



EAGLE COUNTY

April 5, 2023

Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Office of the County Manager

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RE: Congressionally Directed Spending Request - Health and Human Services Appropriation

Dear Senator Bennet,

Eagle County Government would like to express our strong support for the submission of a formal project request to the Senate Appropriations Committee for funding to expand behavioral health outpatient services in Eagle County, Colorado.

The mental health infrastructure in our nation, and in Colorado, is woefully underfunded and tragically underbuilt. As our community recovers from the pandemic strains of the past three years, we are recommitting to meet the behavioral health needs of our community where crisis response among adolescents alone continues to increase at an alarming rate.

Within our rural mountain community, Vail Health is building a centrally-located behavioral health campus in Edwards, CO. Building a community campus for outpatient, inpatient and specialty behavioral health services in the center of our community is the result of several years of collaborative efforts among numerous partners within Eagle County. This project has broad and diverse support due to the longstanding infrastructure it will provide to better address the behavioral health needs of our rural mountain community.

As a result of the collaborative planning to-date, this is a shovel-ready project that aligns with your priority to expand access to mental health care and this investment will help address the significant shortage of behavioral health services across Colorado. Vail Health is poised to meet the current and future behavioral health needs with a new ~46,000 square foot, 28-bed psychiatric facility with 14 beds for adults and 14 beds for adolescents to serve residents across Colorado and it will be located on the same campus as outpatient behavioral health services.

As Congress is now beginning the appropriations process for the next fiscal year, we ask that you strongly consider submitting this project during the Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) process. We look forward to your support as we work toward developing a world class behavioral health system in our rural mountain region in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Jeff Shroll
County Manager