



COLORADO HEALTH POLICY COALITION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Diverse Colorado coalition forms to advocate for thoughtful approach to health care changes

More than 100 groups from across the state urge Congress to outline new framework before taking any action

(Colorado, Jan. 4, 2017) – More than 100 organizations have come together to form the Colorado Health Policy Coalition, which is focused on urging Congress to develop a comprehensive and thoughtful health care framework before taking action to repeal the nation’s current health care policies.

The coalition, made up of 108 business, health care provider, consumer, disability and advocacy groups from across the political spectrum and all parts of the state, made its position known through a letter delivered to Gov. John Hickenlooper as well as Colorado’s entire congressional delegation today. Coalition members anticipate initial Congressional action to begin repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), commonly called Obamacare, as early as this week.

“With Colorado’s long history of bipartisan work on health care, we know our coalition can serve as a good partner to our state and national leaders as we continue to wrestle with how to best ensure quality, affordable health care for all Americans,” said Adela Flores-Brennan, Executive Director of the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative. “But our first, most urgent message has to be that repeal of our existing framework, without a clear picture of what will replace it, is a recipe for disaster for health care in America and for millions of us who rely on our health care infrastructure.”

The coalition members typically not aligned on health care policy found strong agreement in one particular area: Colorado needs stability in its health care marketplace and that the current

“repeal and delay” approach some favor at the federal level will create uncertainty and chaos. That will be bad for all health care consumers, everyone working in health care businesses and all state and local governments.

“The business community is acutely aware of the important decisions that will happen soon and we’re anxious to make sure Congress hears our voice on these issues,” said Kelly Brough, president and chief executive officer of the Denver Metro Chamber. “We recognize that Colorado’s economy is as diverse as our landscape and we need to craft policy accordingly. It is critical that we maintain functional health insurance marketplaces that provide affordable coverage for Coloradans and ensure our entire state is a great place to live, work and practice medicine.”

Not all coalition partners agree with plans to repeal or alter the current law, but all recognize this as an opportunity to improve the country’s current system. By focusing on calling for a “clearly identified and carefully considered replacement plan,” the coalition hopes to engage Colorado’s congressional delegation in a conversation about important elements in any plan proposed.

“We’ve outlined principles that we believe should be part of any new plan that is considered,” said Ross Brooks, chief executive officer of Mountain Family Health Centers. “Health care has been such a divisive topic in this country in recent years. We believe it sends a powerful message to bring together a group this big and this diverse on the values that should underlie our path forward. We hope Senators Gardner and Bennet view this coalition as a helpful resource in informing and shaping their efforts.”

While many parts of current law are publically popular and beneficial, including the requirement that children can stay on their parents’ health insurance until age 26 and the rule that individuals cannot be denied insurance because of pre-existing conditions, there is an understanding that health care is complex and these policies are interconnected. This diverse coalition recognizes that rolling back policies in other areas or taking a piecemeal approach to changing our health care framework – without a clear and comprehensive plan for the future – will have negative unintended consequences for state and local governments, the health care industry and our economy broadly and Coloradans, including rural communities and those who use Medicaid to access health care.

“On the Eastern Plains we understand that access to health care is a critically important part of ensuring a long and productive life for our residents and a key driver of our local economy,” said Cathy Shull, executive director of Northeast Colorado’s Progressive 15. “But with limited options for both health insurance and health care access, we had to join the call demanding Congress be thoughtful about next steps. We can’t stand by while our communities fall victim to the unintended consequences of an unstable market.”

Coalition partners include health care providers like hospitals and clinics, insurance providers and brokers as well as business groups from across the state. Coalition members include:

Ability Connection Colorado	Boulder County Public Health
Action 22	Boulder Valley Women's Health Center
Advocacy Denver	Caring for Colorado Foundation
Advocates for Recovery Colorado	Center for Independence
All Kids Covered Colorado	Centura Health
American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter	Children's Hospital Colorado
American College of Nurse-Midwives, Colorado Affiliate	Club 20
Arc Thrift Stores	Colorado Academy of Family Physicians
Atlantis Community Inc	Colorado Association for School-Based Health Care
Aurora Chamber of Commerce	Colorado Association of Health Plans
Autism Society of Colorado	Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials
Axis Health System	Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council
Bill Lindsay	Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Boulder Community Health	Colorado Children's Campaign
Boulder County Board of County Commissioners	Colorado Children's Healthcare Access Program

Colorado Chronic Care Collaborative	Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights
Colorado Coalition for Autism and other Neurological Disability Options	Colorado Providers Association
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless	Colorado Psychiatric Society
Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved	Colorado Public Health Association
Colorado Community Health Network	Colorado School Medicaid Consortium
Colorado Competitive Council	Colorado State Association of Health Underwriters
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative	Craig Hospital
Colorado Covering Kids and Families	Denver Health and Hospital Authority
Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition	Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce
Colorado Cross Disability Coalition	Disability Law Colorado
Colorado Fiscal Institute	Families at the Forefront of Technology
Colorado Foundation for Universal Health Care	Firefly Autism
Colorado Gerontological Society	FRESC
Colorado Hospital Association	Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association & Film Commission
Colorado Medical Society	Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce
Colorado Mental Wellness Network	Healthier Colorado

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Public Health Nurses Association of Colorado

Hospice & Palliative Care Association of the Rockies

Rocky Mountain Health Plans

Kaiser Permanente Colorado

Rose Community Foundation

Lehman Disability Planning, LLC

Stahlman Disability Consulting

Mental Health Colorado

Summit Community Care Clinic

Mind Springs Health

The Arc - Jefferson, Gilpin and Clear Creek Counties

Mountain Family Health Centers

The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties

NARAL Pro-Choice Colorado

The Arc Mesa County

National Hemophilia Foundation, Colorado Chapter

The Arc of Adams County

Niederman Insurance Agency

The Arc of Aurora

Oral Health Colorado

The Arc of Colorado

Parent to Parent of Colorado

The Arc of Larimer County

Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains

The Arc of Pikes Peak Region

Polsinelli PC

The Arc of Pueblo

Pro 15

The Arc of Southwest Colorado

Progress Now Colorado

The Arc of Weld County

The Arc of West Central Colorado

The Association for Community Living in
Boulder & Broomfield Counties

The Bell Policy Center

The Colorado Health Foundation

The Colorado Trust

THRIVE!: The Persons Living With HIV/AIDS
Initiative of Colorado, Inc

Together Colorado

Tri-County Health Department

UCHealth

Vail Valley Partnership

Warner Pacific Insurance Services, Inc

West Springs Hospital

Yondorf & Associates

Young Invincibles