

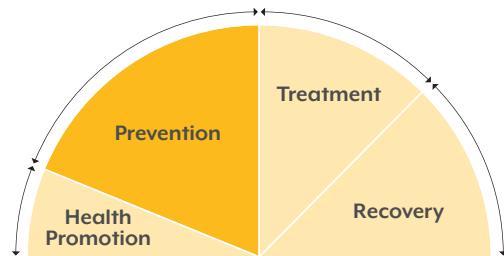


Substance use disorder prevention works.

And now, Colorado has a **strategic plan** to synchronize primary prevention efforts.

Prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery all play critical roles in the substance use disorder continuum of care. This plan focuses on preventing substance abuse before it happens.

Figure 1. Primary Prevention in the Substance Use Disorder Continuum of Care.



Primary prevention is a public health approach to help communities avoid substance use disorders before they start.

Colorado has been doing this work for decades — from programs to strengthen youth decision-making skills, to community-level efforts to change local liquor store policies. A strategic plan is essential for coordinating these efforts.

Supported by the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health, key state and local agencies that fund prevention programming have developed Colorado's first **strategic plan for primary prevention of substance abuse**. These partners and funders have committed to:

- **Reinforcing** how their complementary prevention efforts are coordinated,
- **Continuing** to promote evidence-based prevention strategies and approaches, and
- **Implementing** this plan collaboratively between 2019-2024 to strengthen Colorado's comprehensive prevention efforts.

Example participating partners and their prevention funding programs are described below. Their objectives and strategies are outlined in this brief.

Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse: Examples in Colorado

LifeSkills Training:
Teaches students skills in self-management, and drug awareness and resistance in a classroom-based, multiyear approach.

Strengthening Families (For Parents and Youth 10-14):
Promotes parenting skills and positive family relationships through parent trainings, child skills-building, and family sessions.

Communities That Care:
Mobilizes community stakeholders to collaborate in selecting and implementing evidence-based prevention approaches.

Figure 2. Colorado's Leads for Implementing the Statewide Strategic Plan for Substance Abuse Prevention

Colorado Department of Human Services

- Office of Behavioral Health
- Office of Children, Youth, and Families

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

- Prevention Services Division

Colorado Department of Education

- Office of Health and Wellness

Colorado Attorney General

- Office of Community Engagement

Higher Education Partners

- Colorado State University
- University of Colorado
- University of Denver

Other Initiatives

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Others as needed

The plan outlines two major goals for Colorado's prevention funders and program administrators:

1

Reduce and prevent substance abuse and misuse among youth and their families.

2

Reduce risk factors that predict and strengthen protective factors that prevent substance abuse and other behavioral health problems among youth and their families.

Colorado's Strategic Framework for Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE:

Colorado is a leader in strengthening and supporting effective, coordinated, statewide prevention.

STRATEGIES

- Increase public awareness of the advances in and cost savings of prevention.
- Pursue policy change at state and local levels.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TWO:

Colorado's prevention system promotes tested and effective programs, policies and strategies that prevent substance abuse and other behavioral health problems.

STRATEGIES

- Support and increase community-driven selection, implementation and fidelity of prevention interventions — including both tested and effective approaches and new approaches that are being evaluated.
- Strengthen how Colorado tracks and increases the statewide adoption of tested and effective prevention programs and strategies.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE THREE:

Colorado's prevention workforce is equipped to deliver high-quality prevention.

STRATEGIES

- Strengthen Colorado's prevention workforce with broad prevention skill building and certification and with program-specific competency trainings.
- Increase the diversity of prevention providers practicing in Colorado by geographic representation, race/ethnicity, and other attributes.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FOUR:

Statewide prevention funders align their resources and focus areas.

STRATEGIES

- Align statewide public funders of prevention services.
- Clarify for communities how to access the right funding at the right time.
- Reduce inequities and inequalities leading to substance abuse and the factors that predict it.

Read the full strategic plan: coloradohealthinstitute.org/research/prevention-strategic-plan

Want to learn more? Reach out to CaldwellA@coloradohealthinstitute.org or [Jenny.wood@state.co.us](mailto>Jenny.wood@state.co.us)