



Health District of Northern Larimer County  
970.224.5209 x249  
[www.ChangingMindsLarimer.org](http://www.ChangingMindsLarimer.org)

## Changing Minds Campaign Overview

### Health District launches campaign to raise awareness of drug and alcohol addiction

The Health District of Northern Larimer County, in conjunction with the Mental Health and Substance Use Alliance, has launched a campaign to increase public awareness of drug and alcohol addiction in our community. The goals of the Changing Minds campaign are to shed light on the public health crisis of addiction in Larimer County, de-stigmatize the disease of addiction and give hope to the 26,000 in our community who are living with the disease.

One in 10 Larimer County residents suffers from addiction. Less than 1 in 10 of those 26,000 community members will get the treatment they need. That leaves 23,660 in need of addiction care — enough to fill the Budweiser Events Center three times over.

Addiction is a disease that changes the brain. When addiction takes hold, the brain is rewired to function as if drugs and/or alcohol are life-or-death and essential for survival. It stops being a choice; it becomes a chronic, life-threatening disease like cancer, diabetes and arthritis.

But there is hope. Addiction care can be as effective as treatments for other diseases and works the same way — with medication, counseling and ongoing support. Evidence-based medical treatment has been proven to stabilize dopamine levels in the brain and reduce cravings. Individualized, continuing care is vastly improving remission and recovery rates. Treatment can work. The brain can heal.

The Changing Minds campaign is about starting conversations. In order to spark community dialogue about addiction, the Health District has created Changing Minds Brain Pods, eight freestanding, glowing displays that dispense facts about addiction. The pods will make their debut at New West Fest on Friday, August 10, and then will rotate to different locations throughout Northern Colorado.

When we change the narrative on addiction, we dispel stigma, break down barriers to care and increase awareness of how to best allocate our community's resources. To learn more about how addiction changes the brain, the cost of addiction in Larimer County, and the stories of addiction and recovery in our community, visit [ChangingMindsLarimer.org](http://ChangingMindsLarimer.org).

### Key Statistics

- 1 in 10 of Larimer County residents lives with drug and/or alcohol addiction — 26,000 of our neighbors.
- Less than 1 in 10 who need addiction treatment receive it — leaving 23,660 of our neighbors without the care they need.
- Substance use disorders are more prevalent in the United States than cancer or diabetes.
- 1/3 of inpatient hospital costs are linked to addiction and risky substance use.
- 1 in 11 U.S. children has a parent with an alcohol use disorder.

- 9 in 10 who live with addiction began substance use by age 18.
- 1 in 30 U.S. deaths is related to alcohol.

### Find Out More

To learn more about addiction in Larimer County and/or download Changing Minds campaign materials, please visit [ChangingMindsLarimer.org](http://ChangingMindsLarimer.org)

For information on Brain Pod locations or to request an interview, please contact Brian Ferrans at [bferrans@healthdistrict.org](mailto:bferrans@healthdistrict.org) or 970.224.5209 x249

