



**COLORADO**  
Department of Human Services

# Colorado Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind Annual Report

**September 1, 2019**



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## **INTRODUCTION**

This report includes the following sections:

1. Community Projects and Issues Update - These are collaborative projects between CCDHHDB and its stakeholders.
2. Legislative Recommendations for your consideration - CCDHHDB has no recommendations at this time.

## **COMMUNITY PROJECTS UPDATE AND ISSUES**

### **COLORADO DAYLIGHT PARTNERSHIP: BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE/INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE**

Through a limited annual federal block grant from the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH), the Colorado Daylight Partnership (CDP), a partnership between the Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD) and CCDHHDB, continues to provide technical assistance and consultation to local community centers as part of CDP's mission to create statewide culturally affirmative and linguistically accessible behavioral healthcare for people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Since FY 2017-18, CDP also adopted the Integrated Healthcare Initiative, a project that is working to improve access to mental health, alcohol and drug treatment (also called "behavioral healthcare") through primary/healthcare for deaf, hard-of-hearing and deafblind Coloradans. MHCD's one-time award of unexpended funds made it feasible. These funds are projected to expire early in FY 2020-21.

The Integrated Healthcare Initiative project has completed the research and evaluation phase and is currently implementing one site for a targeted integrated healthcare capacity-building pilot. Key state stakeholders (i.e. OBH, the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Signal Behavioral Health, Colorado Access, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and Colorado State Innovation Model) have been part of this process.

Without a long-term funding commitment from the State, CDP remains in minimal survival mode to maintain this partnership. Work to sustain CDP with funding is underway.

## **LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are no recommendations at this time because CCDHHDB continues to operate two legislative initiatives.

The first initiative involves a pilot project related to the coordination of auxiliary services, i.e. sign language interpreting and Communication Access for Real-time Translation (CART), for the five participating state agencies within the Executive Branch by CCDHHDB, which was effective January 1, 2019. It is anticipated that CCDHHDB will update the Governor and the General Assembly in the September 1, 2019

annual report. Recommendations, i.e. scheduling infrastructure and funding, may be included when evaluation of this pilot is conducted during FY 2019-20, as mandated by HB 18-1108.

The second initiative is the Rural Interpreting Services Project (RISP) Pilot, a Joint Budget Committee (JBC) initiative to make rural areas accessible by providing qualified sign language interpreting services to these regions. RISP just completed the first year of a two-year pilot. CCDHHDB has submitted five quarterly RISP reports to the JBC since its inception in FY 2018-19. CCDHHDB prepares to implement RISP as a permanent, ongoing program beyond FY 2019-20 should funding become available.

Besides these legislative initiatives, there is a community initiative led by the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), Boulder chapter, to require that motion picture theaters provide open captioning for its movies if they include an embedded captioned file that a technician may utilize. This will address current technology issues that limit access to movies for deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deafblind communities. Open captioning means that the captions are hard-wired into the film itself and visible to all audience members throughout the entire movie. In contrast, the current system, of closed-captioning requires the use of individual access glasses and caption-view equipment which suffer from dead batteries, poor screen, text matching, capacity issues (i.e., limited availability of equipment if a large number of deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deafblind individuals attend), and other technological issues. Closed-captioning would not be seen by the audience except for those who use access glasses and caption-view equipment. As a result, open captioned movies provide a more convenient and consistent accessibility for all individuals, including a growing number of senior citizens who have reduced hearing acuity, kids learning to read, or individuals where English is not their primary language.