

Dear Supporters of Tennyson,

For more than 116 years, Tennyson Center for Children has served children and families across Colorado. We have encountered and overcome many challenges in an effort to provide for the safety and wellbeing of children and families most in need. I write today to share another challenge that must be overcome.

The Tennyson Board of Directors has made the difficult decision to voluntarily close our Residential Program to address operational and compliance concerns identified by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) and our own internal review. We will conduct an intensive evaluation to determine if and when we will reopen a residential program, which may take anywhere from 60-90 days, and most likely will coincide with the completion of the current legislative session. At the heart of this decision is the health and safety of the children we serve. Please know this decision was not made easily.

Children in our Residential Program make up 13% of those we serve annually. Currently, the Residential Program closure will affect 13 children, six of whom are already scheduled to be placed in bio, foster, adoptive, or kinship homes. We have invested additional resources to ensure all of the children's safety while they remain on our campus, and we will make extensive efforts to place them appropriately and safely in collaboration with their external treatment teams, as their wellbeing is our number one priority. While we are saddened that the closure of our Residential Program at this time will impact these children, we believe it is necessary in order to comprehensively and diligently meet our compliance obligations. The compliance concerns are due to many factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, which have resulted in significant dysregulation and increases in the acuity of the trauma experienced by the children we serve. As an organization, we will do better.

Tennyson has worked closely with CDHS for many years to improve the lives of children and families. CDHS fully supports our actions and has offered full assistance in our evaluation to determine how we can best serve children and families, while managing the new, complex federal and state regulations impacting residential programs.

Ned Breslin has stepped down as President, CEO and Executive Director of Rewiring and is no longer with Tennyson. James Young is serving as the interim CEO, while we begin a national search to identify the best qualified person to fill the role permanently.

Impact of the Residential Closure on The Agency

It is important to note that the closure of our Residential Program is not related to finances and will not impact the operations of other Tennyson programs, including our K-12 accredited school, Community Based Services, Families Together, Outpatient Services, and Child First, and we continue to be committed to the vision of Rewiring.

Unfortunately, closure of the Residential Program impacts our staff, as well. We are saddened to have to eliminate 33 positions. The staff members impacted have been dedicated to our children, and we are incredibly thankful for their service. We are providing resources and severance compensation to best assist them in pursuing new employment.

State legislation related to residential programs, which is anticipated to come at the end of the legislative session in May, will inform the future of potential residential programming at Tennyson. We find ourselves in a similar position to other facilities that are navigating complex and evolving regulations impacting residential programs.



Our evaluation will include assessing how we can utilize our resources to best serve the needs of children and families. As the result of Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) changes that will be enacted this year, the landscape for residential programs has changed drastically. There is great uncertainty as to whether residential programs across the state and country will be able to timely comply with FFPSA.

Given this landscape, we must explore whether we should direct dollars toward programs other than residential, such as our prevention and early intervention services and other programs and assess whether that investment may serve a greater need and impact more children and families than re-opening a residential program. We are approaching this as an opportunity to ensure that the Tennyson Center for Children best serves those most in need.

If we decide to re-open a residential program, it must meet our highest standard of care at Tennyson and be compliant with federal and state regulations. This will take a significant investment of time and resources and will require a re-engineering of our organization to fully adopt a comprehensive Trauma Informed Care model where all children and staff are provided the highest quality of care, which they need and deserve.

While I know this news will be disappointing to some of you, I firmly believe that Tennyson has the opportunity to emerge from this challenge as a stronger, more impactful organization that serves more children and families in even better ways. On behalf of the Board of Directors and everyone at Tennyson, thank you for your past support and, for the sake of the children and families we serve, we hope that we can continue to rely on your support now as we build the future of Tennyson together.

We will provide an update within the next 60-90 days after our full evaluation. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact interim President and CEO, James Young at james.young@tennysoncenter.org.

Sincerely,
Jody Harper Alderman
Chair of the Board of Directors
Tennyson Center for Children