

Dear members of the CHASE Board,

My name is Gillian Brautigam and I am a Certified Nurse Midwife and Advanced Practice Nurse, and a leader with the Healthcare Organizing Team at Center for Health Progress.

Thank you for presenting the opportunity for a state directed payment program at the upcoming October 22nd, 2024 public meeting.

I am submitting a written comment to lift up unaddressed questions with the proposal, namely, the proposed makeup of the workgroup and lack of public accountability measures. Too often the decisions about funding allocation are made by few stakeholders - the hospital and healthcare administrators and executives - and neglect to include the primary stakeholders, the varied and diverse citizens across the state of Colorado and those who provide the care in clinics and at the hospital bedside.

The working group must explore ways to tie the program to affordability and cost transparency mechanisms. This includes support for financial assistance, debt relief and prevention. In a healthcare system where costs are rising and private insurance is primarily employer-based, companies are continually transferring the burden of cost onto their employees. This means that many privately insured patients are underinsured or covered by high-deductible health plans whereby they could not begin to afford their deductible on the salary that they make. Many patients avoid accessing care until it is an emergency because they cannot make an informed decision about the cost, and fear going into debt if they do seek care. Within the field of obstetrics this could look like avoiding a trip to the emergency room on the weekend when the clinic is closed and yet time is critical for fetal well-being. It could also look like a patient declining a recommended test or evaluation due to fear of cost. As my fellow healthcare leader stated, this contributes to moral distress among healthcare workers as we watch patients forgo care and put their lives and long term health at stake. It is critical that public matching funds require hospital accountability for financial transparency and protection. This goes beyond automated systems and patient electronic health records and requires dedication of time and resources to shift hospital policies.

We urge the CHASE Board, its working group, HCPF ,and all our collective stakeholders to listen to our concerns.

Thank you for your consideration of this comment,

Sincerely,

Gillian Brautigam