

Safety Stability

Value Statement

Adults, youth, children, and families living in Boulder County should have a safe and stable home life, and live in a typical community environment with equal access to resources in order to promote their health, safety, and well-being, and create a more caring and inclusive community.

Recommendation

The HSA supports state and local policies that ensure:

- Investment in primary prevention initiatives that promote positive youth development, healthy relationships, stable and supportive families, and aging well in place.
- Early intervention and support for families experiencing or at risk for domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, or elder abuse;
- Access to affordable, effective intervention and treatment programs for children, youth and adults experiencing behavioral health challenges or substance abuse issues;
- Accessible, affordable housing to promote people's ability to live independently in their own homes;
- Equitable access to services and assistance, regardless of ability/disability;
- Education and advocacy with hospitals, doctors, long-term care agencies, local, state and national political leaders and others involved in the lives of seniors (older adults) and people with disabilities to ensure that remaining in your own home is the first option explored;
- Advocacy to increase accessible, affordable and appropriate community services for people with disabilities and at-risk elders.
- A recognition of the unique needs and additional vulnerabilities facing marginalized community members (i.e., people of color, immigrants, non-English speakers, LGBTQI individuals, people living in poverty, and the unhoused), and the potential negative or unintended consequences that some policy initiatives may have on these communities.

Background

Each year in Boulder County law enforcement respond on average to 1,800 domestic violence calls. With only 1 in 10 cases ever reported to police, there are an estimated 18,000 domestic violence incidents occurring in Boulder County yearly; that's nearly 50 every day. Without intervention and support for survivors and their children, an abuser's use of violence can increase in frequency and lethality.

In 2015, 4,653 cases of suspected child abuse and neglect were reported to the Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services. Of those reported, 1,716 were investigated. Child abuse and neglect costs our society, not only in terms of the trauma caused to the maltreated individuals, but also in economic terms. Economic costs include the funds spent each year on child welfare services for abused and neglected children (direct costs) as well as the large sums dedicated to addressing the short- and long-term consequences of abuse and neglect (indirect costs).

As a community, we need to address domestic violence and child abuse and neglect issues with prevention and early intervention, and support both community-based programs and social service systems that assist children and families to recover from the trauma of violence.