

Thank you members of the committee for your time today. My name is Linda Schiller and I'm testifying on behalf of Young Invincibles and the young adults in our network, who are folks that have historically been furthest from power and privilege, and those who have struggled most to access adequate mental healthcare. We support this bill with amendments.

Young Invincibles has been working in coalition with over 30 organizations in the past year, including CHI, Trailhead, Healthier Colorado, CCHI, and CALPHO, to reimagine health delivery. Our health, social and human services systems are organized, funded, and function in vertical silos, and in them most of the money is spent on preventable issues, such as acute care and corrections. The data is clear that people's mental health is better addressed when you treat the whole person in the full scope of their life.

This bill is an opportunity to develop a care coordination system that addresses "behavioral health needs" but is not limited to them. These needs don't occur in a silo - if someone comes into a clinic with depression but is also struggling with housing and food access, providers can't competently address their mental health without also addressing their basic needs. We ask that the bill work to provide coordination of behavioral health services AND the comprehensive/whole person/whole family services that are present in the majority of behavioral health patients' lives. To work towards this, we would recommend the following:

- First, to include language emphasizing the need for a comprehensive/integrated approach to care coordination throughout the bill. Our state does not need a new, asynchronous care coordination system, and we want to make sure that we don't develop one with this bill.
- Second, address the need for local and community level care coordination to complement the website/app-based system. So, explicitly mentioning human beings from the local community supported by IT.
- Third, we recommend expanding the job of HCPF, DOI, BHA, CDPHE and other departments in collaborating towards alignment of care coordination across sectors. It's vital we make sure all the agencies that are involved in care coordination and CBOs are at the table to plan it, not just the health payors.
- And fourth, we ask that this bill's effort is in coordination with prior BHA funded care coordination efforts, as there are already dollars prioritized for care coordination that must be integrated into one system.

We know intimately that we can't treat a person's mental health without seeing the whole picture of their struggle, and addressing the social determinants of their mental health. We're hopeful that this bill, with amendments, will do just that. Thank you!



May 3, 2022

Dear Members of the House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of SB22-177. On behalf of Children's Hospital Colorado, we are pleased to share our support and urge you to vote YES on this important bill. We are thankful for the work of the Behavioral Health Transformational Task Force in developing this bill as well as the bill sponsors, Rep. Titone and Rep. Bradfield, and stakeholders who worked to strengthen the bill and ensure that care coordination includes strong multi-system collaboration for children and youth with mental health needs.

This committee has heard repeatedly of the challenges that Coloradans face to access mental health resources. Our state's current mental health system is fragmented. Children and youth, in particular, are often served across many systems, including schools, child welfare and local governments. Even after the creation of the Behavioral Health Administration, this will continue to be the case. For example, children and youth with higher acuity needs sometimes require care in facilities that are licensed and regulated within the child welfare system by the Office of Children, Youth, and Families in the Colorado Department of Human Services. This is not changing in the Behavioral Health Administration so having strong, multi-system and multi-agency collaboration is absolutely essential.

Children and youth have unique developmental, physical and psychological needs; they are not little adults. It is imperative that the state's care coordination system is designed to support the specialized navigation services that children, youth and families need.

SB22-177 includes language to ensure that the existing care coordination services provided through Medicaid and private insurance are aligned with this statewide care coordination infrastructure. The bill also ensures that, whenever possible, the care coordination infrastructure integrates other health-care system resources to serve individuals with complex needs and that referral is available across sectors and systems. Finally, the bill ensures that all new and existing navigators are trained on the services available for children, youth, and adults, so that all Coloradans can benefit from this important investment.

We urge you to support SB22-177 and thank you for your commitment to the behavioral health needs of Colorado children, youth and families. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Zach Zaslow", is placed within a light blue rectangular box.

Zach Zaslow, Director of Government Affairs
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