

Testimony to the Business Affairs and Labor Committee

For the Hearing on

HB 09-1273 Colorado Guaranteed Healthcare Act

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Advocating for Healthcare Reform

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Title __Family Nurse Practitioner

Time in Practice __30 years

Time in Colorado __33 years

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Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding the important issue of guaranteed healthcare for all. I am here as a member of the Colorado Nurses for Access to Health Care for All task force (CNAHCA) to testify on behalf of the Colorado Nurses Association (CNA).

As professional nurses we work directly with our community members and see first hand the effects of un-insurance and under-insurance on individuals and families. We see patients who delay treatment or stop needed medications because they cannot afford them, or because they lost their job and with it their insurance, or work part time and don't qualify for insurance, or have insurance available but can't afford the premium... it is for these and many other reasons that we support this bill.

We recognize that this is a difficult economic year for both the Nation and the State of Colorado, but we also recognize that the tough economic times will only increase the need for access to health care as more and more individuals lose their jobs and health benefits. It has become increasingly clear to all that we cannot expect the health care market to "adjust itself" and we cannot continue to delay acting on the health care crisis.

We support this bill because it will create the framework to provide guaranteed health care.

We support this bill because it starts the conversation at the level at which public policy is created.

We support this bill because it is a building block toward our ultimate objective; guaranteed access to health care for all Coloradans.

The Colorado Nurses Association has been advocating for healthcare reform since 1992, and during this time we have seen the need for reform increase. We have participated in Governor Romer's Colorado Care Project as well as Nursing's Agenda for Healthcare Reform in 1993. CNA developed Colorado Principals for Health Care Reform to provide a platform and to clearly articulate our beliefs on this issue. In 2003 the CNAHCA was formed as a task force to focus efforts toward healthcare reform.

The 2005 Colorado Nurses Association endorsed a single-payer universal health care system. A single-payer system provides private health care to all persons with public funding. We have supported and assisted candidates that have indicated support for or willingness to learn about a universal access health care system. We have also participated with Health Care for All Colorado (HCAC) in presenting the Colorado Health Services Plan to the 2008 Blue Ribbon Commission.

I am here today to ask you to have the courage and political will to support this legislation that will begin a process of real change in health care delivery in our state. There is clear evidence that if we continue in our current ways we will only spend more money, and provide fewer services to fewer people. Health care is essential to begin a return to a vital and sustainable society. There is always risk in change but in this economy it seems we are all at risk with NO CHANGE.