

TWO-GENERATION BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Mental health and substance use disorder treatment are critical for both caregivers and children



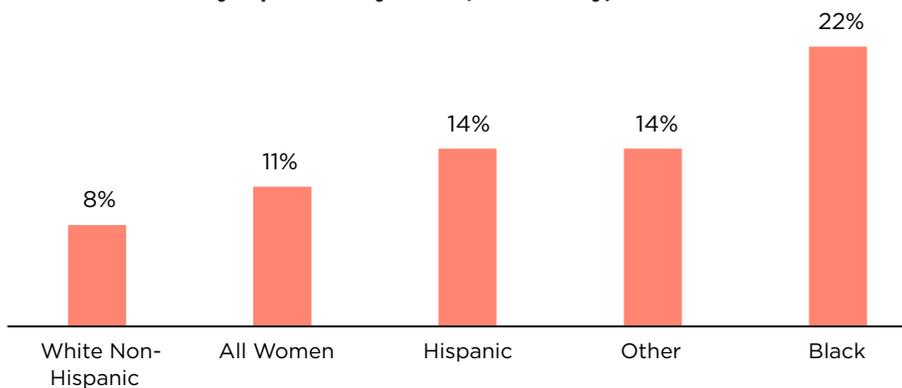
We want all Colorado kids to thrive and reach their full potential. In order for kids to reach their full potential, kids and their caregivers need to be both mentally and physically healthy.

We can help families by ensuring that kids and their caregivers have access to screenings and treatments for behavioral health issues including depression and substance use.

Pregnancy-related depression makes it hard for moms to be the kind of parents they want to be, and without treatment, can impact the early development of their child. Among Colorado women who gave birth in the previous year, nearly one in eight reported experiencing postpartum depressive symptoms. Mothers of color experience pregnancy-related depression at higher rates. Moms of color are more likely to face barriers that limit access to many of the resources that support a healthy pregnancy and help reduce the incidence of pregnancy-related depression, including early prenatal care, family leave and health coverage. These factors, combined with the stresses of racism, discrimination and social isolation, may contribute to higher rates of pregnancy-related depression among Colorado's women of color.



Colorado Women Who Reported Postpartum Depressive Symptoms by Race/Ethnicity, 2014-2015



Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. 2014-2015 Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS).

- Self-harm from accidental overdose or suicide accounted for the largest percentage of maternal deaths observed in Colorado between 2004 and 2012. Among accidental overdose deaths, pharmaceutical opioids were the most common drug identified.

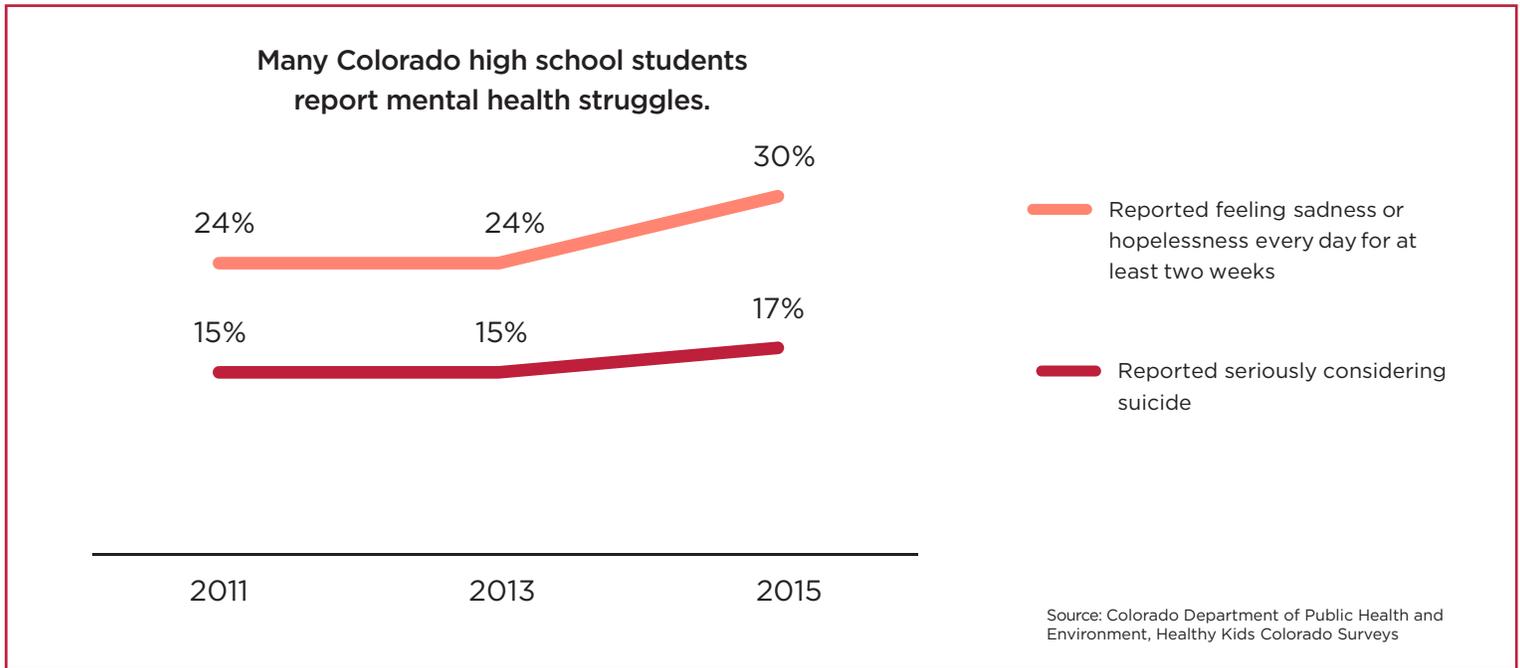
Because pregnancy-related depression makes it hard for moms to be the kind of parents they want to be to their children, the effects of maternal depression are linked to reductions in young children's behavioral, cognitive, and social and emotional functioning.¹ Children raised by clinically depressed mothers are at risk for later mental health problems, social adjustment difficulties, and difficulties in school.² This puts children raised by depressed mothers at greater risk for needing early intervention services and may increase their need for special education services.³ The good news is that if a mother's depression is caught and treated early, the impact on her baby's development is mitigated. When mothers are aware of their depressive symptoms, they are better able to compensate for them when interacting with their child.

¹ National Center for Children in Poverty. (2008). Reducing Maternal Depression and Its Impact on Young Children: Toward a Responsive Early Childhood Policy Framework

² Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2009). Maternal Depression Can Undermine the Development of Young Children: Working Paper No. 8. www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

³ RAND Corporation. (2013). Maternal Depression: Implications for Systems Serving Mother and Child.

Depression and suicide are also tragic problems for Colorado kids and teenagers. Among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in Colorado, suicide is the leading cause of death in Colorado. In 2016, 66 Colorado teens died by suicide, up from 41 in 2012. The rate of high school students reporting symptoms of depression has also increased recently, including those reporting that they have seriously considered suicide. With treatment, many kids who experience mental health struggles can lead happy, healthy lives.



- Among adolescent suicides in Colorado, firearms are the most common method among males and the second-most common method among females.



Questions for Candidates

Here are questions you might ask candidates to learn more about their positions on issues affecting Colorado kids. Whether you ask in person, online or by phone, these questions are designed to help you educate candidates while learning more about whether they are making kids a priority in their platform:

1. How would you expand access to pregnancy-related depression screens for pregnant women and new moms, especially women of color?
2. How would you expand access to services to moms who show symptoms of depression – focusing on those who experience the most barriers to appropriate care, including women of color?
3. What would you do to increase the percent of adolescents who are screened for depression and increase access to services among those who screen positive?
4. What would you do to reduce the risk of suicide among our young people?



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