

# Building Bridges to Wellness

HOPE IMPACT VALUE



Mental Health Center of Denver

# Building Bridges to Wellness



*Dr. Carl Clark*

**Every year, the Mental Health Center of Denver helps more people.** How? The answer is simple: We go where people who need our services already are.

Most people who are sick or injured know they should seek medical help. Most people struggling with mental illness or emotional trauma don't know where to turn.

A majority of those we help are having trouble in life. Their first stop might be at a homeless shelter, a corrections facility, the school nurse, an emergency room, a pastor's office—any number of places whose mission is to serve people in need. We reach the people who need our help through our partnerships with diverse organizations across the community. In this way, regardless of where a person goes for help, they may be referred to the Mental Health Center of Denver.

The Affordable Care Act opens new doors for partnerships that connect people to services, especially through doctors' offices. Going forward, physical

health and mental health will go hand-in-hand. We call it the collaborative care model. For example, a mother takes her newborn to the pediatrician for a checkup. The doctor notes that mom isn't bonding with her baby, a possible sign of post-partum depression. With collaborative care, the doctor's team would include a mental health professional who would be available to the patient right away, perhaps in the same office visit. We are pioneering this model of care, both in private practices and with Denver Health.

Why is this important? People with serious mental illnesses die 25 years earlier than the average lifespan. Maybe they have difficulty holding a job or finding a place to belong. They try to feel better by using drugs, smoking, overeating, or engaging in risky activities. Consequently, they are more susceptible to cardio-pulmonary problems, obesity, diabetes or injuries. With integrated care, we can treat these conditions and improve wellness by encouraging healthy behaviors. This holistic approach helps patients feel better and live longer, even as they continue mental health treatment.

Another benefit of integrated care: the social cost goes down dramatically. Every dollar spent on behavioral health treatment saves seven dollars for taxpayers. As we celebrate our growth, we realize that we are far from the day when everyone who needs mental health help can get it. Yet I am more optimistic than ever. The Affordable Care Act is gradually helping transform our sick-care system into a true health-care system by reaching patients where they are, and connecting them to the care they need in one place.

The Mental Health Center of Denver has helped blaze a trail into this better future. With a full range of mental health expertise in our portfolio, we are uniquely qualified to help partners address complex and specialized patient needs. With more than 100 partnerships to deliver care where it's needed most, we are helping thousands of people write a new, better life story.

Thank you to all our partners and supporters for helping the Mental Health Center of Denver create the foundations of mental wellness in our community.

**Carl Clark, MD**, Chief Executive Officer



2013 AWARDS: CEO Dr. Carl Clark (right) poses with the Large Nonprofit of the Year Award presented by the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce. Director of Human Resources Jeff Tucker sits next to The Denver Post's "Top Workplaces" citation. Following employee nominations and an independent survey of the workforce, we placed among the top 10 workplaces.



BUILDING PUBLIC WILL FOR MENTAL WELLNESS: Thanks to the efforts of Mental Health Ambassador Jeannie Ritter and a gift from the Piton Foundation, more than 575 people in businesses, nonprofits, government, and places of worship have received training to build awareness and take action to improve mental wellness throughout the community.



ALMOST THERE: The **Growth - Enrichment - Recovery** campaign is more than 80 percent of the way to its \$8 million goal.

# MENTAL HEALTH CENTER OF DENVER 2013 BY THE NUMBERS

**+26.3%**

The increase in adult consumers treated.

**+6.9%**

The increase in children and families treated.

**66%**

The percentage of consumers referred by our community partners such as emergency rooms, schools and the justice system.

**1,300**

The number of adult consumers who received help to find a job or pursue education and training thanks to the 2Succeed in Education and Employment program.

**\$5 million**

The value of care and treatment provided to consumers for which no reimbursement was received.



# Mental Health First Aid:

## Building Literacy, Removing Stigma

**“MENTAL ILLNESS IS NOTHING  
TO BE ASHAMED OF, BUT STIGMA  
AND BIAS SHAME US ALL.”**

~ Former president Bill Clinton

American society reveres its first responders—those courageous women and men who dedicate their lives to providing professional help to others threatened by injury, sudden illness and potential harm. Most of us know what to do in an emergency if someone near us is injured or physically distressed. However, few of us know how to react when someone in our midst is experiencing a mental health crisis. When a friend, colleague or family member is in emotional distress or experiencing symptoms of a mental disorder, it is common to ignore, avoid or marginalize the person due to fear or a sense of helplessness.

**Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** is a tool that provides the lay public with basic knowledge and skills to respond to individuals in distress. First developed in Australia in 2001, the eight-hour training is administered in the U.S. by the National Council for Behavioral Health through its networks of community-based providers. The Mental Health Center of Denver has more than a dozen trainers who deliver **MHFA** workshops to nonprofit groups, government agencies, businesses, schools, faith communities and other organizations. Since launching **MHFA** in December 2011, the Mental Health Center of Denver has trained 316 people at sites as diverse as the Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce, the Center for African

*Trinity United Methodist Church: “As a church with open hearts, open minds and open doors, we try to live out that very challenging ideal every day of the week,” says the Rev. Miriam Slejko, minister of discipleship. Each week, 3,000 people pass through Trinity’s doors. The Mental Health Center of Denver has provided training in Mental Health First Aid to staff and volunteers at Trinity and other congregations as part of its outreach to faith communities.*

American Health and the Iliff School of Theology. All new employees at the Mental Health Center of Denver take the training.

“**Mental Health First Aid** falls under the part of our mission to promote mental health and educate the community,” says Dr. Lydia Prado, director of Child and Family Services, who co-directs the program at the Mental Health Center of Denver with Dr. Linda LaGanga, director of Quality Systems and Operational Excellence. “It is meant to teach skills, reduce stigma and increase mental health literacy.”

**MHFA** training begins with a broad overview of mental illness, education in terminology, and explanations of various problems including depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis, substance abuse and eating disorders. Then it provides step-by-step guidance on safe and proven ways to interact helpfully with individuals who are undergoing various kinds of mental health crises: suicidal thoughts or behaviors, non-suicidal self-injury, panic attacks, reactions to trauma, acute psychosis, aggressive behavior, emergency alcohol-abuse intervention and others. **MHFA** is offered in two versions – one covering mental health issues in the general population and the other specifically tailored to address mental health challenges among children.

In 2013, the Mental Health Center of Denver was the first provider in the U.S. to offer **MHFA** in Spanish after being one of the three U.S. pilot sites to develop and test the culturally adjusted version. Michelle Tijerina, coordinator of Child & Family Services, helped beta-test the Spanish version and now is one of several trainers certified to bring **MHFA** to Spanish-speaking groups. In Spanish, it's called Primeros Auxillios de la Salud Mental.



*Mental Health First Aid training has helped volunteer receptionists at Trinity United Methodist Church have more positive interactions with people from all walks of life.*

“Like many marginalized populations, Latinos often lack information on risk factors or how to help if someone they know is experiencing a mental health crisis or challenge,” says Tijerina. “Providing culturally inclusive training, especially in their primary language, helps to build on strengths of the Latino community, including a holistic philosophy around health care, family and resiliency.”

The Mental Health Center of Denver also offers **MHFA** to groups of people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or who have visual impairments.

“We are first-aiders, not crusaders,” says Joanne Aiello, a **MHFA** trainer at the Mental Health Center of Denver. “We are getting out the word that people may have something going wrong in the moment, but with **Mental Health First Aid**, we can help them get through it and on with their lives.”

## PARTNERSHIPS STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY COMPETENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH

**Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** is administered and licensed by the National Council for Behavioral Health, which publishes the training manual and maintains standards for the curriculum and training. It partners with community-based mental health organizations nationwide to train the lay public in **MHFA**. **Mental Health First Aid** Colorado is a public-private partnership between the Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council and the Colorado Office of Behavioral Health and plays a coordinating role for the delivery of **MHFA** in the state. The Spanish-language version of **MHFA** was

developed in partnership with the Boulder-based Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE).

With the Anschutz Foundation as its funding partner, the Mental Health Center of Denver is able to provide training and participant certification to nonprofits, service organizations, businesses, faith organizations, schools and other entities at no cost.

For more information about **MHFA** training, contact Joanne Aiello at 303.504.6732 or visit [www.mhcd.org/mhfa](http://www.mhcd.org/mhfa).



## 2SUCCEED:

# Recovery through Learning and Working

A generation ago, people with serious mental illness were considered unemployable.

Nearly a quarter century ago, the Mental Health Center of Denver began to lay that antiquated notion to rest. Each year, the **2Succeed** program helps hundreds of mental health consumers find jobs and further their education. In 2013, that number reached 1,300.

**2Succeed** works with mental health consumers who want to find a way to contribute to community life. About 70 percent of persons with serious mental illness rank employment as a primary goal. **2Succeed** provides a supportive environment where consumers can prepare for workplace challenges and connect with staff who help them decide what they want to do, and then

guide them toward their goals.

"If you ask consumers what they want, it's a place to live, jobs and a full life like everybody else," says Roy Starks, director of Rehabilitation Services, who has headed **2Succeed** since its inception in 1989. He has worked in rehabilitation services since the early 1970s. "Back then, the belief was that people with major mental illnesses could never go back to work. We now believe that people can and do recover and have a full life."

This shift in treatment philosophy isn't all that has changed. The Americans with Disabilities Act has removed some barriers. Even more encouraging is the increasing awareness among employers that mental illness and substance abuse are manageable realities in today's work

Left: Premiere Food Service's Chef Stephan Cherry (center) wraps up another workday in the corporate dining room with Ernest Peoples (left) and Ralph Cofield from 2Succeed. The two have been working at Premiere's Denver operation for just over a year. "Our company feels like everybody has a right to work whether they have challenges or not," says Cherry.

Right: At Sally's Café, participants receive culinary training while preparing meals enjoyed by consumers who take part in 2Succeed's Education and Employment programs. Pictured are Vocational Counselor Becky Gordon and trainee Brian Lang.



place. "So many employers either have a family member, or know someone who has a mental illness," says Starks. **2Succeed** has more than 1,000 employers in its database ranging from giants like King Soopers to tiny mom 'n pop storefronts. As part of their commitment to ending homelessness, 15 downtown Denver hotels have hired and trained **2Succeed** consumers for hospitality jobs.

A starting point for many hospitality job-seekers is Sally's Café. Staffed by consumers learning culinary skills, **2Succeed's** on-site café serves week-day lunches to consumers. After learning kitchen skills at Sally's Café, Ernest Peoples and Ralph Cofield both went to work at Premiere Food Service, which operates a corporate dining center for a large Denver Tech Center employer.

Before getting his job at Premiere, Peoples got job training at both Emily Griffith Opportunity School and Sally's Café. At Premiere, he enjoys the variety of tasks from dishwashing, restocking, bussing tables and monitoring food temperatures. The best thing about working? "Staying out of trouble," says Peoples, who is proud of his progress. In the future? "A job with a faster pace," he says.

"I'm happy to have my job here," says Cofield, whose one-year anniversary is in March 2014. "I got kitchen training at Sally's Café for a year while I was looking for a job." Cofield's income is helping pay off some debts. He has a background in computer science and one day hopes to return to work involving computers.

**2Succeed's** track record in placing consumers in jobs improves every year thanks to improved treatment, reduced stigma among employers and the program's built-in support for both employers and employees. In

2010, it won the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Science and Service Award. In 2013, it received second place in the Reintegration Awards program of the National Council for Community Behavioral Health.

## COMPANY'S HIRING COMMITMENT: "A DOUBLE-EDGED BENEFIT"

Larry Mourey, president and CEO of Premiere Food Service, is committed to employing people with mental health challenges. The Michigan-based company serves corporate clients at more than a dozen locations nationwide. In Denver, Premiere has hired several employees from **2Succeed**. "It's the foundation of our core beliefs to try to do as much good for our fellow man as possible," says Mourey. Over the years, he has seen about a two-thirds success rate in employing people with disabilities including some who moved up the job ladder by learning more complex skills. "We hold them to high standards," he says.

For Mourey it's not just about helping people in need. Hiring people with disabilities also gives Premiere's leaders and other staff opportunities to develop important skills including patience and clear communication. "This is a double-edged benefit," he says. "It's about giving somebody a chance to become a better person, and it's about helping make us better people."

# VALUE



## **MENTAL HEALTH GOES ONLINE:** **myStrength.com** extends care 24/7/365

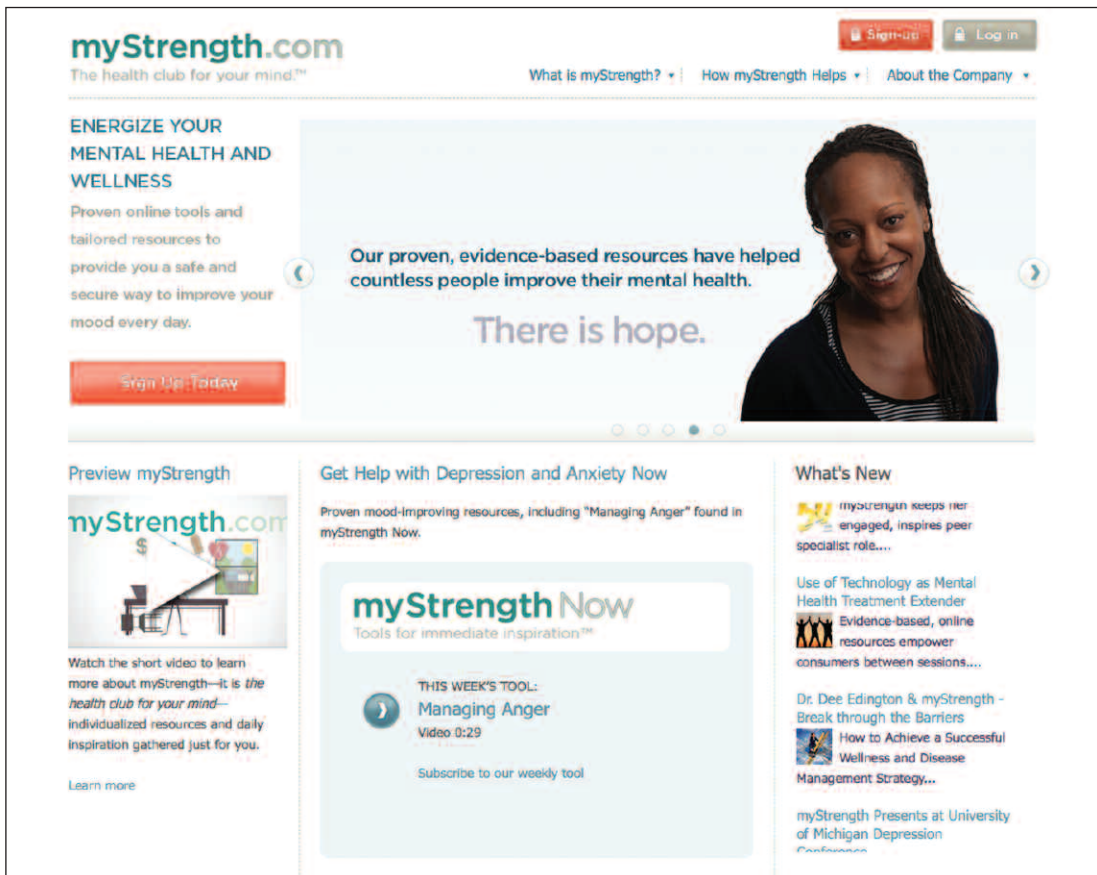
They call it “the health club for your mind.” **myStrength.com** and **myStrength** Mobile are digital resources that provide on-demand mental health support, exercises and tools customized to each individual user. Log in. Fill out an easy mental health assessment. Then start an online journey that tracks your mental state, teaches practical mood-management techniques and motivates you toward your wellness goals. The interactive, evidence-based content is drawn from recognized professionals from the fields of psychology and psychotherapy. It includes short videos, helpful information, and inspiring words and imagery. It is anonymous and confidential.

The Mental Health Center of Denver has partnered with **myStrength** since founders Scott Cousino and Matt

Sopcich—both from the field of online education—launched the Colorado company in 2010. Designed to complement clinical treatment, **myStrength** helps therapists provide consumers with helpful tools between visits.

“This is a treatment extender for clinicians, and not intended to replace existing therapies,” says Cousino, **myStrength**’s CEO. “**myStrength** provides consumers with online and mobile resources to practice techniques introduced initially by the Mental Health Center of Denver clinicians.” It is also effective for users who wish to improve their mental wellness but may not have access to in-person care. “Someone who is sleepless with anxiety at 3 a.m. can get immediate guidance to help relieve the symptoms.”





EXPLORE:  
**myStrength.com**  
 offers many levels of  
 support for mental  
 wellness. Visit  
[www.mhcd.org/mystrength](http://www.mhcd.org/mystrength).

Currently, **myStrength** is used by the Mental Health Center of Denver therapists in adult recovery, child and family services, and Wellshire Behavioral Services. It is also available to the public at [www.mhcd.org/mystrength](http://www.mhcd.org/mystrength).

“Our partnership with **myStrength** is exciting for two reasons,” says Bill Milnor, Mental Health Center of Denver’s director of business processes. “Primarily, it adds to the capacity of our clinicians to serve our core clientele.” Milnor believes that **myStrength** also is a way for Mental Health Center of Denver to build bridges to individuals who need help, but are not ready to seek help due to stigma and other barriers. “It can be the first step in self-evaluation—asking the questions ‘What do I want?’ and ‘What do I need?’”

Since it was beta-tested at the Mental Health Center of Denver, **myStrength** has rapidly expanded around Colorado and into nine other states. It has established ties with both the Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council and the National Council for Behavioral Health. **myStrength** is also building partnerships with commercial health providers. “Our partnership with the Mental Health Center of Denver has given us the ability to improve our product dramatically,” says Cousino. “It is wonderful working with passionate individuals who really want to do great things for their consumers.”

## PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO MENTAL HEALTH DRIVES eLEARNING

A decade ago, Scott Cousino fell into a deep depression. He sought help and recovered. He co-founded **myStrength** with Matt Sopcich, a colleague at an online college headed by Cousino. Sopcich had lost a brother to suicide. The two entrepreneurs teamed up to make mental healthcare more accessible for all.

With 600 employees at the online college, Cousino began to see the hard costs and hidden losses due to behavioral health issues—absenteeism, lower productivity, substance abuse and rising insurance coverage. He asked the company’s insurer to provide employee education and tools to cope with stress and anxiety. What they offered were brochures and handouts. Cousino wasn’t impressed.

“That was the tipping point,” says Cousino. “We figured that there was an unmet need, and that is what set us on this journey.” Today, **myStrength** thrives thanks to the combination of eLearning technology expertise, business acumen and partnerships that make mental wellness more accessible to all.

# THANK YOU FOR *Enriching Lives and Minds...*

## Up to \$499

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and Nursing  
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Policy and Financing  
Colorado Dept of Human  
Services  
• Colorado Commission for  
the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
• Colorado Works  
• Division of Vocational  
Rehabilitation  
• Division of Youth  
Corrections  
• Office of Behavioral Health  
Colorado Dept of Local Affairs  
Colorado Dept of Local Affairs,  
Supportive Housing Programs  
Colorado Dept of Public Health  
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Colorado Recovery  
Colorado Works Statewide  
Strategic Use Fund  
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Control Commission  
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Health, Office of HIV  
Resources  
Denver Dept of Human  
Services  
Denver Health Medical Center  
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Development - Business and  
Housing Services  
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Colorado Community and  
Interagency Council on  
Homelessness

So Others Might Eat  
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University of Colorado Denver  
- Depression Center  
University of Denver,  
Department of Psychology  
University of Michigan,  
Department of Psychiatry  
US Dept of Housing and Urban  
Development  
US Dept of Health and Human  
Services, Substance Abuse  
and Mental Health Services  
Admin

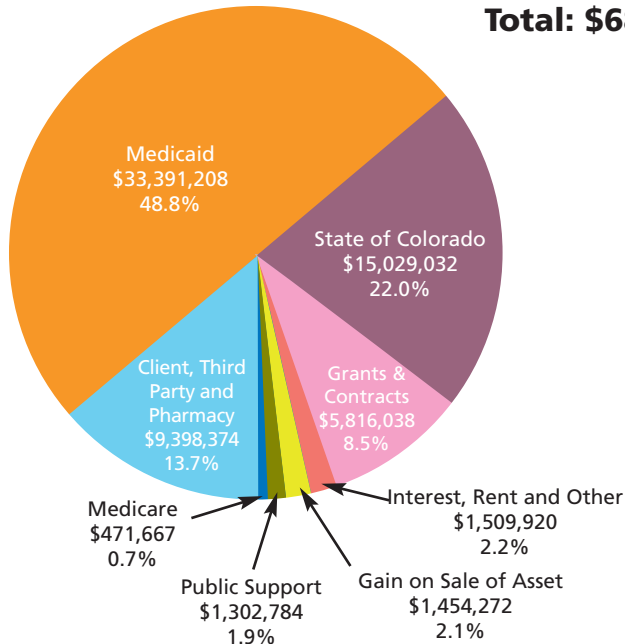
During 2013, more than 5,000  
in-kind goods were given to  
both Mental Health Center of  
Denver's Wishing Well and  
A New Day resource centers  
by individuals, groups, and  
businesses throughout the  
community. These generous  
donations help assure that  
our consumers have access  
to a wide variety of food,  
household products, clothing  
and other items.

We would also like to thank  
the many donors to our Gifts  
of Joy Holiday Gift Drive.  
Donations of cash, gift cards  
and toys helped bring the  
holiday spirit to people of all  
ages who receive treatment at  
the Mental Health Center of  
Denver.

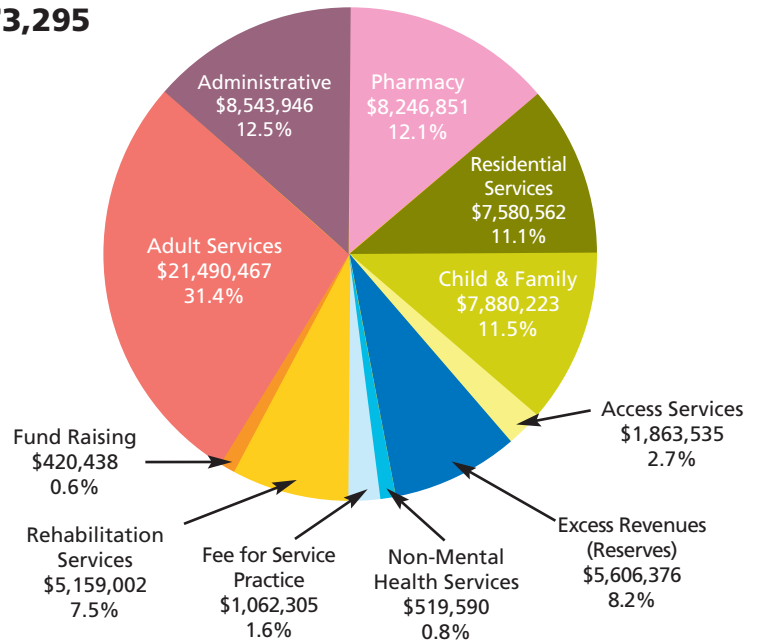
We regret any omissions or  
errors.

\* Multi-Year Donor  
**Gifts of Hope Society in bold**

**Total: \$68,373,295**



**Source of Dollars**



**How Dollars Were Used**

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### Join the conversation...

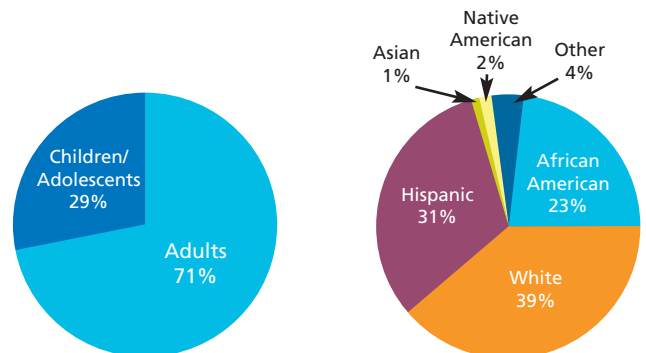
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## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

### Enriching Lives and Minds by Focusing on Strengths and Recovery

The **Mental Health Center of Denver** is a private, not-for-profit, 501(c)(3), community mental health center, providing mental health, substance abuse, housing, educational and employment services. Through treatment and outreach programs, we helped more than 37,800 children, families and adults last year.

The Mental Health Center of Denver provided treatment and prevention services to 13,732 unique individuals in FY2013:



**By Age**

**By Ethnicity**



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