

2021 Advocacy Leadership Awards

Award for Organizational Achievement in Advocacy



ABOUT LARIMER COUNTY

Larimer County is located in north central Colorado. It is the sixth-largest county in Colorado based on population. The county extends to the Continental Divide and includes several mountain communities and Rocky Mountain National Park. The County encompasses 2,640 square miles that include some of the finest irrigated farmland in the state, as well as vast stretches of scenic ranch lands, forests and high mountain peaks. More than 50% of Larimer County is publicly owned, most of which is land within Roosevelt National Forest and Rocky Mountain National Park. In addition to these federal lands, Colorado State Parks and Recreation and Larimer County Parks and Open Spaces combine to provide a wide spectrum of recreational opportunities that are enjoyed by both residents and visitors.

MAKING A MARK

Larimer County is paving the way for others by creating an integrated behavioral health system of care not found in other parts of the country.

In 2018, the Larimer County Board of County Commissioners and its staff laid the foundation to improve behavioral health care for its residents. Along with behavioral health leaders from the community, Larimer County sponsored an initiative to create a countywide recommendations report that showed the cost analysis and ROI that could be realized by creating a strong behavioral health continuum of care in the community. Larimer County's goal is to increase access to affordable and appropriate behavioral health care by expanding community capacity. The completion of this comprehensive report led to the creation of a voter-approved ballot initiative that designates sales-and-use tax dollars to behavioral health programs and initiatives.

Having a dedicated, county-wide revenue source of \$20 million to increase and expand behavioral health care will allow Larimer County to provide care to thousands of people unable to access the critical care they need, regardless of their ability to pay

Larimer County appointed a county champion to lead the community engagement effort to engage stakeholders, gain consensus and increase awareness, which has contributed to their success. The County also utilizes a Behavioral Health Policy Council made up of elected officials from every municipality within the County to help ensure geographic distribution of funds and that diverse voices are being heard with



ongoing input for the distribution of funds through the initiative. This public/private partnership enables Larimer County to dedicate the necessary resources to address the critical gaps in behavioral health care they see in the community.

The dedicated funding generated through the sales-and-use tax is distributed through a robust grant program to support community programs and through the design and construction of an unprecedented new facility that will combine the silos of mental health and substance use disorder treatment and provide six levels of behavioral health care in one facility that will serve all residents.

Thank you, Larimer County, for making a difference in and beyond your community. And a special thanks to our generous sponsor, [Sunovion Pharmaceuticals](#), for their ongoing support.

