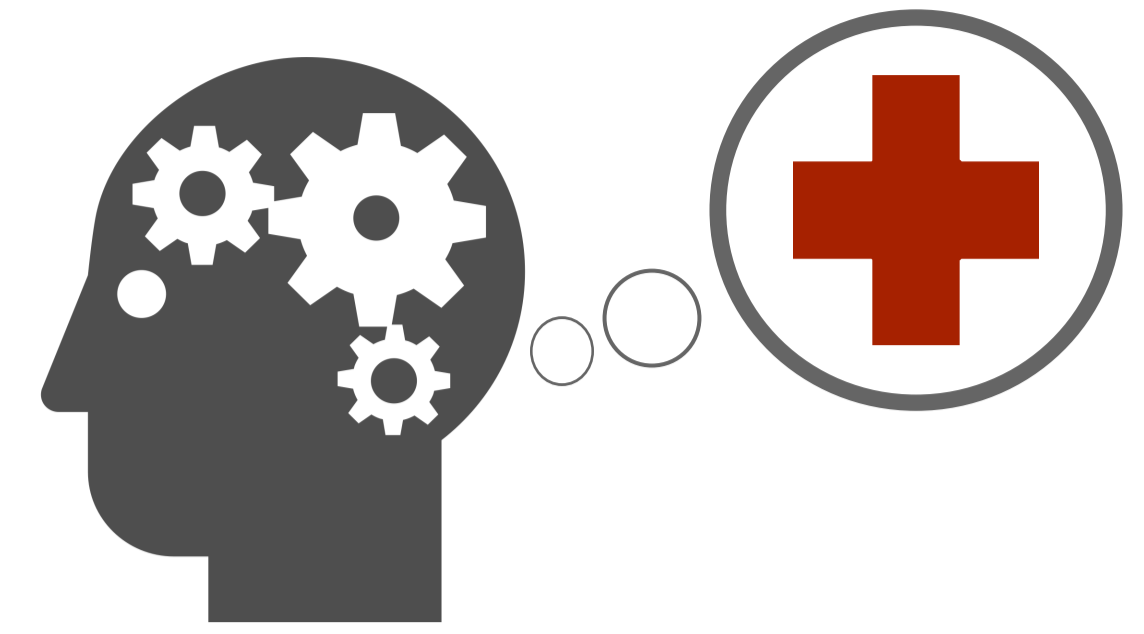


# Colorado's Community Health Centers: Critical to Colorado's Behavioral Health Infrastructure

Colorado's Community Health Centers (CHCs) provide affordable, whole-person health care to communities that may otherwise lack access to health care services.

As an extremely effective strategy to address mental health and substance use concerns and also create more effective treatment for physical health concerns, CHCs have been providing behavioral health care in the primary care setting for well over a decade.



**Between 2012-2021, behavioral health visits at CHCs increased from 112,928 to 285,663 - a 150% increase**

## CHCs are a Significant Provider of Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Services in Colorado

**285,663<sup>1</sup>**

Behavioral Health & Substance Use Disorder Visits to CHCs in 2021



154,000 in-person mental health visits



115,741 virtual mental health visits



15,320 SUD treatment visits

## CHCs are in the vanguard of integrating behavioral health care within the primary care setting

### Examples of behavioral health visits at a CHC\*

- **Fully integrated visit:** When a CHC patient is seen for a scheduled primary care visit, they are typically screened by clinical staff for behavioral health needs. If a need is identified and the patient agrees, a behavioral health provider will talk to the patient during the appointment and assess if further care is needed during that same appointment.
- **Behavioral health-only visits:** Many CHCs serve as the behavioral health care home for their patients and offer therapy and counseling services in-person and virtually.
- **SUD and MAT visits:** CHCs offer SUD treatment services including screening, therapy, and some forms of MAT to patients in need.
- **Crisis assessment and follow-up:** CHCs are often the first point of care for people in crisis and offer suicide risk screening, prevention/safety planning, and appropriate referrals.

\*Integrated care is delivered through a variety of different models. The above is not meant to capture all of the different models, but to provide examples of the behavioral health care offered at CHCs.

### CHCs are a crucial part of Colorado's behavioral health safety net

- Colorado CHCs are key players in the Medicaid **Accountable Care Collaborative (ACC)**, Colorado's plan to improve the quality of and access to care through Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid program). One of the key goals of the ACC is to integrate behavioral health into the primary care setting.
- Health Care Policy and Financing relies on CHCs as the attributed primary care medical home of 33% of Colorado's Medicaid enrollees<sup>2</sup>, making the work CHCs are doing to integrate behavioral health and primary care services key to the ACC's success.
- Most CHCs will serve as Essential Behavioral Health Safety-net providers, with some serving as Comprehensive Behavioral Health Safety-net providers as a part of the state's newly-created **Behavioral Health Administration (BHA)**.