



April 24, 2019

To: Governor Jared Polis
Members, Colorado General Assembly

In 1975, the Colorado General Assembly enacted the Colorado Professional Review Act (the Act) in order to uphold the standards of quality, professional conduct and appropriateness of patient care. Over the past 43 years, the Act and its protections have been reaffirmed several times by the General Assembly.

Senate Bill (SB) 234 is the most important health care bill the General Assembly will consider in 2019. As the CEOs of every Colorado hospital and health system, we strongly urge you to support its immediate consideration and swift passage as recommended by the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA).

DORA's Office of Policy, Research & Regulatory Reform conducted a nine-month investigation and determined that the Act positively contributes to patient safety and professional development. The agency's report overwhelmingly endorsed the full reauthorization of the Act and all the privileges it provides.

Professional review is a foundational tool used by Colorado hospitals and health systems to build a strong culture of patient safety throughout our entire health care system. The legal protections and qualified immunity for professional review participants promotes unfettered reviews of health care professionals, which are critical to ensuring safe and quality patient care.

Without the protections of the Act, medical professionals would be unlikely to participate in medical reviews, reporting would decline, and learning would be stifled. **The General Assembly's actions in the next nine days will determine and potentially put at risk the future of Colorado's health care landscape.**

Today, Colorado is recognized as a national leader in health care innovation. Health care providers – physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and other nursing professionals – want to live in Colorado, contribute to our strong economy, and participate in our state's ever-growing innovative spirit. Without the protections afforded under the Act, Colorado's future health care landscape quickly becomes a less desirable place for providers to work and live.

The General Assembly's failure to reauthorize the Act this year will create an environment where recruiting and retaining top tier providers will be a significant challenge. This situation will be exacerbated in rural areas of Colorado if peer review networks supporting rural communities are no longer an option for isolated providers. Current workforce shortages in rural Colorado already act as a barrier to care – do not harm rural Colorado's opportunity to ensure access to safe care by failing to act this year.

While health care affordability is top of mind for the General Assembly this session, and Colorado hospitals and health systems applaud these ambitious efforts, patient safety and quality of care cannot be forgotten. On behalf of the patients our hospitals treat every day and the families that live in the communities we serve, we urge you to make SB 19-234 a priority – renewal of the Colorado Professional Review Act is the most meaningful health care bill you will consider in 2019.

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