



## Changing Minds Campaign Overview

### Health District campaign raises awareness of substance use disorders (drug and alcohol addiction)

The Health District of Northern Larimer County, in conjunction with the Mental Health and Substance Use Alliance, aims to increase public awareness of substance use disorders (drug and alcohol addiction) in our community with the Changing Minds campaign. The goals of Changing Minds are to destigmatize the disease, shift perceptions of treatment and recovery, and give hope that recovery is possible to the approximately 35,900 in our community who are living with the disease.

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.

One in 10 Larimer County residents suffers from addiction. Less than 1 in 10 of those 35,900 community members will get the treatment they need. That leaves nearly 32,310 in need of care — enough to fill the Budweiser Events Center four and a half times.

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. Recovery is possible. The brain can heal.

The Changing Minds campaign is about starting conversations. 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, see the cost of addiction in Larimer County and read stories of recovery in our community, visit [ChangingMindsLarimer.org](http://ChangingMindsLarimer.org).

### Key Statistics

- 1 in 10 Larimer County residents lives with drug and/or alcohol addiction — 35,900 of our neighbors.
- Less than 1 in 10 who need addiction treatment receive it — leaving 32,310 of our neighbors without the care they need.
- Substance use disorders are more prevalent in the United States than cancer or diabetes.
- 1 in 10 U.S. children has a parent with an alcohol use disorder.
- 7 in 10 who try an illegal drug before age 13 develop a substance use disorder within the next 7 years.
- More than 108,000 people die from drug or alcohol overdose in the U.S. every year.

## **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)

To request an interview, please contact the Health District of Northern Larimer County at [CIT@healthdistrict.org](mailto:CIT@healthdistrict.org)

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