



March 28, 2018

Senator Jim Smallwood
Chair
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
200 E. Colfax
Rm. 346
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Senator Smallwood and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee:

On behalf of the Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN), I am writing to ask you to vote **NO** on Senate Bill (SB) 18-214: Request Self-Sufficiency Waiver Medicaid Program.

CCHN is the membership association for Colorado's 20 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), which operate 202 clinic sites in 41 counties and care for Coloradans from 61 of the 64 counties in the state. FQHCs are the health care home for more than 740,000 people, including 25% of Medicaid enrollees, 22% of CHP+ enrollees, and 35% of Colorado's uninsured. Over 93% of patients at Colorado FQHCs have family incomes below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Colorado FQHCs are one of the largest providers of health care for low-income individuals and families in the state. CCHN's mission is to support FQHCs to increase access to high quality health care for people in need in Colorado.

Colorado's FQHCs are essential partners in the Medicaid program and serve as the health care home for 35% of the Medicaid population attributed to a primary care medical provider. Since the Medicaid expansion in 2014, FQHCs saw a significant shift in their uninsured populations that are now eligible for Medicaid – from 42% Medicaid patients in 2013 to 56% Medicaid patients in 2016 (2016 Uniform Data System). Medicaid is providing critical coverage to Coloradans that were previously uninsured. According to a report to the Joint Budget Committee from the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) in November 2017, 75% of non-disabled adults on Colorado Medicaid are working low-wage jobs that don't offer insurance. Medicaid coverage is critical in ensuring access to needed health care services and providing financial security. In the same report reference above, HCPF notes that Medicaid is particularly important in rural parts of the state where as many as 1 in 2 Coloradans are covered by Medicaid. FQHCs are providing quality care, positively impacting population health outcomes, and controlling costs. As a committed partner to the Medicaid program and their patients, FQHCs are developing in partnership with the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing payment and delivery models that maximize Medicaid resources to enhance access, care, and outcomes for our state's most vulnerable and isolated patient populations.

SB18-214 would create unnecessary restrictions for Coloradans who use Medicaid for their health insurance coverage and would increase barriers to accessing much needed health care services, particularly in rural and underserved areas of the state. The Colorado Rural Health Center reported in their *2017 Snapshot of Rural Health* that rural Coloradans experience a higher rate of uninsurance (20.9%) compared to their urban counterparts (14.4%). Adding additional barriers to access would surely increase that uninsurance rate in these areas. A loss of health coverage inevitably caused by this bill will cause financial stress for families and will have a negative impact on FQHCs and the patients and communities that they serve.

CCHN and Colorado's FQHCs urge you to vote NO on SB18-214. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact CCHN, or, we would be happy to put you in touch with the FQHCs in your district.

Sincerely,

Katie Pachan Jacobson
Policy Director