



COLORADO

Behavioral Health Task Force

Department of Human Services



AT THE TABLE

Behavioral Health Task Force Update

A note from subcommittee co-chair Alison Butler



As co-chair of the Long Term Competency Subcommittee, I want to say way to go to Gov. Jared Polis, Lt. Gov. Dianne Primavera, all the Task Force and subcommittee members and all the staff and contractors who are prioritizing this important work. We have a tough road ahead and I think we have all confirmed that in the past few months.

For too many Coloradans, our behavioral health system simply isn't working. There is not an easy fix and it will take all of us working hard to create real solutions to the problems that exist.

I also want to put out a call to all Coloradans affected by the behavioral health system in Colorado — we need to hear from you. We have made efforts to include individuals and families directly impacted, but we can never get too much input from the community. We strive not to build a system *for* these individuals, but rather to build a system *with* these individuals. No matter the expertise of those around the table, the most important voice is that of an individual who has used, is using or will use the system for themselves.

I'm honored to be a part of this group that has chosen to roll up its sleeves and dig in to find systemic solutions. The behavioral health system serves so many people across the state, including many individuals who are incarcerated in jails and prisons. Too often, receiving appropriate mental health care is looked upon as a bonus, not the fundamental human right that it is. We don't ask people with cancer to sit and wait months to find an oncologist or ask a person with a broken leg to hang tight for several weeks before getting evaluated. We must demand the same treatment for those needing behavioral health care. Let's stay grounded, keep a focus on individuals and make some tough decisions. I am optimistic about what can be done.

— Alison Butler, Long Term Competency Subcommittee co-chair
