



# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT





## 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.

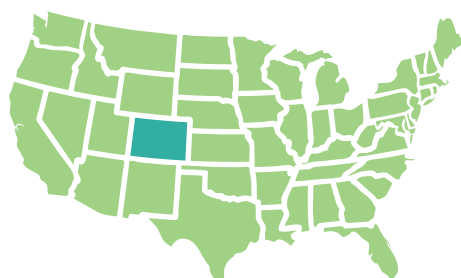
Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to improving the lives of Colorado children, youth, and families.



**Heidi Baskfield**

*Interim Executive Director, PCMH*

# THE STATE OF YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH IN COLORADO



**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**



**of Colorado  
students**

**do not have an adult**  
they can go to for help  
with a serious problem







## IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY



**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.



# TOGETHER, WE CAN CREATE CHANGE

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.



### **Implementation Support**

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



### **Workforce Development**

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



### **Policy & Finance**

Influencing children's mental health initiatives, policy, and legislation.



### **Research & Evaluation**

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





# 2021 SNAPSHOT

## 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

4,500+  
contact hours  
with Colorado  
professionals

### 9 transformative

mental health bills signed  
into state law

### 2 youth leaders hired

to lead PCMH's youth advisory council in  
its inaugural year

### 264 resources

on youth mental health  
shared through our  
monthly newsletter

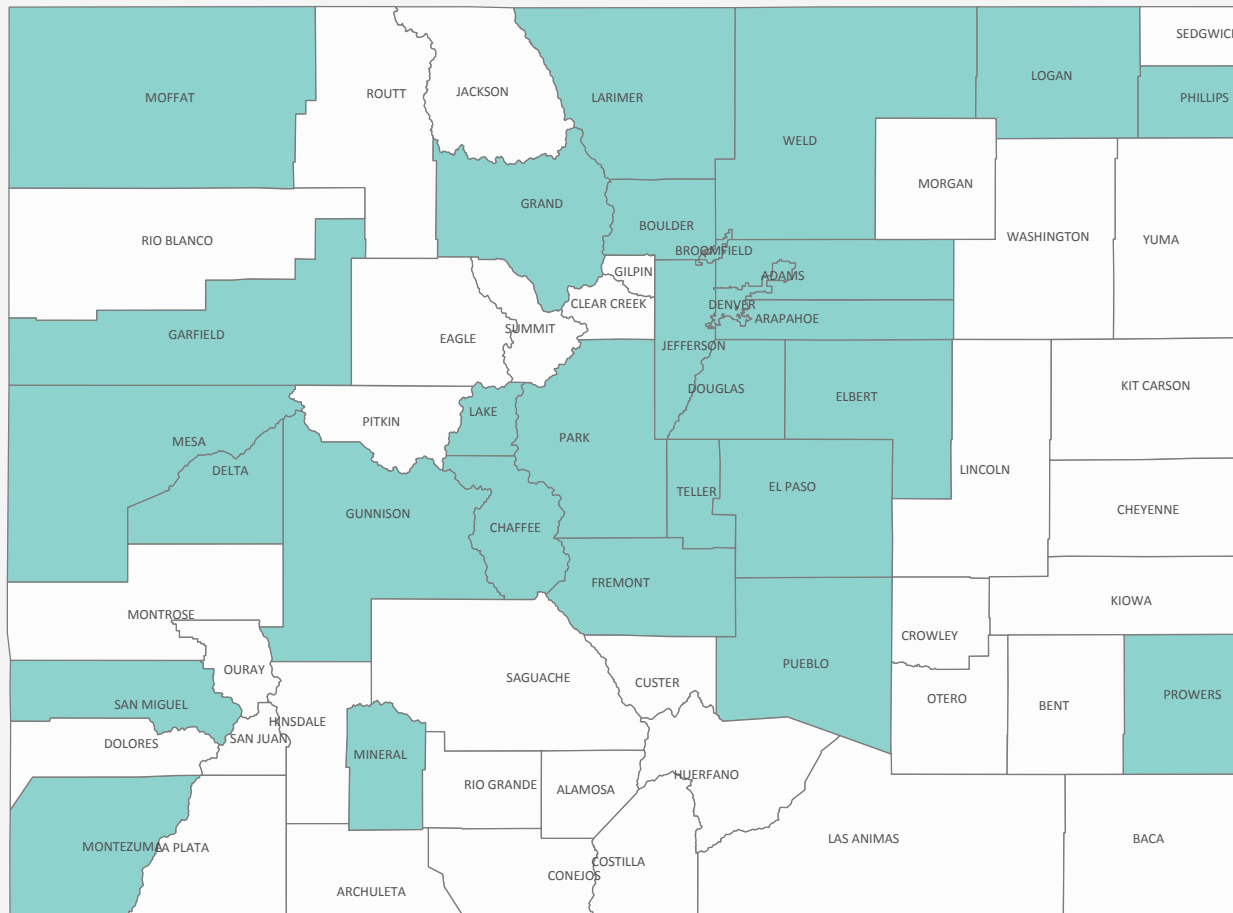
### 10 meetings

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



## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

### 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.

2  
workshop  
series facilitated

46  
school staff  
trained

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



## 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.

**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

"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



"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

## 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.

**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

**24**  
**behavioral**

health providers  
received 52 hours of  
training each

**100%**

rated the training as  
good or excellent







"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

## 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.



## 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 PEOPLE

## 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.



**16**  
**virtual**  
book club hours

Our 2021 book:  
**The 15**  
**Commitments**  
**of Conscious**  
**Leadership**

**10**  
**employee**  
learning sessions



## 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 Davidon**

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

## FUNDERS

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

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



## 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](mailto: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](http://www.pcmh.org)**

🐦 **[twitter.com/pcmhcolorado](https://twitter.com/pcmhcolorado)**

in **[linkedin.com/company/PCMHColorado](https://linkedin.com/company/PCMHColorado)**

