



Wrapping Up Mental Health Awareness Month

This May we have been **celebrating Mental Health Awareness Month** in some new ways – most of them virtual. As we close out this month, I wanted to share why it is so important to us at The Center for Mental Health.

Mental Health Awareness Month **began in 1949**. It was started by Mental Health America to raise awareness, educate the public, and advocate for policies that support mental health. Every year in May we take time to promote mental health issues and try to break down the stigma that is often associated with seeking help.

In an effort to break down the stigma, the industry has turned to the term **“behavioral health.”** This term seeks to include both mental health issues and substance use disorders. One in 12 American adults has experienced a substance use disorder and 1 in 5 has experienced a mental illness during the past year. That equates to 467,000 Colorado adults who experienced a substance use disorder and over one million who experienced a mental illness. Approximately one quarter of these individuals received treatment at one of Colorado’s 17 Community Mental Health Centers.

On October 31, 1963, **President John F. Kennedy signed the Community Mental Health Act into law**. This led to the establishment of Community Mental Health Centers throughout the country so that anyone who needed care could receive it. This helped people with mental illnesses who were “warehoused” in hospitals and institutions move back into their communities. A growing body of evidence at that time demonstrated that mental illnesses could be treated more effectively and in a more cost-effective manner in community settings than in traditional psychiatric hospitals.

The Center for Mental Health is one such **Community Mental Health Center** and currently serves clients in Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel counties.

Our goal is to provide behavioral healthcare to anyone in our communities who may need it. We know that **good mental health is essential to overall health** and personal well-being. Emotional problems can impair a person’s thinking, feelings, and behavior and, over time, can become increasingly serious and disabling.

As a local Community Mental Health Center, we try to make sure everyone has access to **affordable, high-quality care**. Offering 24/7 crisis and support services, individual and group therapy, and maintaining offices in rural areas are just some of the ways we support our residents.

During this time of COVID-19, we have watched our communities pull together in countless ways to support one another. It is critical that our **neighbors feel connected and supported** during this time. As we close out this year’s Mental Health Awareness Month, we encourage you to continue caring for each other. If you see someone who needs extra support, please reach out and use The Center for Mental Health as your community resource.

Sincerely,

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1 IN 5 ADULTS
in the United States
experience a mental health
condition in a given year.

1 IN 6 YOUTH
aged 6-17 experience a
mental health condition.

FEWER THAN HALF
of the adults in the U.S. who
experience mental illness get
the help they need.