

Unclear future for state's mental health initiative

Written by Kristin Jones, I-News at Rocky Mountain PBS
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Tom Sullivan knows the value of getting treatment for mental health problems. His son Alex was killed in the Aurora theater massacre in 2012, the victim of a man who seemed to think he was the Joker in a Batman movie.

James Holmes' sanity is a key question in his ongoing prosecution. But the shooting led Gov. John Hickenlooper to lay plans for 24-hour crisis centers meant to catch untreated mental illness and maybe avert the next mass shooting.

For Sullivan and the other survivors and family members affected by the Aurora shooting, though, mental health services fill a more immediate need. They provide support for surviving trauma.

"The people that did survive, but weren't physically hurt, are having all kinds of problems. There have been drug problems, alcohol problems. Families have been torn apart," says Sullivan, who says his family has benefited from the trauma-recovery groups convened by Aurora Mental Health Center. "Day to day, our lives are pretty complex, and when those types of things get added on top of it, it makes it all a little bit harder."

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