

# LA PLATA COUNTY COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLAN



## *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

**SEPTEMBER 2014**



*La Plata County is a community where behavioral health is part of a comprehensive healthcare delivery and where collaborative and integrated care is the norm that sustains optimal well-being for all.*

## ABOUT THE CITIZENS HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Citizens Health Advisory Council is an open coalition of interested citizens and organizations that advocate for community health and wellness in La Plata County by serving as a central point for communication and collaboration.

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## THANK YOU!

The Citizens Health Advisory Council gratefully acknowledges our funders who made this Project possible through their generous support.



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The Citizens Health Advisory Council also thanks, from the bottom of our hearts, the over-200 community members who participated in this Plan and helped shape it, including a 37-member Behavioral Health Team. All are listed in the final document.

## VISION

La Plata County is a community where behavioral health is part of a comprehensive healthcare delivery and where collaborative and integrated care is the norm that sustains optimal well-being for all.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND: SETTING THE STAGE

We hope you enjoy reading this document. We hope it inspires you to create increased health in your own life and family and in our broader La Plata County community. We also hope implementation of ideas in this plan creates more well-being, more connectedness, more community and more vitality for La Plata County citizens.

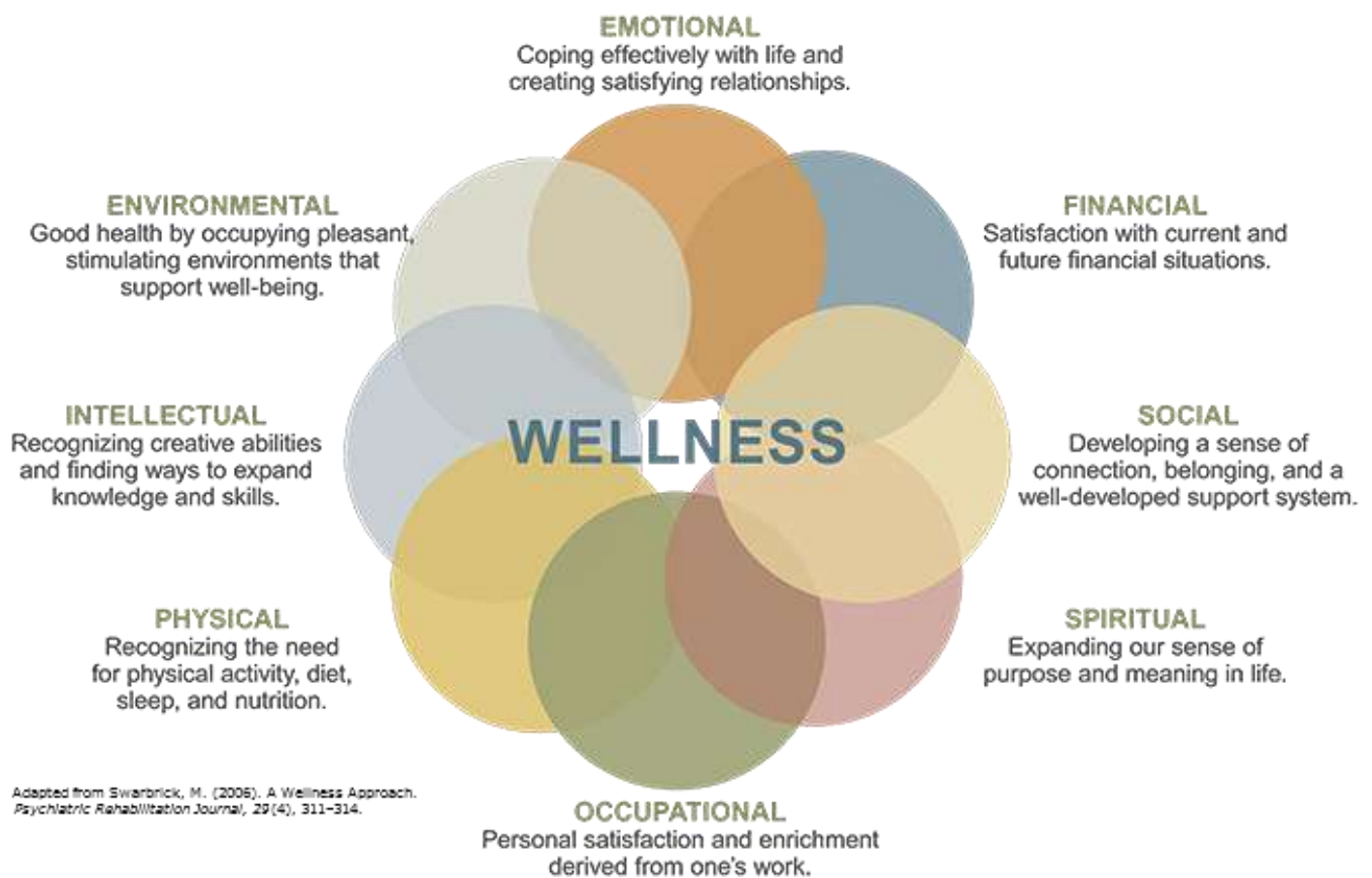
In 2012, at a meeting of the Citizens Health Advisory Council, a decision was made to complete a Behavioral Health Plan for La Plata County. A 37-member team formed (Behavioral Health Team) and spearheaded the effort. Many statistics back up what anecdotally people in our communities feel: that more needs to be done to address mental health and substance abuse problems; that better services are needed which are more affordable and accessible; and that we need to tackle these issues using a more holistic framework that spans prevention and wellness and includes the whole person. The aim is to routinely integrate behavioral health – which combines the topics of mental health and all substance use – into all health care to reduce the stigma for mental illness and to improve well-being for all with a focus on young people and those in highest need.

This report is a grassroots effort to collect diverse community experience and input. All participants' input and opinions were honored and based on individual experiences. Their thoughts may not represent everyone's view of the needs in the community. Some important

voices may be missing. This report is not a needs analysis, which is based on a factual and analytic process to examine what is available and what is missing in the area of behavioral health services. Many new community initiatives have occurred over the last few years which have brought an array of affordable and available behavioral health services to La Plata County. People in our communities that participated in this project feel more needs to be done to address mental health and substance use.

This *LA PLATA COUNTY COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLAN – Phase One* is presented as a working/living document and project. This foundational Plan describes the planning process, sets forth priority actions, and presents a framework, definitions and other important information. This multi-year effort includes the next steps of further specific action planning, seeking funding for priorities and mobilizing resources and partners across La Plata County.

The framework for action is the **Eight Dimensions of Wellness** (pictured below) because its holistic nature provides our community a way to think about behavioral health in a broad, integrated way. More information about the eight dimensions is included below in the Plan.



1. Dunn, H.L. (1961). *High-Level Wellness*, Beatty Press: Arlington, VA.
2. Adapted from Swarbrick Dan Futterman, M. (2006). A Wellness Approach. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 29(4), 311-314

The Behavioral Health Team launched this planning effort by seeking grassroots input from diverse voices across the county. Over 170 stakeholders were involved. This was accomplished through a Summit in 2013 that helped introduce the concept of the Eight Dimensions of Wellness and framed up issues, concerns and opportunities. Then, for 11 months, numerous convening sessions were held. Participants answered a series of targeted questions about how they see these issues in their own lives and their communities, and they were asked about potential solutions and ideas. There was an online

survey done as well. This input was organized and led to an action-planning and priority-setting Summit held in May of 2014. While this plan reflects priorities, many action steps are presented as they were generated by the community.

## PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

The **general and over-arching priorities** identified by those who participated include:

Provide broad community education on the Eight Dimensions of Wellness model using a train-the-trainer method. Also, work to reduce the discrimination and stigma associated with behavioral health. Other opportunities for education were identified.

Provide increased access to care through working with community partners to decrease the overall wait time at our community mental health center, primary care practices and at private therapist offices. Affordability of services needs addressed as well. Reducing therapist turnover is another goal. Some specific groups in our community need better overall access to services.

Provide broad community marketing through the development of coordinated messages to promote integration of healthy behavior messages across schools and employers. Also, producing an easy-to-navigate and updated online directory of behavioral health resources is a priority.

Support the Healthy Communities Coalition, an existing group, in decreasing the normalization of alcohol in the community. One tool for doing this includes building support networks and reducing isolation of vulnerable community members.

Increasing public transportation in general and after-school transportation options (specifically for youth) were cited as important strategies.

**The priorities set by the Eight Dimensions of Wellness include:**

**EMOTIONAL:** Teach students coping skills, model behavior, and encourage health/wellness awareness.

**FINANCIAL:** Increase awareness of and access to community education programs on financial management skills.

**SOCIAL:** Build support networks for isolated individuals in new ways that include professionals, neighbors, friends, families, and caregivers.

**SPIRITUAL:** Carry out education on incorporating the topic of spirituality into clinicians' and providers' practices.

**OCCUPATIONAL:** Educate employers on the relevance of behavioral health in the workplace and how it makes good business sense to have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Work to reduce stigma, encourage respectful treatment of employees, and expand on-site wellness programs.

**PHYSICAL:** Develop coordinated messages for all groups to promote integration of healthy behavior messages across schools and employers.

**INTELLECTUAL:** Promote personal empowerment through teaching hands-on skills.

**ENVIRONMENTAL:** Increase all public transportation and more specifically after-school transportation options for students.

As **Phase Two** starts, the Citizens Health Advisory Council and the Behavioral Health Team look forward to continued community engagement and action around these vital issues. Accomplishment of these goals and projects will take the collective will of many including partners, citizens and those who experience behavioral health concerns as well as health care providers, funders and agencies.

## FIND THE FULL PLAN

- [www.chaclaplata.org](http://www.chaclaplata.org)
- Read details
- Find priorities for action
- Learn definitions

## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

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