



**There is more to me
than my disability.**
Community Connections

Contact: Tara Kiene

Tel: (970) 385-3443

Cell: (970) 759-9154

Email: tara@cci-colorado.org

Website: www.communityconnectionsco.org

Facebook: CommunityConnectionsCOInc

Twitter: CCIColorado

For Immediate Release

Federal Agency Rule Changes Impact Local Human Service Agency

In March 2014, the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services published new Rules that impact the way home and community based services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) will be provided at the local level. Community Connections, a nonprofit provider of IDD services in Southwest Colorado, is seeking input from local community members to plan its response to these changes, which will go into effect starting in 2019.

Colorado's human and community based system for providing IDD services was designed over 50 years ago to allow for local control of services and a single point of entry for each geographic region. Under this system, the Community-Centered Board for each area of the state was responsible for eligibility and case management for all individuals with IDD as well as directly providing the needed services. Under the new Federal Rule, agencies like Community Connections will need to choose whether to continue providing case management or direct program services. Organizations will not be able to provide both services to the same individual.

The new Federal Rule also mandates that home and community based services funded by Medicaid must meet certain requirements to ensure that the services are fully integrated in the community, allow for a variety of service options, respect the dignity of individuals with disabilities, and support individuals' ability to make their own life choices. The changes will encourage providers to abandon segregated settings for people with disabilities, including group homes and sheltered workshops, neither of which are operating in Southwest Colorado.

“With change comes opportunity,” says Tara Kiene, President and CEO of Community Connections. “Our organization is in a good position to respond to these changes, but it is critical that our plans for the future meet the needs of the communities of Southwest Colorado.”

To address the changing landscape of providing IDD services and to ensure that the community has maximum input in planning for the future, Community Connections will be hosting an Open Community Forum open to all members of the public. The Forum will be held on September 27, 2017 from 5-6 p.m. at the Durango Recreation Center Sunlight Room. Participants may drop in any time during the Forum to learn more about the challenges facing intellectual and developmental services and provide their input.

For more information, community members can call Community Connections at 970-259-2464 or email cci@cci-colorado.org or visit the Community Connections website at communityconnectionsco.org.

Community Connections is a Durango-based nonprofit whose mission is to create opportunities for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to lead healthy and fulfilling lives in our community.

###