

# FAMILY FIRST IMPLEMENTATION

**Family First  
Independent Assessor:  
Lessons Learned & How  
to Prepare**



**COLORADO**  
Department of Human Services

# | AGENDA

- Refresher: What is the independent assessment process?
- Where we are now and what's coming next (timeline)
- Lessons learned - current county implementation
- What can counties be doing now to prepare for successful implementation?
- ASO introductions
- Questions?

# Independent Assessor Requirements

- Any child or youth referred for a qualified residential treatment program (QRTP) must have an independent assessment by a qualified individual
- A qualified individual is:
  - A trained professional or licensed clinician
  - Not an employee of the Title IV-E agency or connected to/affiliated with any placement setting
- Qualified Individuals are contracted directly with an Administrative Service Organization (ASO) and overseen by CDHS's Office of Behavioral Health



# Independent Assessments

## A full psychosocial assessment:

- Face to Face with child
- Meets with family
- Connects with collateral informants: schools, GALs, religious leaders, case workers, current/previous providers, DYS
- Reviews documentation: hospital discharges, DYS assessments, school assessments, etc.
- Attends Family and Permanency Meeting
- Uses the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool to help identify goals, guide decisions making
- The Assessor must specify why the needs of the child cannot be met by the family of the child or in a foster family home or any other level of care
- The lack of availability of a lower level of care is not a justification for QRTP services



# | Independent Assessments

An **Assessment Summary** will be created at the end of the assessment and given to the referring party:

- Clinical recommendations, Level of care recommendations, Time spent in a QRTP to date, History of services, If consensus was achieved during Family and Permanency meeting (consensus is not required), Major findings from the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool, Short and long-term clinical goals
- There is no appeal to an Independent Assessment, the recommendations are provided to the court who weighs the recommendation with all other information provided to make a decision on QRTP services

# Independent Assessment Process



**County identifies a child/youth as potentially needing Q RTP-level care**

Use county-specific criteria/review process



**County makes a referral to the appropriate ASO with supporting documentation**

Documentation includes prior assessments and collateral contact information



**ASO initiates the Independent Assessment**

Conduct face-to-face visit with child/youth, contact with collaterals, document review



**ASO completes the Independent Assessment**

Input all gathered information into the CANS assessment tool



**Family and Permanency Team Meeting held**

Review assessment results and recommendations; work towards consensus



**IA report and family decision on Q RTP is finalized**

Information is shared with the county and included in the court report



**Court Review**

Approves or disapproves Q RTP level of care

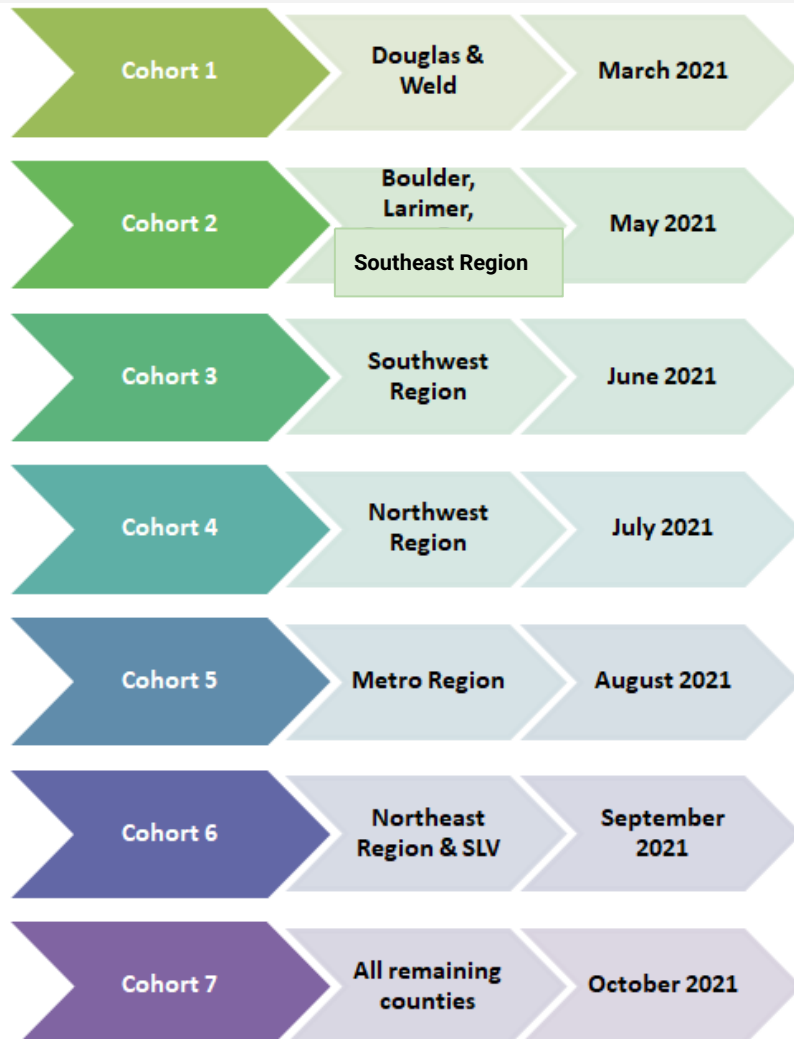


# Implementation Timeline

- Currently in 2 counties – need to get to all 64 by October!
- Rulemaking timeline:
  - o June - Finalize IA rule recommendations
  - o July - SubPAC/PAC
  - o August - 1st read state board
  - o September - 2nd read state board



# 64 County Rollout





# Douglas & Weld Counties

---

# LESSONS LEARNED



# | Lessons Learned

- Communication, communication, communication!
- Approaches to training / Local adaptations
- Releases of Information (ROI)
- Coordination and sequencing with CYMHTA
- Regular check-ins with all parties
- Presentation of the recommendation at the Family and Permanency Team Meeting



# | County To-Do List

- ✓ Reach out to your ASO
- ✓ Begin to create the logistics to make referrals
- ✓ Discuss this process with your Judicial partners





# State Resources + Local Conversations

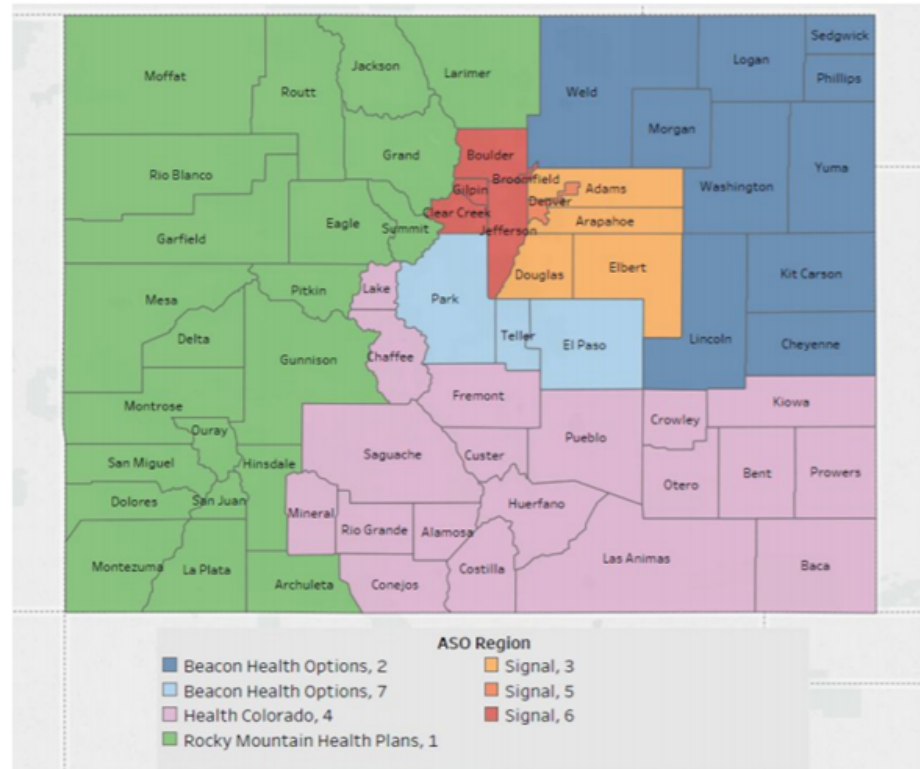
- DCW County Intermediaries
- IA Toolkit - living document, updated weekly as needed
- Training: Recorded training and Live training
- IA Factsheet & videos
- Judicial bench cards





# What is an ASO?

- Manage Colorado Crisis Services
- Manage the Children and Youth Mental Health Treatment Act (CYMHTA)
- Manage the COACT High-Fidelity Wraparound services grant
- Able to maintain a flexible workforce, provide quality oversight, and is held accountable for delivering contracted services



# | ASO Introductions

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Beacon Health Options</b>                     | <a href="mailto:Elizabeth.Richards@beaconhealthoptions.com">Elizabeth.Richards@beaconhealthoptions.com</a> , 719-367-7164 | Cheyenne, El Paso, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Park, Phillips, Sedgwick, Teller, Washington, Yuma  |
| <b>Beacon Health Options for Health Colorado</b> | <a href="mailto:Elizabeth.Richards@beaconhealthoptions.com">Elizabeth.Richards@beaconhealthoptions.com</a> , 719-367-7164 | Alamosa, Baca, Bent, Chaffee, Conejos, Costilla, Crowley, Custer, Fremont, Huerfano, Kiowa, Lake, Las Animas, Mineral, Otero, Prower, Pueblo, Rio Grande, Saguache                                   |
| <b>Rocky Mountain Health Plans</b>               | <a href="mailto:Krista.Cavataio@rmhp.org">Krista.Cavataio@rmhp.org</a>  | Archuleta, Delta, Dolores, Eagle, Garfield, Grand, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Jackson, La Plata, Larimer, Mesa, Moffat, Montezuma, Montrose, Ouray, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, San Juan, San Miguel, Summit |
| <b>Signal Behavioral Health</b>                  | Bret Snyder <a href="mailto:bsnyder@signalbhn.org">bsnyder@signalbhn.org</a> , 720-617-9723                               | Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Elbert, Gilpin  |





---

“Change is hard at first, messy in the middle, and gorgeous at the end.”

*Robin Sharma*

---



**COLORADO**  
Department of Human Services

# Resources

Judicial Resources for Family First (Bench Card Recorded Trainings)

<https://www.co4kids.org/judicial-and-legal-community>

Colorado Family First Training Request Form

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/11CxZFnoM8BaHCEcFVUz0EDnb\\_7odhqQINA\\_G5sDr8JM/edit](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/11CxZFnoM8BaHCEcFVUz0EDnb_7odhqQINA_G5sDr8JM/edit)

Process maps associated with the independent assessor process:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12NzOfilDq5fB4mCJPvLy3A5\\_-W\\_6pmgf?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12NzOfilDq5fB4mCJPvLy3A5_-W_6pmgf?usp=sharing)

Informational sheet on the CANS tool:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/17PR\\_XKkZ5SwAWMSD3qXCG8gyvhfSR1hZ/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/17PR_XKkZ5SwAWMSD3qXCG8gyvhfSR1hZ/view)