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Education ~ Advocacy ~ Outreach ~ Prevention

February 2010

## In This Issue

[Mental Health Advocates Rally at LEAD](#)

[WE CAN! Receives Capacity Building Grant](#)

[Statewide Efforts for Suicide Prevention](#)

[Staff News](#)

[News & Announcements](#)

## Legislative Education & Advocacy Day

The Boettcher Auditorium at the Colorado History Museum was filled to capacity for the 17th Annual Legislative Education & Advocacy Day, Friday, February 5. More than two hundred people signed up to learn about the top issues affecting mental health in the legislature this year, as well as to participate in trainings to become effective advocates.

In addition to the trainings, attendees shared in recognizing legislators and advocates for their support of mental health.

Pictured top right: Kevin Thompson, **Jay Borgman Advocate of the Year** and Chris Ewald.



Pictured center right: Jeanne M. Rohner; President & CEO of MHAC, Amanda Kearney-Smith, Director of WE CAN!; **Lifetime Achievement awardee, Senator Moe Keller**; Stephen Kopanos, Vice President of Public Policy & Systems Advocacy at MHAC.



Pictured bottom right: Keynote speaker, **TR Reid** and Ed George, MHAC supporter and volunteer.

TR Reid motivated the room with his analysis of health care systems around the world. His

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[Giving](#)

[Events](#)

[2010 Census Information](#)



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final words to the audience were that there is a solution for America once we embrace the concept of fair, affordable and just access for everyone.

[Follow 2010 Mental Health Legislation](#)

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[MHAC Public Policy webpages](#)

### **WE CAN! Receives Capacity Building Grant**

[WE CAN! of Colorado](#) (Wellness Education Coalition and Advocacy Network) recently received a \$3,225 grant from the Colorado Compassion Initiative (CCI) for a new Volunteer Engagement Program, which will focus on working with individuals who are over 55 years of age. CCI is a capacity building program for faith-based and community organizations that provide services to people 55 and older and involve this population as leaders and volunteers. About 50 percent of those who access WE CAN!'s program are over the age of 55.

WE CAN! is currently a program of Mental Health America of Colorado. It advocates for the equal treatment of individuals with mental health disorders (consumers) and



improved representation of the consumer voice within the state of Colorado. The Volunteer Engagement Program will serve a dual purpose. The first purpose will be to engage volunteers who are 55 and older to help develop a volunteer program that will help WE CAN! reach out to more individuals with mental illnesses who are 55 years and older, the program's second purpose. The grant will also provide valuable technical assistance to WE CAN!, including assistance on fundraising, marketing, and other capacity building topics.

If you are interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities at WE CAN!, please email [Amanda Kearney-Smith](#).

Congratulations to WE CAN! on this capacity building initiative!

### **Statewide Efforts for Suicide Prevention**

Suicide prevention partners from across Colorado convened at the Statewide Suicide Prevention Forum January 28 and 29 in Lakewood. The Forum, facilitated by MHAC and funded by The Colorado Trust, utilized the *Preventing Suicide in Colorado Progress Achieved and Goals for the Future* report, which was published in 2009.

The meeting was successful in bringing these partners and their programs together to build collaborative relationships and strengthen and sustain work being done based on the recommendations of the report (link below).

**Maranda Miller**, Project Coordinator at grantee Rural Solutions in Sterling shared, "Being born and raised in Northeast Colorado, I have a deep understanding of the lifestyle and culture. With that said, I don't

believe I would be as passionate or driven to prevent suicide if I didn't have that built in knowledge. I believe it is my responsibility to help our community members find healthy and safe alternatives to suicide."



Pictured above:

Left: **First Lady Jeannie Ritter** welcomed the grantees and congratulated them for their commitment to suicide prevention.

Center: **Ronna Autry** and **John Fleeker** with R.E.P.S (Reaching Everyone Preventing Suicide) of Steamboat Springs and **Dr. Jean Demmler**, data analyst for the report.

Right: **Heather Trish**, Jefferson Center for Mental Health, shares materials for outreach to youth.

[Download the report](#)

## Staff News

### New Staff

[Tim Webb](#), a former AmeriCorps VISTA at Mental Health America of Colorado, has joined the organization full-time as the Education Coordinator. Tim earned his bachelor's degree in English-Writing from Mount Union College in Ohio.



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## News & Announcements

### Mental Health Matters

Join us to learn more about our mission and vision and see how MHAC leads prevention, education, outreach and advocacy programs and mental health services across Colorado. We look forward to meeting you and sharing how we can all make a difference in the lives of individuals and families coping with mental health issues. Light lunch will be served.



**Thursday, March 4 - 5:30pm**

MHAC Office, 6th Floor Conference Room  
1385 S. Colorado Blvd., Denver CO [Map](#)

RSVP by Tuesday, March 2. [Email Alyson](#) or call 720-208-2243.

### The Census is Coming

Your participation in the U.S. Census counts! This process only occurs every 10 years and an accurate population is important for how our state's federal funding is portioned out for the next 10 years.

In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau will conduct the process of counting every resident in the United States; this includes people of all ages, races, ethnic groups, citizens and non-citizens. The Census Bureau will mail or deliver questionnaires to your house in March 2010.

[Colorado Census Information](#)

[Learn more about the U.S. Census](#)



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