



COLORADO

**Department of Health Care
Policy & Financing**

Department of Health Care Policy and Financing
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The Americans with Disabilities Act: Celebrating 25 Years of Progress

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This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed into law on July 26, 1990. This historic, ground-breaking legislation has improved the lives of people with disabilities in many ways big and small, while bringing the issues of access and inclusion to the forefront of our national consciousness.

Prior to the disability rights movement, even the most basic aspects of daily life were unattainable for many Americans. The lack of fundamental access to city streets, buildings and restrooms, or public transportation – which most of us take for granted – prevented people with disabilities from fully engaging in their communities. People who should have been our colleagues, friends and neighbors were relegated to live in institutional settings, isolated and unable to contribute to the outside world. They did not have a say in how and where they lived. People with disabilities and their advocates and allies turned their isolation into action and sought to pass civil rights legislation, such as the ADA.

Colorado has an important part in the history of this civil rights movement. From advocacy that improved access to public transportation, to the creation of the Colorado Cross Disability Coalition in 1990 to insure proper implementation of the ADA, to our Department's continuing work to improve the lives of people with disabilities, Colorado has been on the front lines of the struggle for equality. The Colorado spirit of independence and self-determination is an integral part of the disability rights movement and has proven essential to its successes.

We are proud of our Department's role in this process, and we strive for a relationship that embodies partnership and understanding with all of our stakeholders to improve the quality of life for the people we serve. People who are living the life they want to live are more likely to be healthy and engaged in their communities.

Our Community Living Advisory Group, comprised of multiple state agencies, advocates and stakeholders representing all areas of the disability community, has recommended changes to improve our Long-Term Services and Supports delivery system. These changes will improve coordination and quality of care, simplify regulations across state agencies, and promote accessible, affordable, integrated housing while improving employment opportunities for people receiving Long-Term Services and Supports.

Our mission is to improve health care access and outcomes for the people we serve while demonstrating sound stewardship of financial resources.
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The Advisory Group's work led to the creation of the [Colorado Community Living Plan](#). The Plan calls for community-based services, supports and housing for individuals with disabilities who live in long-term care facilities and wish to return to their community, or who wish to remain in their own homes.

We expanded our Buy-In Program for People with Disabilities to help more people maintain employment while continuing to qualify for Medicaid benefits, so they don't have to choose between jobs and the medical care and other supports they need to be healthy and successful. The Department is committed to providing service delivery options that empower Medicaid clients and their families to direct and manage the services and supports they need to live at home. Our goal is that all Coloradans who wish to live independently in their communities can do so.

We are excited about the future and look forward to working with our partners and stakeholders to improve quality of life for our members with disabilities.

Please join us as we celebrate our collaborative achievements, past and future, as we continue the important work of creating a world that honors all individuals and empowers them to reach their full potential.

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