



April 28, 2022

Dear Chair Bridges and Members of the Senate Transportation & Energy Committee,

On behalf of Children's Hospital Colorado, we are writing today to urge your support of HB22-1042. This bill will help remove cost barriers for teen parents so that more young people can access driver's education safety courses. This will in turn lead to safer teen drivers on Colorado's roads and enable greater self-sufficiency for teen parents and their children.

Children's Hospital Colorado is proud to partner with the community to advocate for the health and well-being of kids and families. Our work goes beyond our hospital walls and into the communities we support. Children's Hospital Colorado operates a Young Mother's Clinic, which is a multidisciplinary clinic that supports both the mother and child's medical needs, and we often support families to remove barriers such as transportation challenges. In solving for transportation challenges, we also work closely with community partners to promote injury prevention among children and teens.

Teen parents who cannot access driver's education courses or receive instruction from a supervising adult can pose a safety risk to themselves, their children and the public. According to the Colorado Department of Transportation, Colorado averages 84 teen deaths per year.¹ The U.S. Department of Transportation recommends a minimum 30-hours of classroom learning and a minimum 6-hour field-based driver's education course. Various research studies have shown that formal driver's education courses result in reduced likelihood of crashes and reduced likelihood of violation tickets. Specifically, a Nebraska Safety Council study that was conducted over a span of 8 years with 150,000 teen drivers found that teens who had not completed driver's education were 75 percent more likely to get a traffic ticket, 24 percent more likely to be involved in a fatal or injury accident, and 16 percent more likely to have an accident.²

When focusing on the teen parent population in particular, we also must be cognizant that they may need to transport their own children to and from daycare or other necessary appointments. Car crashes continue to be a top cause of child injury or fatality for kids age 1-14.³ By improving teen driver skills, we can protect both teen drivers and their infant children, improving everyone's safety on Colorado roads.

Lastly, cost is often a prohibitive factor that keeps many teen parents from being able to access these vital education courses. Driver's education, as currently required by Colorado's Graduated Drivers Licensing Law, requires 32 hours of classroom/online instruction, and 6 hours on the road with an instructor. These courses are very expensive though, with costs of these courses ranging between \$450 and \$700.⁴ Research shows that more driver's education, and specifically hands-on training in a car with an instructor, can lead to safer drivers.⁵ Removing this cost barrier ensures that access to quality teen driving education will not be a concern for under resourced families. HB22-1042 aims to cover the

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associated costs of driver's education courses for eligible teen parents, especially since the need for teen parents to drive can be much more substantial than other teens. Investing in teen driving programs will allow teen parents to be able to make appointments, attend school and graduate, and work. This also ensures Colorado has well-trained and safe drivers on the road.

On behalf of Children's Hospital Colorado, we would like to thank Senators Buckner and Hisey for their leadership on this issue, and we urge the committee's support of HB22-1042.

Sincerely,

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¹ Colorado Teen Driving – Colorado Department of Transportation (codot.gov)
² Study: Driver's ed significantly reduces teen crashes, tickets | Nebraska Today | University of Nebraska-Lincoln (unl.edu)
³ Child Passenger Safety: Get the Facts | Transportation Safety | CDC
⁴ Graduated Drivers License Laws (codot.gov)
⁵ Study: Hands-On Training May Help Drivers Better Understand ADAS -