

2020 Advocacy Leadership Awards

Award for Public Service in Advocacy



ABOUT LESLIE HEROD

Representative Leslie Herod was elected in 2016 as the first LGBTQ African American in the Colorado General Assembly. She represents House District 8 in Northeast Denver. While a student at the University of Colorado Boulder, she co-founded [New Era Colorado](#) – the state's leading organization focused on the engagement of young people.

Rep. Herod has served on multiple organizations, boards and commissions, including serving as Governor Ritter's appointee to the Judicial Performance Commission, a mayoral appointee to Denver's Cultural Affairs Commission, the Board of Directors for Urban Peak (Colorado's leading homeless youth service agency) and President of Colorado Black Women for Political Action. She also served as President Obama's deputy political director in Colorado during his 2012 reelection campaign.

MAKING A MARK

"Leslie is a forceful advocate and champion for the community, especially as it relates to behavioral health concerns. She is persistent in her work to increase access to care for everyone, including those in the LGBTQ+ community." – Jerry Cunningham, Envision: You Co-founder

Representative Leslie Herod is passionate about advocating for mental health and substance use treatment, as well as increasing access to care for Denver residents. Herod championed a ballot initiative – [Caring for Denver](#) – that will raise at least \$35 million annually for mental health and substance abuse treatment and services for children and adults in Denver. The initiative passed overwhelmingly and has created the largest mental health foundation in the state.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Herod has been a voice for LGBTQ+ older adults, bringing attention to the prevalence of feelings of isolation. She says:

“We have to remember that a lot of the older, LGBTQ+ people have lived through the AIDS epidemic and watched so many people die. Right now, there are a lot of similarities being drawn between COVID-19 and the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and although we haven’t seen that level yet in Colorado, my fear is that we will. And so, while we can look to our seniors for support, we have got to ensure that we are supporting them.”

Rep. Herod is committed to ensuring the people of Denver continue to have access to mental health and substance use treatment during this time, when the need is greater than ever.

Thank you, Rep. Herod, for making a difference in and beyond your community. And a special thanks to our generous sponsor, [Sunovion Pharmaceuticals](#), for their ongoing support.