
High-Quality Mental Health Care

PCMH is spearheading implementation of the PracticeWise Managing and Adapting Practice (MAP) system in Colorado to help equip providers with the tools, skills, and support required to respond to mental health needs in their community. The MAP system gives clinicians easy access to the most current scientific information and provides user-friendly measurement tools and clinical protocols.

In 2021, one of our team members became a certified MAP therapist and supervisor to help bring this important resource to communities across Colorado.

“I learned a lot and the encouragement of participation helped our group get more comfortable and learn more too. Great job!”

– PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIAL
Authentic Youth Engagement

We can’t effectively improve children’s mental health without the input and opinions of those we are trying to serve. In 2021, we hired two incredible youth to join our team for the summer. They had one specific task: help PCMH develop an authentic youth engagement strategy.

Throughout the summer, they identified a solid business case for a youth-led, adult-supported advisory council at PCMH and helped us apply for grant funding to support it. We were selected to receive the funding and were thrilled when both youth agreed to lead the advisory council in its inaugural year.

“The youth engagement summer program is an experience that I’m going to carry with me [on] my professional journey. It was a great change to be treated like my opinion really does matter, and I felt very empowered by the experience.”

– YOUTH CONSULTANT TESTIMONIAL
Policy & Advocacy

PCMH is working to influence and advance legislation and policy agendas to improve the children's mental health system. Over the past several years we have worked to lay the foundation for system transformation through:

- Convening more than 100 stakeholders to develop a four-year strategic roadmap that identified and prioritized goals focused on improving quality and expanding access to mental health resources for Colorado children and youth
- Developing a financial map showing where state, federal, and other funds are supporting Colorado’s behavioral health system for children and youth

In 2021, key areas of focus included:

- Reviewing and providing input on relevant bills to help advance impactful legislation
- Advocating for state and local COVID-19 relief (American Rescue Plan Act) funds to be allocated for children and youth mental health
- Engaging with the legislature to ensure a strong voice for children and youth in the new Behavioral Health Administration and other future system transformations
Our Team

The PCMH team is made up of 16 passionate, collaborative, hard-working individuals who are committed to improving children’s mental health in Colorado.

Our multi-disciplinary team is staffed by both Children’s Hospital Colorado team members and University of Colorado faculty. As a group, we draw upon learnings from a variety of industries and backgrounds — from training, research, policy, marketing, and operations — in an effort to end the children’s mental health crisis.

In 2021, we were thrilled to add two youth leaders to our team who will be leading PCMH’s youth engagement council in its inaugural year. We also added new team members in Southern Colorado to help us expand our reach throughout the state.
Our Advisory Council

We’re immensely grateful to our partners who provide strategic guidance on PCMH’s efforts and initiatives.

- Eileen Barker
  Colorado Access
- Barb Becker
  Colorado Behavioral Health Council
- Steven Berkowitz
  CU School of Medicine
- Colleen Church
  Caring for Colorado Foundation
- Kippi Clausen
  Unfolding Directions, LLC
- Heather Craiglow
  Office of Early Childhood
- Sarah Davidson
  Consultant
- Marjorie Grimsley
  Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health
- Chris Harms
  School Safety Resource Center
- Lena Heilmann
  Office of Suicide Prevention
- Deborah Monaghan
  Colorado Department of Human Services
- Susanna Snyder
  Department of Health Care Policy & Financing
- Robert Werthwein
  Office of Behavioral Health

The Youth Committee for Mental Health (YCMH)

We are thrilled to welcome 14 youth from across Colorado to YCMH in its inaugural year. More to come about these incredible youth advisors in early 2022.

YCMH Youth Leaders

- Stacey Adimou
- Jose Flores
OUR PARTNERS

We can’t do this alone.

We’re building a network of individuals, organizations, and agencies committed to collaborating as a system to improve children’s mental and behavioral health in Colorado. Our key partners include:

- Advocacy organizations
- Caregivers
- Child-serving state and local agencies
- Child welfare specialists
- Community stakeholders
- Educators
- Foundations/philanthropy
- Juvenile justice specialists
- Mental health professionals
- Primary care providers
- Youth

FUNDERS

We’re so grateful for the support of our donors, who make our work possible.

Alliance Data
Jennifer and Greg Baldwin
The family of Mark and Shannon Breuer
Carson Foundation
Colorado Health Access Fund of the Denver Foundation
Megan and Chris Cowan/Roco Agape Charitable Foundation
ENT Credit Union
Fitzsimons Aurora Medical Campus Foundation, Inc.
Dale and Cindy Francescon
Marion Esser Kaufmann Foundation
Molly and Rick Klau
Ripple Effect Martial Arts
Elizabeth B. Searle and family
Slalom
Mrs. Thomas E. Taplin
T. Rowe Price
ON THE HORIZON

What’s Next

We’re excited to expand our work in 2022 through the following efforts:

• Complete an environmental scan mapping current suicide prevention and mental health resources in Colorado to identify communities with the greatest need

• Deliver Youth Mental Health First Aid to Emergency Medical Services providers in rural, frontier, and tribal communities

• Develop and offer a three-part training for providers on mental health supports for transgender youth

• Launch a youth engagement council to incorporate input from Colorado youth as we plan, develop, and execute initiatives

• Present the suicide prevention care pathway within at least two 5-session ECHO series to expand access to the training for primary care providers

• Advocate for state and local COVID-19 relief funds to be allocated for children and youth mental health

• Ensure a strong voice for children and youth in the Behavioral Health Administration and other future system transformations
WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

If you’re fighting for better youth mental health in Colorado, we want to work with you.

Contact us at info@pcmh.org.

STAY IN THE LOOP

Check out our website for more information and follow us on social media for the latest updates.

→ www.pcmh.org

 twitter.com/pcmhcolorado

 linkedin.com/company/PCMHColorado