



The Honorable Cory Gardner
United States Senate
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Gardner,

As an important advocate and partner for business organizations across the state, we wanted to reach out and offer our support for you as you grapple with federal health care reform. As business organizations that represent thousands of Colorado companies in every county in Colorado we share with you a common goal of putting more Coloradans to work and recognize the critical role health care access and coverage plays in our economy.

We recognize that there is an opportunity to improve the current state of Medicaid. That said, as it stands today, the program is critical to not only the health of nearly 1.3 million Coloradans (almost half of them children age 20 or under), but also to the health of Colorado's economy. Simply put, a healthy workforce is critical to a healthy economy.

The significant cuts proposed in the American Health Care Act would reduce Colorado's federal Medicaid funding by approximately \$20.4 billion over seven years and increase the number of uninsured Coloradans by 64 percent. These fast-paced Medicaid cuts will shift an increasing share of the cost of care to the commercial health insurance market place, to private employers, to health care providers and to our state government. Such changes risk creating significantly increased health care costs for Colorado's private employers, financial losses to hospitals across the state, tremendous pressures on physicians who struggle to meet the demand for services under low reimbursement structures, and significant uncertainty for Colorado's state budget.

While the health and economic benefits of Medicaid are felt statewide, nowhere would deep cuts in federal funding be felt more intensely than in rural Colorado, where significant portions of people rely on the program for their health care coverage. In nine rural counties, Medicaid covers 40 percent or more of the population. Substantial reductions in Medicaid funding will leave thousands of individuals without health coverage or care, and will imperil the health systems and economies of Colorado's rural communities. Federal health care policy and funding changes must be made in a way that protects Colorado's statewide economy and workforce from the impact of cuts that could endanger our fragile, rural health system and result in significantly decreased access to care.

Colorado's economy is on a roll. We have a record low unemployment rate and uninsured rate. Today, Colorado's economy, as measured by state gross domestic product, is \$3.82 billion (1.4 percent) larger as a result of the increased economic activity created by Medicaid.

Colorado has a long and proud history of cross-sector, bi-partisan collaboration in working to develop solutions to pressing challenges in health care and otherwise. We look forward to hearing of your leadership on these matters, and want to offer our support to you as you attempt to weave a solution that is reasonable and effective, protects our economy and ensures we continue to be a vibrant and healthy state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly J. Brough, President and CEO
Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce

Nicholas Colglazier, Director
Colorado Competitive Council (C3)

J.J. Ament, CEO
Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation