

Testimony as Prepared for Delivery in support of HB22-1289, Cover All Coloradans by Erin Miller, Vice President of Health Initiatives at the Colorado Children's Campaign

Senate Health & Human Services

April 27, 2022

1:30PM

Old Supreme Court

- Thank you, Chair Fields and members of the committee.
- My name is Erin Miller and I'm the Vice President of Health Initiatives at the Colorado Children's Campaign.
- I am here, together with my incredible partners, in strong support of HB22-1289, Health Benefits for Colorado Children and Pregnant Persons.
- This bill has been driven by an incredible Steering Committee of impacted community members in one of the most community-led policy processes that I have seen in my decade-long policy making experience and I want to express my deep gratitude to all of these amazing leaders as well as the incredible partners we have worked with on this policy including the Center for Health Progress, CIRC CCLP, COLOR, Planned Parenthood, and the Colorado Community Health Network.
- In addition to those partners, this bill has the strong support of critical health care partners including Colorado Access, Children's Hospital Colorado, the Colorado AAP, and the Colorado Association of Family Physicians.
- This bill will create a more inclusive, healthier Colorado that is a safer place to start and grow a family.
- It ends costly and unnecessary exclusion and oppression in our state currently costs some of the hardest working and most marginalized Coloradans in lost wellbeing, productivity, and lives and it improves perinatal and child health for all Coloradans.
- Research suggests that the prenatal coverage provided by this bill alone will save the lives of two infants each year in our state.

- We know that health insurance coverage improves financial security, health status, mental health, and access to health care, and decreases infant, child, and maternal mortality rates.
- Kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults.
- COVID-19 is a prime case study on how our own health and wellbeing is collective and depends on every member of our community being able to get the health care they need. Federal programs that stepped in to fill some of these gaps during the pandemic are expiring, leaving uninsured Coloradans – including uninsured pregnant and postpartum folks and young children – without as many options to access COVID testing and treatment. It is time for us, as a state, to step up to take care of all Coloradans.
- This bill also codifies and strengthens CDPHE’s Health eMoms survey – one of the best sources of longitudinal data about the perinatal period in the country. Further, it requires the survey to sufficiently sample populations that experience the greatest health inequities and their corresponding outcomes – African Americans and Native Americans – so that we can better understand their perinatal experiences.
- And it makes investments in the perinatal period for all Coloradans by requiring Medicaid and CHIP to provide breast pumps to enrollees and establishing a stakeholder process to determine the best way to direct additional federal matching funds to improve perinatal and postpartum care in Colorado.
- We cannot afford *not* to close some of these last remaining gaps in our coverage system. These investments will allow Colorado to draw down millions in federal funds – more than we will be contributing through the General Fund – and saves the state millions of dollars in Emergency Medicaid costs.
- Oppression and inadequate perinatal care cost Coloradans too much and we should take this step toward building a better Colorado for kids and families.
- I urge your support of this bill and I am happy to take any questions.