



HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 07-1050

**BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) McGihon, and Labuda;
also SENATOR(S) Hagedorn, Boyd, Groff, and Williams.**

**CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A JOINT TASK FORCE FOR
THE STUDY OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUES.**

WHEREAS, Mental disorders are common in the United States, with approximately 57.7 million people age 18 or older suffering from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year; and

WHEREAS, Mental disorders are the leading cause of disability in the United States for ages 15 through 44; and

WHEREAS, Colorado ranks 19% higher than the national average in per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages; and

WHEREAS, In 2005, an estimated 19.7 million Americans were classified as current illicit drug users and 126 million aged 12 or older were current drinkers; and

WHEREAS, In Colorado, there are 17,300 people with a serious mental illness who are left untreated due to a lack of appropriated resources; and

WHEREAS, Children and adolescents in Colorado experience over one-third of the severe mental health disorders in the state, yet only approximately half of the children from low-income families receive care for such disorders; and

WHEREAS, There are an estimated 30,000 adolescent substance abusers in Colorado; and

WHEREAS, Colorado spends just over \$64 per capita on publicly funded mental health care, which is 21% below the national average; and

WHEREAS, Nationwide, \$27 per United States resident is spent on publicly funded substance abuse treatment compared to \$7.50 spent per resident in Colorado; and

WHEREAS, Six out of ten people receiving mental health services in Colorado are receiving services outside of the mental health system, and instead must seek care in other systems such as Corrections and Social Services; and

WHEREAS, In fiscal year 2006, 43% of the youth in mental health treatment had been referred by the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, Several state agencies are involved in the treatment of persons with mental health and substance abuse disorders; and

WHEREAS, Many other states have organized departments and state agencies to coordinate and create single behavioral health service systems for mental health and substance abuse treatment resulting in the maximization of public funding streams for services and treatment and a better coordination of efforts to treat those in need; and

WHEREAS, In order to best serve Coloradans, these state agencies need to coordinate their efforts to serve all persons in need and to maximize public funding for mental health and substance services; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Sixty-sixth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:

(1) That there is hereby created a task force for the study of behavioral health funding and treatment, whose duty shall be to study mental health and substance abuse services in order to coordinate the efforts of state agencies and streamline the services provided and to maximize federal and other funding sources;

(2) The task force shall consist of fourteen members as follows:

(a) Three members of the House of Representatives, of whom two shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and one shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives;

(b) Three members of the Senate, of whom two shall be appointed by the President of the Senate and one shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

(c) One representative of the governor's office, who shall be appointed by the Governor;

(d) The executive director of the department of human services or his or her designee;

(e) The executive director of the department of health care policy and financing or his or her designee;

(f) The executive director of the department of public health and environment or his or her designee;

(g) The executive director of the department of corrections or his or her designee;

(h) The executive director of the department of public safety or his or her designee;

(i) The executive director of the department of education or his or her designee; and

(j) The executive director of the department of law or his or her designee;

(3) That the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall designate a chairperson of the task force from among the members appointed from the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate shall designate a vice-chairperson of the task force from among the members appointed from the Senate;

(4) That the task force shall consult with interested parties to assist the task force in its work, which parties may include community mental health centers, mental health institute administrators, the Colorado mental health planning and advisory council, mental health and substance abuse service users, county commissioners, parole and probation officers, school district representatives, substance abuse treatment providers, law enforcement representatives, hospital representatives, developmental disability representatives, representatives of the judicial system, residential treatment providers, and other persons whose assistance the task force may find helpful;

(5) That the task force shall receive information and testimony and shall present a report to the Health and Human Services Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives on or before January 31, 2008, regarding any findings and legislative recommendations.

(6) That the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate shall designate a nonprofit or private organization as the custodian of funds for the task force for the study of behavioral health issues. The organization is authorized to receive and expend any funds necessary for the operation of the task force. The organization shall prepare a budget for the operation of the task force. Prior to the expenditure of any moneys received, the organization shall transmit a copy of the operating budget to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate and shall certify that there is adequate funding available to cover the expenses identified in the operating budget.

(7) That any staff needed to assist the task force in conducting its duties shall be provided by nonprofit agencies or private groups.

(8) That the members of the task force shall not be compensated for services or reimbursed for expenses associated with their service on the task force.

(9) That the task force may contract with an outside consultant to prepare a report for presentation to the General Assembly.

(10) That all costs incurred while conducting the study on behavioral health issues, including, but not limited to, the direct or indirect costs associated with the duties of the task force, the costs of research and analysis, compensation for any nonprofit agency or private group that assists the task force by supplying staff support, and costs for contracting with an outside consultant to prepare a report for the General Assembly shall be paid by contributions, grants, services, and in-kind donations from private sources.

Andrew Romanoff
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

Joan Fitz-Gerald
PRESIDENT OF
THE SENATE

Marilyn Eddins
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

Karen Goldman
SECRETARY OF
THE SENATE