

Testimony regarding House Bill 09-1273
Colorado House of Representatives
Business Affairs and Labor Committee
March 18th, 2009

Chairman Rice and members of the Business Affairs and Labor Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is John Valvano. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and pleased to represent the **National Association of Social Workers, Colorado Chapter** (NASW Colorado) in its support for HB 1273, the Colorado Guaranteed Health Care Act. NASW Colorado currently represents over 2,300 social workers in Colorado who practice in a wide variety of health, mental health and community-based settings.

Many social workers are expert witnesses to the tragic challenges inherent in our current health and mental health care systems. We are often asked to pick up the pieces of a fragmented health care system that increasingly fails the people it is intended to serve. Person after person, family after family, story after story, we are intimately acquainted with those impacted by these failures – though their increased suffering, financial distress, premature levels of disability and, at times, early death. At the same time, we know well the value of what quality health and mental health services brings to us in terms of our overall quality of life, well-being and productive nature.

NASW Colorado is pleased to endorse HB 1273 as a path towards ensuring that all Coloradans have access to the highest quality and most cost-effective health and mental health care services regardless of their employment, income, or health status. It is also a path to improved continuity of care through guaranteed access and reduced fragmentation of our health and mental health care service delivery systems.

Healthy individuals lead to healthy workers, which lead to healthy businesses, which lead to healthy communities. We urge your support for HB 1273 for the promise of improved health care that it brings to all Coloradans.

Thank you.

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February 20, 2009

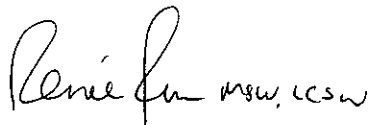
To Whom It May Concern:

The National Association of Social Workers, Colorado Chapter is pleased to endorse HB 09-1273, the Colorado Guaranteed Health Care Act, as introduced by State Representative John Kefalas. This Act seeks to create a system that provides comprehensive health and mental health services to all eligible participants in Colorado. NASW supports health care policies such as HB 09-1273 that ensures the right to universal access to a continuum of health and mental health care throughout all stages of the life cycle.

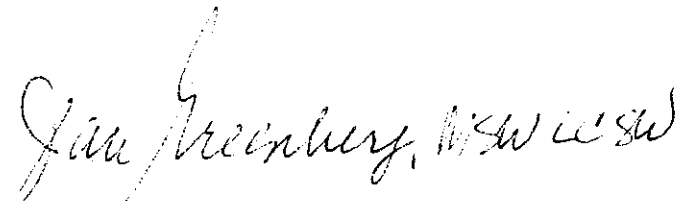
NASW Colorado is a professional association that advocates for the profession of social work and social work values. NASW Colorado currently represents over 2,300 members in Colorado. Social workers provide services in a variety of healthcare throughout our state, including mental health and public health. Nationally, the social worker profession is the largest provider of mental health services. Social work knowledge and skills will become even more critical under a universal system of comprehensive health and mental health care that serves all Coloradans, as proposed in HB 09-1273.

Integrating social work services into a newly designed health care system and providing adequate reimbursement for social workers will be critical to its overall success. NASW Colorado believes that HB 09-1273 is a path towards ensuring that all Coloradans have access to the highest quality and most cost effective health and mental health care services regardless of their employment, income, or healthcare status.

Sincerely,



Renee Rivera, MSW, LCSW
Executive Director



Jean Greenberg, MSW, LCSW
Chair, Legislative Committee