


# Bridges Program



●  
Connecting Colorado's  
Criminal Justice and  
Mental Health Systems

Presented to the  
Colorado Commission on Criminal  
and Juvenile Justice, June 14, 2019

# Senate Bill 18-251

## The vision

**All Coloradans are provided a fair chance of living a healthy and productive life.**

## The mission

**To promote positive outcomes for Coloradans living with mental health conditions who encounter criminal justice involvement by fostering collaboration between both systems.**

**Local professionals will serve as Bridges Program Court Liaisons in each Colorado Judicial District and will *facilitate communication and collaboration* between the criminal justice and mental health systems.**

## Promoting Outcomes

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Promote positive outcomes for Coloradans living with mental health conditions who encounter the criminal justice system.

## Sharing Information

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Keep judges, district attorneys and defense attorneys informed about available community-based mental health services for defendants, including those in need of competency services.

## Connecting to Services

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Identify needs and connect individuals to appropriate mental health and other support services.

## The need

- **Inmates may wait months for services. Without treatment, many inmates' mental health declines, making them potentially dangerous to themselves or others**
- **CMHIP is required, by court order, to reduce average wait times for restoration services to 24 days or less\*. However, in the first five months of 2018, the average wait time was 84 days. Some individuals have waited as long as 149 days. (\*These requirements will change with the new consent decree.)**
- **CDHS estimates that at least 25% of patients receiving inpatient restoration services could be served in the community, reducing wait times for inpatient beds at CMHIP and potentially reducing repeat referrals.**

## The need

- **The majority of Coloradans with mental illness do not receive services, with many receiving referrals after entering the justice system.**
- **Colorado prisons provide treatment to 4x as many people as all public psychiatric hospitals.**
- **People with serious mental illness are twice as likely to be arrested again within a year of leaving prison, compared to those without mental health needs.**
- **Arapahoe County Detention Center reports that inmates with mental health conditions cost 44% more to incarcerate and are held in custody three times longer than other inmates.**

*To promote **positive outcomes** for Coloradans living with mental health conditions who encounter criminal justice involvement by fostering collaboration between both systems.*

## Custody to Community

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Support individuals who are determined not to be a risk to community safety toward successful engagement in community-based services.

## Stop "Revolving Door"

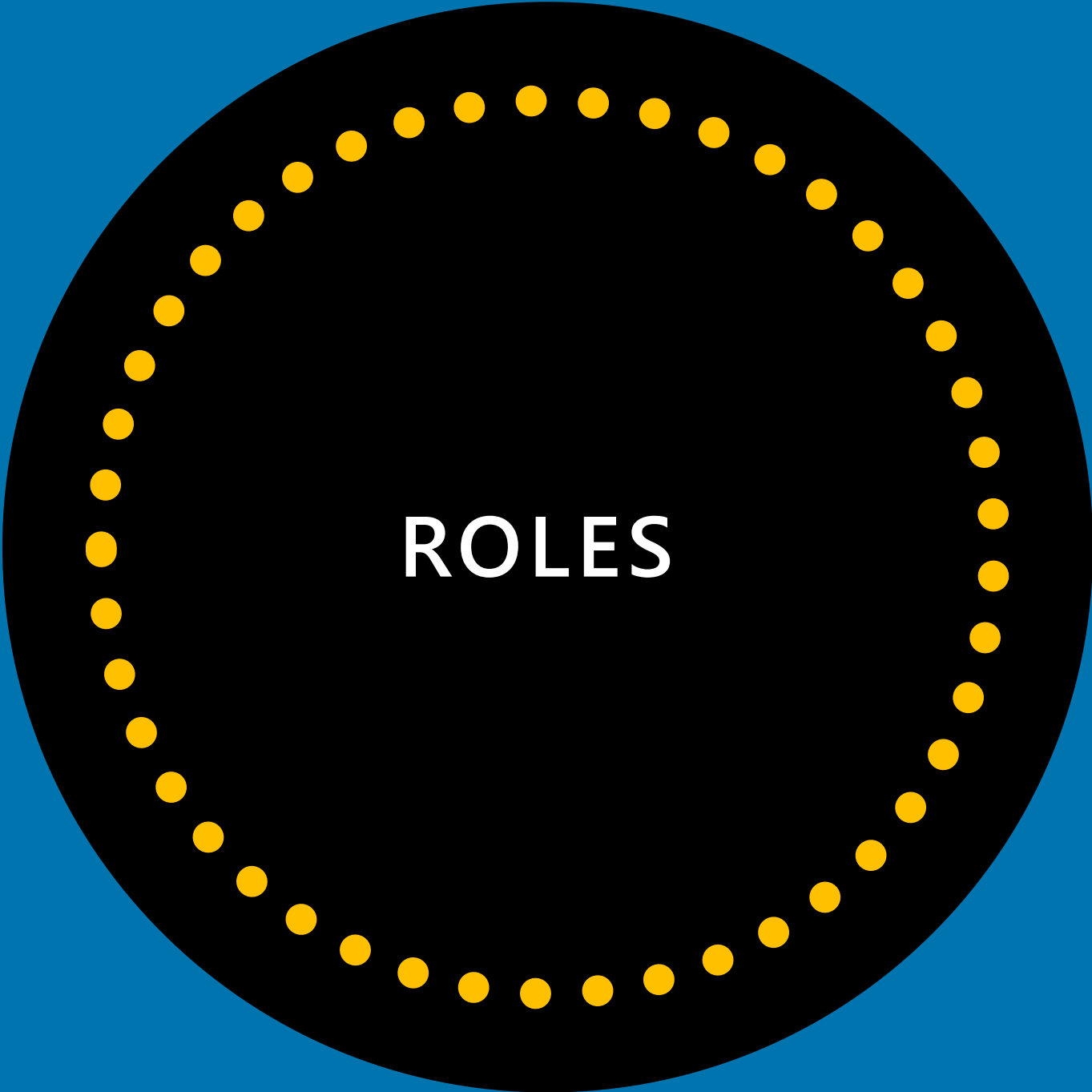
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Address deeper mental health needs and related social considerations of health toward long-term stability, reducing repeated involvement in the criminal justice system.

## Timely & Appropriate

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Identify meaningful responses to a participant's mental health, competency, and other service needs and provide advocacy to ensure services are timely, appropriate, and accessible.



ROLES

# ONGOING COLLABORATION

## | JUDICIAL DISTRICTS

identify needs of stakeholders and individualize Bridges Program to local community; support connections

## | COMMUNITY AGENCIES

provide and train professionals who identify participant need and facilitate communication and collaboration between systems; ensure quality of service

## | STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

develop statewide program model to support local efforts toward best practices and alignment with legislative intent



# COURT LIAISONS

## | FORENSIC ADVOCACY

- Advocating for services
- Maintaining judicial neutrality
- Avoiding unintended negative consequences

Court Liaisons are not...

- **Clinicians**
- **Client advocates**

## | PROMOTING POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Most appropriate services
- Available funding mechanisms
- Timely delivery of services

## | SHARING INFORMATION

- Informing judicial decision making
- Informing parties of process
- Monitoring attendance

## | CONNECTING TO SERVICES

- Rapport, rapport, rapport
- Needs assessment
- Engagement

# Scope of Work

“There is something intensely dramatic and fanciful in the appeal of the bridge to all classes of people, under all conditions of nature. All traffic converges and concentrates on the bridges. They become a daily necessity and a familiar benefactor, giving convenient passage over some natural obstruction.”

~Walter Kidney, 1999



# Focus: Service Delivery

| competency

| statewide templates & protocols

| court liaison orientations

| local team engagement & needs identification

| identification of service resources

| identification of funding mechanisms

| data tracking according to legislation

# Focus: Program Planning

| additional mental health conditions

| local team engagement & individualization of program

| client voice

I court liaison communities of practice

| statewide steering committee & strategic planning

| pilots for target populations (veterans, TBI, IDD, juvenile, rural, DMC/LGBTQ)

| additional outcomes & measures

- **All 22 Judicial Districts have contracts in place for provision of Court Liaisons.**
  - **Majority Community Mental Health Centers**
  - **Three private non-profit behavioral health organizations**
  - **Two pre-trial services providers**
  - **One public health department**
- **27 of 29 Court Liaisons have been hired in 21 districts.**

## **All Bridges Program Participation will be through Court Order**

- **Establishes Accountability to Judge**
- **Puts Legal Protections in Place**
  - **Competency Referrals**
  - **General Mental Health Referrals**
- **Controls Flow & Volume of General Mental Health Referrals**
- **Adult & Juvenile Orders**
- **Competency & General Mental Health Orders**



**APRIL 2019**

**PARTICIPANTS**

**ENTER PROGRAM**

# Judicial Districts

# Colorado

## A Culture of Collaboration

## Community Partners

# State Court Administrator's Office

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