The 2019 Legislative Session: During this year’s session about 400 bills were passed, including bills that address energy and climate, healthcare, education, economic security, and civil and human rights. Depending on which side of the aisle one sits, the session was either extremely productive (Dems) or a failure (Reps). The session included a significant number of controversial bills. A larger than unusual number of bills did pass that directly or indirectly address suicide prevention. A number of bills also focused on behavioral health.

Final status of bills SPCC tracked this legislative session:

SB19-010 School Behavioral Health Services:

The bill allows grant money to be used for behavioral health care services at recipient schools and specifies that grants may also fund behavioral health services contracts with community providers. Grant applicants must specify the extent to which the school has seen an increase in activities or experiences that affect students’ mental well-being. The bill requires the department of education to prioritize grant applications based on the school's need for additional health professionals and the extent to which the school will prioritize the use of grant money for staff training related to behavioral health supports. Status: passed

HB19-1129 Prohibit Conversion Therapy: The bill prohibits a licensed physician specializing in psychiatry or a licensed, certified, or registered mental health care provider from engaging in conversion therapy with a patient under 18 years of age. A licensee who engages in these practices is subject to disciplinary action by the appropriate licensing board. The bill also makes the advertising or practice of conversion therapy by a physician or mental health care provider a deceptive trade practice under the "Colorado Consumer Protection Act". "Conversion therapy" means efforts to change an individual's sexual orientation, including efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attraction or feelings toward individuals of the same sex. After 5 years, this bill finally passed.

HB19-1269 Behavioral Health Coverage and Parity Modernization Act:

Act will address issues related to coverage of behavioral, mental health, and substance use disorder services under private health insurance and the state medicaid program. It will: eliminate loopholes in existing state and federal parity laws; bring behavioral health coverage into alignment with medical health coverage; and focus more on prevention and less on late-stage treatment. Status: passed

HB19-1017 K-5 Social and Emotional Health Act:

Bill requires department of education to select a pilot school district to ensure that an elementary school with high rate of poverty will have a social worker dedicated to every 250 students (funded by the state); pilot will be funded from 2020-21 school year and repealed July 2027. The department will contract with a program evaluator to determine the effectiveness of the pilot on the health and well-being of students. Status: passed

HB19-1120 Concerning Multiple Approaches to Youth Suicide

The bill allows a minor 12 years of age or older to seek and obtain psychotherapy services with or without the consent of the minor’s parent or guardian if the mental health professional determines the minor is knowingly and voluntarily seeking the psychotherapy services and the psychotherapy services are clinically necessary. A mental health professional providing psychotherapy services to a minor may, with the consent of the minor,
advise the minor's parent or legal guardian of the psychotherapy services provided, unless notifying the parent or legal guardian would be inappropriate or detrimental to the minor's care and treatment. However, the mental health professional is permitted to notify the minor's parent or legal guardian without the minor's consent if, in the opinion of the mental health professional, the minor is unable to manage the minor's care or treatment.

The mental health professional is required to engage the minor in a discussion about the importance of involving and notifying the minor's parent or legal guardian and document any attempt to contact the minor's parent or legal guardian. If a minor communicates a clear and imminent threat to commit suicide, the mental health professional is required to notify the minor's parent or legal guardian of the minor's suicidal ideation.

The bill requires the department of education, in consultation with the office of suicide prevention (office), the youth advisory council, and the suicide prevention commission, to create and maintain a mental health education literacy resource bank. The resource bank is available to the public free of charge. The bill also requires the state board of education to adopt standards related to mental health, including suicide prevention.

**HB19-1177 Extreme Risk Protection Order (sometimes called the “Red Flag Bill.”)** This bill will allow for a family member, household member, or law enforcement officer to petition a judge to remove a firearm from the home where there is risk of harm to self or others. A follow up hearing must take place to determine if the ERPO is warranted. This bill was extremely controversial and SPCC remained neutral - aside from providing legislators with information about the relationship between firearms and suicide. Status: passed

**Increase funding for the Zero Suicide:** This was not a bill; there were several attempts to get $800,000 added to the Long Bill (state budget). In the end, an amendment to the budget added a modest $100,000 to funding for the Zero Suicide initiative.