



For Immediate Release:
Chris Hopper
Director of Communications
chopper@da17.state.co.us
da17media@da17.state.co.us
(303) 835-5639

May 12, 2021

Adams County, Colorado Leaders Make Major Public Push for Passage of a “First of its Kind” Mental Health Bill in United States During Mental Health Awareness Month

Brighton, CO—Today, Colorado State Representative Dafna Michaelson Jenet (D-District 30), Colorado State Representative Brianna Titone (D-District 27), Colorado State Senator Dominick Moreno (D-District 21), 17th Judicial District Attorney Brian Mason, Adams County Commissioner Emma Pinter (District 3), and Alex Castro, Executive Director of Life Recovery Centers announced their major public push for passage of HB21-1068, Insurance Coverage Mental Health Wellness Exam.

If passed HB-1068 would establish a system where annual mental health exams would become a routine benefit, like a physical exam, for all Coloradans. The historic passage of this bill would make it a first of its kind piece of legislation in the United States of America. To encourage this important bill's continued progress through the Colorado Legislature, Representative Michaelson Jenet (HB-1068's Primary Sponsor), Representative Titone (Co-Sponsor), Senator Moreno (Co-Sponsor), DA Mason, Commissioner Pinter, and Executive Director Castro hosted a press conference at the Colorado State Capitol to inform Coloradans of the importance of this piece of legislation for the future of mental health support in our state and our nation.

Representative Dafna Michaelson Jenet:

“The pandemic has taken a toll on all of us. We had to shelter in place, our children had to learn from home, and we all felt some form of isolation. These mental health initiatives that we are pushing forward today will directly address the issues we are facing as a result of COVID-19. I liken it to a doctor who diagnoses a patient with high blood pressure and asks that patient to return when they have a heart attack. These initiatives will help us get ahead of what is currently a crisis-only system.”

17th Judicial District DA Brian S. Mason:

“The mental health crisis has a disproportionate impact on the criminal justice system. A significant number of those who commit crimes suffer from mental health problems. Preventing crime is always better – and might I add cheaper – than prosecuting crime. We can help prevent crime with this bill. By providing annual mental health exams, we can identify problems before people enter the criminal justice system and, hopefully, keep them out altogether. This not only helps those who struggle with mental health, it makes our community safer.”

Representative Brianna Titone:

“Let's get ahead of this, and let's fix these problems early. This is a way for us to get people the help they need now and in the future. This will set an example for other states because we believe we will be the first state to do something like this. We're standing up for the people of Colorado, and we are here to set that precedent.”

Adams Co. Commissioner Emma Pinter:

“This crisis has only intensified. We in Adams County Government care about it because we care about our community. We care about those who live in our community. Early preventative mental health care enables us to make sure that folks

are taking care of their mental health. This will help them retain their jobs, and this will help maintain stable family relationships so they can remain in housing.”

Alex Castro, Executive Dir., Life Recovery Centers:

“We are proud and honored to be able to support HB21-1068. This bill will be able to eliminate the barriers for children and any adult who is struggling with mental health issues.”

[Recorded Facebook Live Stream of Press Conference](#)

[Online Petition in Support of HB21-1068](#)

[HB21-1068 Full Bill](#)

HB21-1068 is scheduled for Appropriations at 8:00 am MDT on Friday, May 14, 2021, at the Old State Library.

As discussed during Wednesday’s press event, this group of leaders is also fully supporting **[HB21-1258 Rapid Mental Health Response for Colorado Youth](#)** which will create a program to provide free mental health services to young people in Colorado. Youth would have access to three mental health sessions with a professional to respond to mental health needs that may have arisen, in part, from the COVID-19 pandemic. **[This legislation is even more important this week in light of a reported increase in suicide attempts among 8-16-year-olds in the City of Aurora.](#)**

###

[AdamsBroomfieldDA.org](#), Facebook: **[@da17colorado](#) Twitter: **[@da17colorado](#)**
Instagram: **[@da17colorado](#)** YouTube: **[ColoradoDA17](#)****