



# Notes: Larimer Member Experience Advisory Council

Thursday, January 15, 2026 11:30am-1pm / Virtual Meeting on Zoom

## About the Larimer Member Experience Advisory Council:

A council for people in Larimer county who use Medicaid, to share our experiences of accessing care covered by Medicaid. We help shape the system that serves us to improve access for everyone. Our council has operated for over 8 years under the leadership of Colorado Cross Disability Coalition, led by a Medicaid member themselves. Our council works on system change by advising the regional organization on how to better serve and outreach Medicaid members in Larimer county, bringing various community leaders in to listen and talk with us.

## Meeting Summary

The focus of our January 2026 Larimer MEAC was learning about available services for behavioral health covered by Medicaid, including time for questions, and how to access the services. The Larimer MEAC also learned about an upcoming leadership training to apply for where cost is covered by the Colorado Health Foundation.

## Attendees

Admins:

**NHP:**

Cari Ladd  
Raina Ali  
Kayla Garlow

**Rocky:**

Chris Miller

**Larimer County:**

Amy Martonis

**Facilitator:**

Alison Sbrana

\*\*30 members attended



## Meeting Minutes

### How to confirm you have Medicaid and it's active

- If you don't know if you have Medicaid, that's ok. You can always call NHP. Don't stress about the different regions – they'll get you to the right place.
- Other options to check on your Medicaid is Colorado Peak, which is the website where people can apply and update or check on their Medicaid eligibility.
- NHP is our regional organization, and people can call them, email them, or fill out an online form for help
- Signal is another type of regional organization

### Available Behavioral Health Services with Medicaid:

#### Services that don't need a referral

(Referral here means prior authorization)

- **Emergency and crisis services**
  - Crisis is self defined. You don't have to be in crisis by anyone else's standards. It could be something like worsening depression without access to a consistent provider, or any other time-sensitive need. It doesn't have to be 'bad enough' to go to a crisis center.
- **Outpatient individual or group therapy** - a provider you see at a frequency you need (weekly, every other week, monthly). These could be anything from a licensed clinical social worker, licensed professional counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist and more.
  - Group therapy is similar, typically it's people with similar goals or similar symptoms that they want to address through group therapy
- **Outpatient substance use disorder services**
  - This could be medications that help with cravings or withdrawal for someone who has been using substances.
  - You might at the same time see a talk therapist to build up skills, manage stressful situations, learn new coping strategies, and then maybe use medication support to help with physical symptoms
- **Help from peers** (someone who has lived experience with behavioral health who can help you, paid for by Medicaid)
  - Someone who brings their unique experience navigating symptoms and the system to get help. It's really about a level playing field, talking to a peer who is walking alongside you
  - There are some organizations who offer these services, we have several options in Larimer county



- **Accessing medications for behavioral health**
  - This is called medication management in the system terms. This is the category for medications for managing mental health which can include things like treatment resistant depression, trauma, etc.
  - Medication assisted therapy - this came up when we heard about substance use disorder. Sometimes you will hear this as MAT medication assisted therapy. This usually lives in the substance use space.
- **Care coordination or case management**
  - This is a lot of what NHP offers. They can help with finding you a provider like a therapist, like a psychiatrist, things like that. They can also help you with things like help with accessing assistance programs for food, utilities, etc. and other things like that.
  - Kayla wants folks to know about care coordination. The best way to get help is to go through the referral form, but if you need further help that we have her contact info
- **Withdrawal management** (people might know this as detox)

## Services that do require referrals

Referral = prior authorization in this case

- **Overnight care**
  - If you are going to stay overnight somewhere, it requires a referral aka prior auth.
  - Care at hospitals including inpatient care, or partial hospitalization programs (where you sleep at home but go in for care most days)
  - Care that you stay overnight at but that's not the hospital (residential treatment)
- **Crisis stabilization and acute treatment unit**
  - these are 3-7 days of care. This is used when people don't need to be at a hospital, but need to stay somewhere a few days to start medications, or not safe at home, or just need that higher level of care
- **Intensive outpatient programs** → you stay at home, but you might go 3-5hrs per day a couple days per week. It could be telehealth or you could go in person
- **Partial hospitalization** → you stay at home, but you would go several hours per day to more intensive services via telehealth or in person. This is time limited, so typically several weeks
- **Psychological assessment** → lots of hours over several days

How to find a provider or the right care for you using the online provider search tool

- Go to the NHP website to [Find a Provider link](#)
- Then click on the [Find a Behavioral Health Provider](#). That takes you to the website that looks like United Healthcare, but it's correct. It's because of how the system works on the backend



- There you can sort by type of provider, location, specialty, whatever works for you. If you need help using this site, please contact care coordination as they are happy to help you

## Q&A Discussion

- **Can a care coordinator help with billing issues?**
  - A: YES, and remember that providers are not allowed to bill Medicaid members. So if that is happening, call care coordination and they will help you (providers can get in big trouble.)
- **Q: What happens if someone has complex medical needs but is in crisis, could care coordinators make sure that inpatient services will be able to handle the medical needs like medications?**
  - A: Kayla noted that care coordinators can advocate for you for your medical needs to be met, but can't guarantee it. Cari noted it goes back to choice – there is not just one inpatient provider available to you. The care coordinator can help advocate for you and investigate multiple inpatient provider options
  - Where to start for someone like this?
    - Depends on time-sensitivity: If you are in the middle of a crisis, go to crisis services
    - If it's before a crisis, start with care coordination first. Care coordination can also send you to crisis services
- **Q: What if someone isn't able to physically get to a crisis place for services?**
  - A: There is a mobile crisis option: that's a crisis service that comes to you at home. Self-defined crisis – you don't have to qualify for that service. You can get connected through 988. You can also call Summitstone in Larimer county instead of 988
    - 970-494-4200 option 4
    - **Acute Care Larimer County Behavioral Health Services at Longview Campus**
    - 2260 W Trilby Road, Fort Collins CO

## Free health equity leadership training opportunity

Learn more about the different programs available: <https://www.cocollectiveleadership.org/ourprograms>

Alison invited a guest from the Collective Leadership Initiative to talk about upcoming leadership trainings, paid for by the Colorado Health Foundation which takes care of all the costs to participate and intentionally wants to reduce barriers to participation. Alison encouraged council members that even if they don't think of themselves as leaders in a traditional sense, they should still consider this. Alison followed up with the information via email to the council including this information:



- **SpotLight on Policy & Advocacy**  
Created for emerging leaders in community-based organizations who are shaping the policies and advocacy efforts that drive health equity forward.  
Application Due: February 6, 2026
- **AllHands in Northeast Colorado**  
Open to emerging leaders of Colorado's Northeast rural counties who are working to expand access to health and opportunity.  
Application Due: March 13, 2026
- **MakeSpace for Us**  
Created for community activists and advocates who stand at the front lines for Colorado's underrepresented communities.  
Application Due: March 27, 2026

[Book a time to talk to the program assistant](#) about any questions or concerns you might have to participate.