

June 30, 2023

The Honorable Dafna Michaelson Jenet Chair, Colorado House of Representatives,
Public and Behavioral Health and Human Services

The Honorable Rhonda Fields Chair, Colorado Senate Health and Human Services
Committee

Representative Michaelson Jenet and Senator Fields:

The Colorado Department of Human Services, Behavioral Health Administration, in response to reporting requirements set forth in Section 27-60-109 C.R.S., respectfully submits the attached Temporary Youth Mental Health Services Program Report.

“On or before January 1 of each year, and on or before June 30 of each year, the state department shall report to the house of representatives public and behavioral health and human services committee and the senate health and human services committee, or their successor committees, regarding the number of youth who received services under the program, excluding any personally identifiable information in accordance with state and federal law; information in aggregate about the services provided to youth under the program; and other relevant information regarding the program.”

If you have any questions, please contact Ryan Templeton, Policy and External Affairs Division Director, by phone at 720-765-7957 or by email at:

ryan.templeton@state.co.us.

Sincerely,

Michelle Barnes,

Interim Commissioner, Behavioral Health Administration



Temporary Youth Mental Health Services Program Legislative Report June 2023

Subtitle or Relevant Statute: C.R.S. 27-60-109

Acknowledgements:

This report was submitted on behalf of the work of several individuals at the Behavioral Health Administration, who are recognized below:

- Michelle Barnes, Interim Commissioner, Behavioral Health Administration
- Paul Barnett, Director of Child, Youth, and Family Behavioral Health, Behavioral Health Administration
- Chloe Rekow, Marketing and Outreach Specialist, Behavioral Health Administration



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Executive Summary

The following report provides an overview of the Behavioral Health Administration's (BHA) progress in implementing House Bill 22-1243, now known as I Matter, pursuant to C.R.S. 27-60-109 for State Fiscal Year 2022-23. This report does not include data for State Fiscal Year 2021-22, as that was covered in the previous legislative report for House Bill 21-1258.

Key Takeaways

- 7,933 youth have been served since I Matter launched (October 2021 - April 2023)
- 5,024 youth have received three or more sessions (October 2021 - April 2023)
- 2,422 youth have received six or more sessions (October 2021 - April 2023)
- 85% show rate for scheduled appointments (July 2022 - April 2023)
- 76% of sessions have been telehealth, and 24% of sessions have been in person

Introduction

The Colorado Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) respectfully submits this report on the implementation of C.R.S. 27-60-109, Temporary Youth Mental Health Services Program (I Matter), for State Fiscal Year 2022-23 to the General Assembly in compliance with the following request to provide, by June 30, 2023, a report regarding the following as outlined in Colorado Revised Statute 27-60-109:

- a. The number of youth who received services under the program, excluding any personally identifiable information in accordance with state and federal law;
- b. Information in aggregate about the services provided to the youth under the program;

- c. Other relevant information regarding the program.

Background

Colorado House Bill 21-1258 established and House Bill 22-1243 (C.R.S. 27-60-109) extended a temporary behavioral health services program to provide access to mental health and substance use disorder services for youth, including addressing needs that may have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. The program, called I Matter, is open to youth 18 years of age or younger or 21 years of age or younger if receiving special education services.

I Matter provides up to six free therapy sessions for youth in Colorado and reimburses participating providers, who are licensed clinicians from agencies and independent contractors. Also, two bilingual care navigators assist youth, families, and providers to coordinate continued behavioral health care beyond the six covered sessions, refer to other types of behavioral health services when indicated, and/or identify community resources beyond behavioral health needs.

I Matter has a statewide public awareness and outreach campaign that includes digital ads on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, and on-the-ground ads through poster placements. Anyone in Colorado can order free print materials and share digital social media posts to promote I Matter in their communities.

Program and Platform Information

In July of 2021, the Behavioral Health Administration executed a contract with Signal Behavioral Health Network (SBHN) to implement the Temporary Youth Mental Health Services Program, known as I Matter. The program implementation included developing a HIPAA compliant, web-based platform for clients and providers to access telehealth and in-person therapy services, establishing a network of providers, and

ensuring continuity of care as needed for clients beyond the covered sessions and/or for other services as needed.

Platform Development

In September of 2021, SBHN executed a contract with TeleTeachers to develop a web portal for the I Matter program. The portal was officially launched on October 27, 2021. The platform provides information about the program, a brief mental health screening, provider information, session scheduling, access to care coordination, and other resources.

Platform and Program Enhancements

The BHA has received and assessed feedback from I Matter providers regarding the platform and is currently working with the platform developers to make improvements. Additionally, the BHA is working to improve the platform for youth and their families to improve their experience navigating the website. In addition, this last year there has been a focus on improvements on the back-end of the system to develop reports and features to allow for increased quality management of the program by SBHN. Platform/Program enhancements to support SBHN in implementing I Matter include the following:

- Creation of a data dictionary, so that all monthly data reporting elements are clear; (the I Matter data dictionary is a collection of terms and definitions used in the monthly data reports);
- Creation of a specific report to support the reporting of unique individuals who have their first I Matter session;
- Ability to report on sessions that have been provided in Spanish;
- Improved reporting to oversee the completion of Mandatory Disclosures.

Platform enhancements for providers include the following:

- Improved process for providers to request additional sessions when clinically warranted beyond the initial allowable six sessions;
- Improved ability through reports and visualization on what Mandatory Disclosures are completed and/or need to be completed.

Platform enhancements for youth/parents include the following:

- Improved visual layout to support user experience based on the youth council's recommendations;
- For individuals who do not qualify for the program (such as due to age), a message detailing this along with resources is provided.

Provider Network Development

SBHN launched a provider recruitment effort in August of 2021 and reached out to all their currently contracted providers serving youth, as well as any newly identified providers who serve youth in Colorado. SBHN also contracted with several Community Mental Health Centers across the state. In addition, the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) partnered with the BHA to reach out to eligible professionals to garner interest in participation. Within State Fiscal Year 2022-23, the provider recruitment focus has been on the following categories to reach underserved individuals and communities, among others:

- In-person services;
- Non-English language services;
- Services for youth under 11; and
- Rural access.

Continuity of Care

To ensure the behavioral health needs of youth are met beyond the provisions of this program, a Continuity of Care Plan was developed for the I Matter program. Care navigators can be accessed through the I Matter platform and via email (support@imattercolorado.org), and can assist youth, families, and I Matter program providers in a variety of ways. These care navigators support children, youth, and families, and there are bilingual navigators as well. Care navigation and coordination is especially important when clients need additional resources, more intensive services, or referral to services following the I Matter covered sessions.

I Matter Providers

The provider network for I Matter continues to grow and there remains a steady flow of interested providers across Colorado. Recently, a therapy voucher program in Summit County began working to credential their youth-serving providers to expand access to care in that area.

The BHA is currently focused on increasing the number of Spanish-speaking providers and those serving ages 11 and under (including Spanish-speaking). We are actively pursuing potential providers to meet these needs. SBHN is contacting providers of such services to see if they are able to expand their availability of sessions providing in-person sessions and/or sessions outside of school hours. It is challenging for those who live in rural areas and want in-person sessions and/or want a provider that is Spanish-speaking and serves children under the age of 11. These are the youth who tend to remain on the waitlist for longer periods of time.

Provider Training

Prior to beginning services with clients, all I Matter program providers are asked to complete a training video. Additional training materials, including the provider handbook are then sent out to providers following the completion of the credentialing process. I Matter program support team members are available to assist participating therapists as needed.

As providers become contracted with the I Matter program, SBHN continues to provide them with technical training on how to utilize the technology platform for scheduling appointments, completing mandatory disclosures, documenting counseling session notes, and communicating with the I Matter Care Navigators when transition of care needs are identified.

In this most recent State Fiscal Year, I Matter continues to support providers by improving program handbook documentation, and focusing on quality delivery of services.

Provider Information (State Fiscal Year 2022-23)

- Provider Agencies: 93
- Clinicians: 215
- Spanish speaking therapists: 16 contracted providers with 4 providers offering availability over the next two weeks.

Below are the areas of specialties of current I Matter providers; providers can select more than one specialty.



Area of Specialty/Focus	Number of Providers (SFY23)
Self Esteem	193
Depression	189
Anxiety	191
Coping Skills	187
Peer Relationships	169
Trauma/Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	158
Family Conflict	150
Grief	138
LGBTQIA+	106
Culturally Competent Care	102
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	96
Gender-Affirming Care	89
Substance Use Disorder	58
Racial Identity	59
Bipolar Disorder	45



Individuals Served

I Matter has a far reach throughout Colorado, serving youth in 61 of our 64 counties. Since program inception in October 2021 through April 2023, 7,933 youth have been served, 5,024 youth have received three or more sessions, and 2,422 youth have received six or more sessions. The show rate for scheduled sessions has been 85%, which is considered a high rate. Seventy-six percent of sessions have been telehealth, and twenty-four percent of sessions have been in person.

The following information reflects the available data from I Matter's launch to the present date (October 2021 - April 2023).

Gender	Youth served from launch to date (October 2021 - April 2023)
Female	4,497
Male	2,923
Non-binary/third gender	369
Other	53
Prefer not to say	91

Age	Youth served from launch to date (October 2021 - April 2023)
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11 and under	2,526
12-14	2,288
15-18	2,287
19 and over	269
Age unknown- qualified for program	23

Waitlist

In April 2023, there were 34 individuals on the waitlist, and all of them had been outreached by a Care Navigator at least once. Care Navigators provide options to help youth get the services they need and get off the waitlist. Those on the waitlist who are responsive to Care Navigator outreach do not have any specific trend for the BHA to solve. For instance, we had a few youth waiting for in-person services, but it is not limited to one geographical area. We had several youth waiting for a specific provider to have availability, either online or in-person.

Statewide Public Awareness and Outreach Campaign

The BHA has a contract with Amelie Company to promote I Matter through a comprehensive marketing strategy. The intent of this marketing campaign is to reach youth, their parents, and other programs and organizations that interact with youth to let them know that free therapy is available for all youth in Colorado. This fiscal year, the campaign has added specific ads that speak to our male youth audience to encourage more male youth to sign up for free therapy. The campaign has also updated our creative assets to reflect a more diverse Colorado youth.



Paid Media Performance (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)

Paid media has included out-of-home placements (i.e., posters, lawn signs, banners), streaming audio, social media, in-app video, search, and streaming video.

Total Impressions: 71,297,492 (goal 42,260,167)

Total Clicks: 330,624 (goal 129,819)

Click Through Rate: 0.58% (goal 0.50%)

Overall Website Traffic: 511,368 sessions

- IMatterColorado.org: 501,537 sessions
- YolImportoColorado.org: 9,831 sessions

Paid Media Driven Website Sessions: 257,747 sessions

- IMatterColorado.org: 252,008 sessions
- YolImportoColorado.org: 5,739 sessions

Tactic Overview

Tactic	Impressions
Paid Search	177,959
Facebook/Instagram	20,956,650
Snapchat	12,071,846
Streaming TV	4,982,792

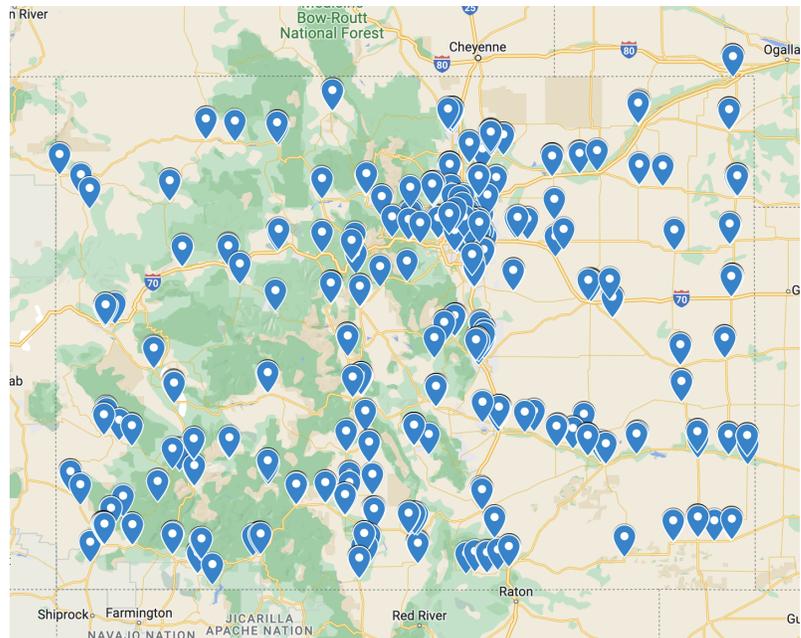


In-App Video	2,886,922
YouTube	11,743,296
Spotify	8,039,720
Posters & Pediatric Office Placements	1,253,100
Total	71,297,492

*Note: Demographic data including age, race, zip code, gender identity and sexual orientation is not available for this campaign due to targeting limitations and data privacy.

Map of Poster Placements Statewide (July 1, 2022 - April 30, 2023)

Poster placement is a part of the paid media strategy for this campaign. A contracted vendor places posters across Colorado at various organizations and businesses that opt-in to poster placements. There were 1,000 total poster placements for this time period.





Earned Media (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)

Earned media is coverage of I Matter that was not paid for, like news coverage, which is earned in addition to our paid media.

Total Impressions: 153,319,791

Total Unique Stories: 71

Number of Pick-Ups (a news outlet sharing the original content of another news outlet on their platform): 48

I Matter has received an incredible amount of media attention, due to its unique nature and groundbreaking premise of offering free therapy to youth via a state government funded program (as far as is known, it is the first of its kind). It has also reached a considerable amount of coverage as a go-to resource during times of tragedy (e.g., the fires in Boulder County in 2021, after mass shootings in the state and across the country, etc.), to encourage parents and families to sign up their children.

Print Materials Ordered

Between July 1, 2022 and April 30, 2023, there were 433 individuals and organizations that ordered campaign materials. This includes the following orders, totaling 154,622 I Matter campaign materials that have been (or are in the process of being) distributed statewide:

- 38,100 Youth Rack Cards (English)
- 23,050 Youth Rack Cards (Spanish)
- 36,000 Trusted Adults/Parent Rack Cards (English)
- 22,450 Trusted Adults/Parent Rack Cards (Spanish)



- 3,308 Youth Posters (English)
- 833 Youth Posters (Spanish)
- 2,412 Adult Posters (English)
- 592 Adult Posters (Spanish)
- 18,250 of each Youth Sticker - 47,250 total (English)
- 9,075 Youth Stickers (Spanish)
- 143 Schoolyard Banners
- 409 Lawn Signs

Throughout the lifetime of I Matter, 1,407 individuals and organizations have ordered campaign material, totaling 653,538 I Matter campaign materials that have been (or are in the process of being) distributed statewide.

Signal Behavioral Health Network Outreach

SBHN staff have completed three I Matter presentations since July 2022. The first was a School Partner Presentation through the TriCounty Health Department, the second was a Monthly Mental Health Team Meeting for Adams 14 schools, and the third was a program presentation to the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College in support of a student-led capstone project focusing on youth mental health. The presentations were aimed at getting the word out about the program and how kids could receive services. This opportunity was used to inform staff of the gaps in the provider network and to spread the work with those they may know who could help fill the gaps.

The BHA has received many requests for materials and information regarding the I Matter program. One such request came from a registered nurse who works with Children's Hospital, and when she came to the SBHN office to pick up marketing materials, she expressed her appreciation for all that is done with I Matter and

expressed how this program is changing and saving lives. She stated that she gets a lot of feedback from kids on how beneficial I Matter has been for them. She said 9 times out of 10 when she asks kids where they get their behavioral health resources, the answer is I Matter!

Conclusion

As of April 2023, I Matter has provided 7,933 youth in Colorado free therapy sessions since it launched in October 2021. These numbers reflect the important and often unmet need for behavioral health services that are free and easily accessible to young people. The Colorado Behavioral Health Administration is proud to manage this critical service for youth and we look forward to serving all of the youth that we will reach this year.