



January 6, 2021

The Honorable Governor Jared Polis of Colorado
200 E. Colfax Ave
Denver, CO 80203

The Honorable Lt. Governor Diana Primavera of Colorado
200 E. Colfax Ave., Rm. 130
Denver, CO 80203

Colorado President of the Senate Leroy Garcia
200 E. Colfax Ave., Rm. 272
Denver, CO 80203

Colorado Senate Minority Leader Chris Holbert
200 E. Colfax Ave., Rm. 346
Denver, CO 80203

Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives Alec Garnett
200 E. Colfax Ave., Rm. 307
Denver, CO 80203

Colorado House of Representatives Minority Leader Hugh McKean
200 E. Colfax Ave., Rm. 307
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Polis, Lt. Governor Primavera, Senate President Garcia, Senate Minority Leader Holbert, Speaker Garnett and House Minority Leader McKean,

Re: Health care policy in 2021

As we embark on the 2021 legislative session in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we write to ask for improved processes for stakeholder engagement on health care policies that will have broad impacts on the health care of Coloradans during this precarious time.

The health care sector is currently facing a historic challenge. As of today, there are 346,893 COVID-19 cases in our state, with more than 2.1 million people having been tested and more than 3,000 outbreaks. Hospitals and frontline health care workers are facing incredibly demanding conditions as they try to care for patients with and without COVID. Health insurance providers are working diligently to modify policies to meet patient and provider needs, responding to more than 55 Division of Insurance regulations and bulletins in 2020 alone. Through all of this, the health care sector has worked together to advance improvements in clinical care, reduce administrative and payment barriers, and increase telehealth across the state in an unprecedented amount of time. Colorado's health care sector has stepped up at every turn to support the administration since COVID-19 arrived in Colorado, and we intend to continue to work as partners with each other and with you in the fight against the pandemic. While there is hope in the form of the vaccine, it will be the latter part of 2021 before most Coloradans are immunized. Until then, and perhaps even beyond that point, we must remain vigilant and focused on minimizing impacts of the pandemic on Coloradans and on Colorado's health care system.

Apart from the ongoing COVID-19 issues which continue to be our priority, we are all committed to decreasing health care costs, increasing competition, and improving access to high-quality, affordable, and efficient health care in our state. As such, we have supported many of the more than thirty bills that have been introduced and passed in just the last two years. We continue to engage with all stakeholders to work towards the goals outlined above and are diligently implementing a number of policies intended to move Colorado towards more affordable health care. In particular, we are:

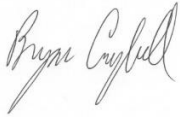
- Providing a 20% reduction to individual market premiums through the Reinsurance Program (HB19 – 1168). Further reducing individual market premiums in 2022 through the HIT fee (SB20 – 215) and providing additional programs to expand affordability and coverage.
- Reducing health care costs and protecting consumers from out-of-network bills (HB19 – 1174).
- Implementing value-based payments for hospitals through the Medicaid Hospital Transformation Program (HB17-267).
- Aligning investment with value to achieve better health outcomes through the Primary Care Reform Collaborative (HB19 – 1233).
- Ensuring consumers can access mental healthcare (HB19 -1269).
- Expanding hospital transparency on financial measures and community benefit spending (HB19 - 1001 and HB19 – 1320).
- Improving enrollment accessibility to reduce the uninsured rate through the Easy Enrollment program (HB20 – 1236).
- Expanding coverage for infertility (HB20 – 1158).
- Studying various health care systems for impacts to Coloradans (HB19 – 1176).

Throughout the development, legislative consideration, and implementation of many of the above policies there has been a lack of authentic and early engagement with our sector and we are concerned about this trend continuing in 2021. While we may not always agree with policymakers or with each other on policies, we do agree that there should be transparent processes for providing feedback and space for collaborative improvement on access and affordability policies. We have serious concerns that “surprise” policies in 2021 could destabilize the market and be harmful to Coloradans while the entire sector is focused on maintaining coverage and care for both COVID and non-COVID patients.

We ask that you strive to work with us, and engage with us in a meaningful way, develop a vision and goals for the future of health care in Colorado. We believe it is more imperative than ever that the administration and legislators alike provide timely information, direct and trustworthy responses, and acknowledge feedback from our sector regarding the impacts of health care policies. We have worked in good faith with each other and with policymakers to advance access to health insurance and health care and improve affordability. It is the best interests of our members, patients, families, and our communities that there are transparent processes in place for these discussions as it will be up to us to secure the success of your policies. While policymakers may have the best intentions, our knowledge and expertise are essential to creating and implementing sound policies that do not have adverse effects on those we hope to help – especially when considering how current implementation will align (or not) with proposed policy.

We appreciate your consideration and hope to have your partnership as we continue to work together towards decreasing healthcare costs, increasing competition and improving access to high-quality, affordable, and efficient health care in our state.

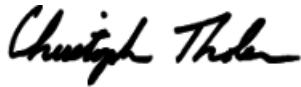
Sincerely,



Bryan Campbell
CEO, Colorado Medical Society



Amanda Massey
Executive Director, Colorado Association of Health Plans



Chris Tholen
President and CEO, Colorado Hospital Association

Cc: Senator Rhonda Fields, Senator Joann Ginal, Senator-elect Sonya Jaquez-Lewis, Senator-elect Janet Buckner, Senator Jim Smallwood, Senator-elect Barbara Kirkmeyer, Senator-elect Cleave Simpson, Senator Kerry Donovan, Representative Susan Lontine, Representative Yadira Caraveo, Representative Dominique Jackson, Representative Chris Kennedy, Representative-elect Karen McCormick, Representative Kyle Mullica, Representative-elect David Ortiz, Representative Brianna Titone, Representative Mark Baisley, Representative Ron Hanks, Representative Matt Soper, Representative-elect Tonya Van Beber, Representative Dave Williams, Representative Dafna Michaelson Jenet, Representative Emily Sirota, Representative Lisa Cutter, Representative Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez, Representative-elect Iman Jodeh, Representative-elect Naquetta Ricks, Representative Mary Young, Representative Rod Pelton, Representative-elect Mary Bradfield, Representative Richard Holtorf, Representative Colin Larson, Representative Dan Woog, and Representative Dylan Roberts