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May 2, 2022

The Honorable Susan Lontine
 Chair
 House Health & Insurance Committee
 200 East Colfax Avenue, Room 307
 Denver, Colorado 80203

Re: Support for Senate Bill 186- Colorado Rare Disease Advisory Council

Dear Chair Lontine and Members of the House Health & Insurance Committee:

On behalf of the 15 undersigned organizations representing individuals with rare diseases in Colorado, we ask for your support of the Senate Bill 186 (SB 186) when it comes before you for consideration. SB 186 establishes a Rare Disease Advisory Council (RDAC) within the state, which if passed, would help to give a voice to the estimated 1-in-10 individuals living with a rare disease in Colorado.

Any condition that affects fewer than 200,000 Americans is considered rare. There are more than 7,000 known rare diseases, affecting 25-30 million Americans across a broad spectrum of medical conditions. Rare disease patients face many unique challenges every day, from obtaining an accurate diagnosis and accessing medical specialists with knowledge of their condition, to battling for fair insurance coverage of their treatment and care. However, due to small patient populations and the variety of rare diseases, it can be difficult for state government officials to have an in-depth understanding of the rare disease community's needs. This lack of awareness often contributes to the obstacles faced by rare disease patients and their loved ones.

While RDACs are organized differently in each state, they provide a forum for patients, caregivers and experts across the state to analyze the needs of the community and make recommendations on how to improve public policy related to rare diseases. RDAC members typically include a variety of rare disease stakeholders, including patients, caregivers, health care

providers, health insurers, biotech industry, researchers, and patient advocacy organizations. The council may conduct surveys to better understand common challenges rare disease patients or caregivers face, consult with experts to improve access to quality health care, and compile resources related to rare diseases.

In creating this council, Colorado will join twenty-one other states that have already enacted similar legislation in support of their rare disease community and proven that an RDAC can be an invaluable resource. Those states are Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Once again, we ask that you support SB 186 when it comes before your Committee for consideration to help give a voice to all Colorado residents living with rare diseases. For any questions, please contact Annissa Reed with the National Organization for Rare Disorders via email at areed@rarediseases.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

National Organization for Rare Disorders
American Kidney Fund
American Partnership for Eosinophilic Disorders
Be The Match/ National Marrow Donor Program
Chronic Care Collaborative
Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute (CFRI)
IGA Nephropathy Foundation
Immune Deficiency Foundation
International Pemphigus Pemphigoid Foundation
Lymphedema Advocacy Group
Sick Cells
SLC6A1 Connect
The Homocystinuria Network of America
The Independence Center
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society