



COLORADO

Department of Health Care
Policy & Financing

303 E. 17th Ave. Suite 1100
Denver, CO 80203

November 26, 2024

RE: Health Care Budget and Policy Priorities for Federal Fiscal Year 2025

Dear Colorado Congressional Delegation:

The Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing (HCPF) serves as Colorado's single state agency for the administration of Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid program) and Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+, which is Colorado's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)). We write to highlight our current health care budget and policy priorities for the approximately 1.28 million Coloradans we cover and serve. **We urge you to prioritize the following two policy and funding requests** in deliberations on the budget for federal fiscal year 2025 (FFY 2025) and other year-end priorities.

We are grateful for the recent guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) which clarifies that states can continue certain emergency "waivers" that improved renewal outcomes and efficiencies during the unwind.

1. Fully Fund Community Health Centers

Community Health Centers (CHCs) serve as the primary care medical home for one in seven Coloradans in urban, rural and suburban communities. With 251 health center delivery sites providing primary care in every Colorado Congressional district¹, CHCs provided care for more than 644,000 Colorado patients in 2022, 52% of whom were covered by Medicaid and 21% who were uninsured². These safety net clinics are seeing an increase in the percentage of uninsured patients seeking their services since the conclusion of the federal public health emergency (PHE) and Medicaid continuous coverage requirement ("PHE Unwind")³, making support for the safety net more important than ever.

To support these vitally important safety net care facilities statewide so that they can continue delivering these important preventive and primary care services, we respectfully request that you reauthorize CHC discretionary funding of at least \$1.4 billion annually and appropriate mandatory funding of at least \$5.8 billion for the next three years, by the current budget deadline of December 20, 2024.

¹National Association of Community Health Centers, Colorado Health Center Delivery Sites Map (HRSA.gov data December 2022); Accessed 9/25/24 at:

<https://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Colorado-state-map.pdf>

²National Association of Community Health Centers, Colorado Health Center Fact Sheet (February 2024); Accessed 10/8/24 at:

https://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/StateFactSheet_CO_2022UDS_Feb2024.pdf

³For more information on Colorado's PHE unwind, please visit <https://hcpf.colorado.gov/ccu>



2. Continue Advance Premium Tax Credits and Cost Sharing Reductions

With the end of the PHE Unwind, Coloradans who no longer qualify for Medicaid may need to purchase individual or family coverage through Colorado's state based marketplace, Connect for Health Colorado.

Like millions of Americans, many Coloradans rely on federal premium tax credits (PTCs) and cost sharing reductions (CSRs) to purchase health insurance coverage through the marketplace and to reduce their out-of-pocket health care costs. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) extended temporary changes to CSRs and PTCs for three years, through the end of 2025. In 2024, more than 237,000 Coloradans are enrolled in health insurance through Connect for Health Colorado.⁴ Of the total enrollments for 2024 coverage, 77 percent are receiving financial help to reduce premiums.⁵ That is an increase of more than 57,000 since 2021.

These middle-income taxpayer credits and subsidies will expire at the end of 2025 unless Congress acts to make the credits permanent or extend them. **We urge you to act before the end of this year by supporting the recently introduced Health Care Affordability Act of 2024 legislation ([S.5194](#), [H.R.9774](#)) that would make permanent the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) enhanced premium tax credits (PTCs) for Health Insurance Marketplace coverage, as extended through the Inflation Reduction Act. We also ask you to act now to continue cost sharing reductions that are essential to make health care services affordable and accessible for low income Coloradans even when insured.**

Conclusion

Thank you for your collaboration throughout the pandemic and subsequent PHE Unwind. We respectfully ask you to consider including the proposals above in your end of year federal budget legislation. We look forward to working with you on this effort and leveraging additional opportunities to ensure that your constituents served by Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program and other coverage options can continue to access health coverage and health care.

Sincerely,



Kim Bimestefer
Executive Director

⁴ [Colorado's Health Insurance Marketplace Finishes Open Enrollment with More Than 237,000 Sign-Ups, A New Record](#). Connect for Health Colorado. January 2024.

⁵ Ibid. Connect for Health Colorado. January 2024.

