



Mental Health and Substance Use Alliance of Larimer County An Unincorporated Non-Profit Association and Health Alliance



Current Priorities and Projects of the Health District's Community Impact Team (CIT)

What is the Health District and What Does its Community Impact Team Do?

The Health District of Northern Larimer County's mission is to "enhance the health of the community." The Health District provides residents of northern Larimer County with dental, mental health, and preventive health services, in addition to connecting people to more affordable health insurance and prescription options and encouraging advanced care planning. In addition to direct health service provision, the Community Impact Team (CIT) was created in 2000 to organize the Health District's efforts to make long-term, systemic changes in areas most likely to significantly improve the health of the community. CIT work includes improving access to care and enhancing coordination and delivery of health, mental health and substance use services through system-level community partnerships and collaborations.

What is the Mental Health and Substance Use Alliance of Larimer County?

A key area of focus for the CIT Team is implementing the priorities set by the Steering Committee of the Mental Health and Substance Use Alliance of Larimer County (MHSU Alliance). The MHSU Alliance is an Unincorporated Non-Profit Association and Health Alliance governed by a Steering committee of approximately 20 organizational and consumer and family representatives. The MHSU Alliance has been working together since 1999 to improve our community's approach and responsiveness to the needs of community members with mental illness and substance use disorders. The Health District serves as the fiscal and operating agent for the MHSU Alliance, and funding comes from MHSU Alliance members, the Health District, and grants. Current MHSU Alliance priority areas include:

- Develop solutions to mental health service gaps in Larimer County
- Transform perceptions and treatment of substance use disorders
- Improve outcomes & reduce community costs for frequent users of acute, crisis & high cost services
- Support early identification and early intervention for youth ages 0-24
- Monitor, research & take action on key legislative and policy issues

What are Current CIT Projects Related to Mental Health and Substance Use Alliance Priorities?

DEVELOP SOLUTIONS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE GAPS IN LARIMER COUNTY

Study of Gaps and Creation of Report of Recommendations to Fill Gaps

In collaboration with other community agencies and national experts, a recommendations report was published in April 2016 and updated in April 2018 entitled "What Will it Take? Solutions to Mental Health Service Gaps in Larimer County." This report identifies gaps in mental health and substance use services, and makes recommendations for expansion of treatment options to better meet community needs (i.e., detox services, residential treatment and other services and supports). These recommendations informed the County Commissioners' decision to introduce a ballot initiative in 2016 for a sales tax increase that would fund the recommended services. There is significant interest in the community for a repeat ballot initiative in 2018 to fill funding gaps to enable development of recommended services. **Project Contact: Brian Ferrans, bferrans@healthdistrict.org**

Develop and Implement Strategies to Address the Opioid Epidemic in our Community

The MHSU Alliance is working closely with a variety of stakeholders throughout Larimer and Weld counties to find solutions that address the opioid crisis in our communities. One such effort is The Northern Colorado Opioid Prevention Workgroup. Formed in 2017 by the North Colorado Health Alliance and SummitStone Health Partners, this group has identified four top priority areas including prescriber education, implementation of a “Hub and Spoke” model in northern Colorado, naloxone education and distribution, and improving treatment for opioid use disorders in the criminal justice system. CIT staff are working to help plan these strategies and implement specific projects related to shared priority areas. One such project is:

Naloxone Education and Distribution: CIT staff are working to unify, support and increase local efforts to make Naloxone (an opioid antagonist) available to those in northern Colorado who may be in a position to reverse an overdose. Using a collective impact model, CIT staff provide coordination for key partners across northern Colorado through a workgroup engaging key community members such as law enforcement, emergency responders, pharmacies, and community members and organizations to increase understanding, knowledge, and access regarding Naloxone. **Project Contact: Kiley Floren, kflorens@healthdistrict.org**

TRANSFORM PERCEPTIONS AND TREATMENT OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Advancing Behavioral Health Grant, Colorado Health Foundation

Two-year grant to work with local partners within our community-based mental health system (SummitStone Health Partners) and our criminal justice system (Alternative Sentencing, Probation, Community Corrections, etc.) to increase understanding of SUDs as treatable chronic health conditions and help facilitate the utilization of best practices within these systems and organizations. **Project contact: Lin Wilder, lwilder@healthdistrict.org**

Public Awareness Campaign on Substance Use Disorders/Addiction

Three year social marketing campaign funded by the MHSU Alliance and the Health District. The goal of the campaign is to transform public perceptions of addiction and substance use in Larimer County and promote public understanding that addiction is a chronic disease requiring adequate levels and quality of treatment; that treatment works and recovery is possible; and that recovery has significant benefits for individuals, families and the community. The CIT is currently working with a local marketing firm to develop campaign messaging and outreach strategies. The first phase of the campaign is planned for release in the summer of 2018. **Project Contact: Brian Ferrans, bferrans@healthdistrict.org**

IMPROVE OUTCOMES & REDUCE COMMUNITY COSTS FOR FREQUENT USERS OF ACUTE & CRISIS SERVICES

In 2016, a study by the MHSU Alliance and TriWest Group consulting outlined the characteristics, service use patterns and needs of the most frequent utilizers of high cost acute services (such as emergency rooms, emergency medical transport, inpatient hospitalization, law enforcement and jail) in Larimer County. CIT staff have used study findings and recommendations to identify potential interventions to improve outcomes for frequent utilizers and reduce related community costs. Staff has also worked with the University of Utah’s Sorensen Impact Center to examine the potential feasibility for funding these interventions through “Pay for Success”, an innovative funding model. The CIT is currently working with local partners and the University of Utah to develop a local demonstration project that will support data collection on frequent utilizers and testing of interventions that could be scaled up into a local Pay for Success Project. **Project Contact: Lin Wilder, lwilder@healthdistrict.org**

SUPPORT EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND EARLY INTERVENTION FOR YOUTH AGES 0-24

CIT staff is working with the Early Childhood Council's LEAP Coalition to improve socio-emotional development for children ages 0-5, one of the top priorities identified by the MHSU Alliance's EIEI Workgroup. Strategies include improvements in five key elements, including screening and assessment, enhanced home visiting, early childhood mental health consultation, family strengthening and integrated care. In addition to sitting on the LEAP Steering Committee, CIT staff also help guide the work of the Integrated Care Subcommittee of LEAP. The top priorities of this group are: 1) closing the communication loop between primary care providers and behavioral health providers; and 2) outlining core competencies for behavioral health and health care providers around socio-emotional development of ages 0-5. **Project Contact: Jess Fear, jfear@healthdistrict.org**

What Else Does the Community Impact Team Do?

CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

The Connections Program offers answers, options and support to community members to facilitate access to mental health and substance use services and navigate the complex system of care. This includes free information and referrals and initial screening and assessment services to help pinpoint specific issues and problems and determine the best course of action. Connections consists of an Adult Team as well as a Child, Adolescent and Young Adult Connections (CAYAC) Team, that provides interim psychological testing, psychiatric medication services, care coordination, and other assistance for youth and families until connection to outside, long-term services can be made. Connections staff also host educational events in the community including: Mental Health First Aid, Question Persuade Refer (QPR), Therapist Networking and Training, and a Mental Health Education Series and Parent Education Series. **Program Contact: Kristen Cochran-Ward, kcochran@healthdistrict.org**

REGIONAL HEALTH CONNECTOR (RHC) GRANT

The Health District is the Larimer County (Region 1) host of a Regional Health Connector (RHC) who is housed on the Community Impact Team. The RHCs main function is to strengthen and build connections among primary care providers/clinics, health care, government, and community organizations to support service integration. The RHC is implementing three main projects:

1. Develop quick tools and processes for Primary Care Providers and related to tobacco, vaping, and marijuana
2. Connect Primary Care Providers to community behavioral health resources and improve bilateral communication loop between PCPs and behavioral health providers
3. Build Primary Care Provider skills in identifying SUDs and referring to behavioral health resources

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HEALTHINFOSOURCE.COM REDEVELOPMENT

HealthInfoSource is a community resource guide that contains a searchable online database of local health providers, services, support groups and training opportunities. The CIT is working with design and development vendors to update the HealthInfoSource website into a more user friendly, responsive website that will improve community knowledge of available health services, assist care coordination professionals in supporting their clients, and support good health decision-making. **Project Contact: Vivian Perry, vperry@healthdistrict.org**

PAIN MANAGEMENT PROJECT

The Health District completed a report, titled "Exploring the Issues Related to Pain: A Preliminary Assessment" in 2016. The CIT is currently helping to update that report and to complete a service mapping of Larimer County pain-related services and providers. This information will inform the recommendation of potential community-based strategies to help fill identified pain management gaps to improve the lives of people with chronic pain and reduce the use of prescription opioids in Larimer County. **Project Contact: Brian Ferrans, bferrans@healthdistrict.org**