



**Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
SB 228 Testimony
House Transportation & Energy Committee
April 23, 2009**

1536 WYNKOOP ST
SUITE 101
DENVER, CO 80202

t: (303) 839-1261
f: (303) 839-1263

cohealthinitiative.org

Thank you Madam Chair, members of the Committee and Representative Marostica.

My name is Kelly Shanahan and I am the Policy Director for the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative. I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 228.

CCHI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization who's mission is barrier-free access to quality, affordable health care for all Coloradans. We act as a unified, statewide voice for consumers here at the Capitol and in other state-level policy making arenas. We have over 50 organizational members and many individual members. Some examples of our membership are the American Diabetes Association, the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, 9 to 5 National Association of Working Women, Family Voices, Autism Society of Colorado, Mental Health America of Colorado, the American Cancer Society, the MS Society, the Colorado Children's Campaign, and many more.

Today I'd like to talk very briefly about the health care debate in our state and why removing the 6% budget formula is potentially a good thing for addressing the healthcare crisis.

And it is a crisis...

- Health care premiums are increasing at five times the rate of inflation and wages.
- This is certainly due to a number of factors, but not the least of which is the cost-shift. The cost shift is caused by the uninsured, the underinsured, and the underfunding of public safety net programs such as Medicaid and SCHIP, which gets shifted to private payers.
- In Colorado, we have a higher than average rate of uninsured compared to the nation.
- We have the fastest growing child poverty rate in the nation, which means more and more Colorado families are struggling.
- We have one of the leanest Medicaid programs in the nation, due in large measure to our inability to make necessary public investments.

However, a bright light is that we are the home of good conversation and robust debate on healthcare reform.

This legislative body created the 208 Blue Ribbon Commission for Healthcare Reform to discuss how we can pull our state out of this healthcare crisis and become an example of best practice to the rest of the nation.

The recommendations from that Commission were things like...

- Health information technology (universally supported but it requires significant upfront investments to get off the ground).
- Fill in the holes in the safety net – create a public program for the most vulnerable in the state that truly meets their needs and maximize federal dollars.
- Improving our high risk pool – CoverColorado – so that it is truly a pool that cares for those in the most need and is adequately funded to do so, taking pressure off the private market.

However, these ideas and many more of their recommendations require some long term investments.

Because of the 6% budget formula, during good economic times, we are severely limited by this formula in the ability of our state (and this legislative body) to prioritize and make these investments.

And during rotten economic times, we are forced to make cuts to the bone. And these cuts are made permanent.

Whether it's severe economic pain that will be caused by the \$30.8 million in medical provider rate cuts approved in the Budget, OR the \$15 million taken from the Primary Care Fund for safety net community health centers, OR if the Legislature had chosen to take \$300 million from higher education, getting rid of the 6% will help ease that pain by helping those vital priorities to recover more quickly when the economy recovers. The alternative is artificially extending the recession by making permanent cuts to economic drivers such as health care and education.

For this reason, members of the health care community support removing this rigid formula and giving our legislature, you, the ability to put all public investments on a level playing field and prioritize funding based on our state's current needs as YOU see fit.

I urge your support of Senate Bill 228.

Thank you.



2008 MEMBERS & PARTNERS

The Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, with the active support of our members and partners, is a unified, statewide organization of consumers and partners, working for barrier-free access to quality, affordable healthcare

As a result of our efforts, thousands of Coloradans have gained access to health care.

MEMBERS:

9 to 5 National Association of Working Women
 AARP Colorado
 Alzheimer's Association, Rocky Mountain Chapter
 American Diabetes Association
 American Heart Association
 Arc of Arapahoe and Douglas County
 Arc of Aurora
 Arc of Denver
 Autism Society of Boulder County
 Autism Society of Colorado
 Bell Policy Center
 Center for African American Health
 Colorado AIDS Project
 Colorado Center on Law and Policy
 Colorado Children's Campaign
 Colorado Citizen's for Accountability
 Colorado Coalition for the Medically Undeserved (CCMU)
 Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council
 Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity & Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
 Colorado Progressive Coalition
 Colorado Rural Health Center

Colorado Women's Agenda
 Colorado Public Interest Research Group (CoPIRG)
 Denver Urban Ministries (DeaUM)
 Empower Colorado
 Epilepsy Foundation of Colorado
 Family Resource Center Association
 Family Voices Colorado
 Health Care for All Colorado
 Health Think/Global Think
 Hunger for Justice
 The Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People
 Lupus Foundation of Colorado
 Lutheran Advocacy Ministry
 Mental Health Association of Colorado
 Metro CareRing
 National Alliance on Mental Illness
 National MS Society - Colorado Chapter
 Oral Health Awareness Colorado
 Parent to Parent of Colorado
 Pikes Peak Partnership
 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
 Service Employees International Union
 Thrive! People living with HIV/AIDS
 Women's Lobby of Colorado
 Women's Resource Center of Durango

PARTNERS:

American Academy of Pediatrics
 Boulder County Head Start
 Brookside Assisted Living
 CCB Partners
 Christian Healing Coalition
 Clinica Campesina
 Colorado Access
 Colorado Association of Alcohol and Drug Service Providers
 Colorado Association of School-Based Health Centers
 Colorado Behavioral Health Council
 Colorado Community Health Network
 Colorado Dietetic Association
 Colorado Gerontological Society
 Colorado Gynecological & Obstetrical Society
 Colorado Health Department, CO Springs
 Colorado Nurses Association
 Colorado Organizations Responding to AIDS (CORA)
 Community Health Partnership
 Community Voices, Denver Health
 Covering Kids and Families
 Denver Department of Human Services
 Denver Health
 Denver Healthy People 2010
 Denver Hospice
 Doctors Care
 El Paso County Department of Public Health & Environment
 Grupo SAUD
 Health District of Northern Larimer County
 High Plains Community Health Center
 Hospice of St. John
 Inner City Health Center
 JFK Partners
 Latino American Health Network
 Metro Community Provider Network
 National Jewish Medical & Research Center
 Peak Vista Community Health Center
 Pikes Peak Behavioral Health Group
 Penrose St. Francis
 Pikes Peak Mental Health
 Pueblo Community Health Center Foundation
 San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center

ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE

