



May 2, 2023

To House Public and Behavioral Health Services

From: Julie Reiskin, Co-Executive Director CCDC

## RE: Strong support of SB 23-289

Chairwoman Michaelson-Jenet and Members of the Committee

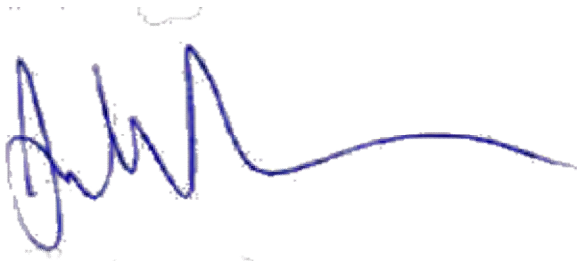
Please accept the strong support of the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition for SB 23-289 regarding Community First Choice. As you know, CCDC is the largest statewide disability rights organization and most of us on staff and throughout our membership are Medicaid clients. We have been working on Community First Choice for almost 10 years and believe that it is a policy that is a true win/win for Colorado. It will bring in enhanced federal match for our long-term services and supports system and require increased use of self-directed care which is the best practice and best quality. Clients will still have choices and those not interested in self-directed care can choose other options, but as you have heard so often in this community most people do better when they have the support and resources to take control of their own lives.

As we continue to see the population aging and as people are increasingly surviving disabling conditions at all ages the need for ongoing personal care for activities of daily living, that includes physical care like bathing and dressing along with help for cognitive, psychiatric, and behavioral conditions that assist people with executive functioning, memory, severe anxiety, etc., we will have an increased need for these services. We need to be able to pay the workers adequately and removing the expensive administrative layer which is possible through self-directed care coupled with the increased match and incentives to manage the programs better will help us continue to be the national leader that we are in this realm.

We have been working with HCPF and the JBC since this option became available studying options, doing fiscal analysis, and identifying policies for many years and we are now ready to implement. We will continue to stay actively involved as advocates with an eye on accountability, transparency, and making sure the resources go where they are truly most needed and will support our Colorado values of interdependence and community integration. We believe this option helps propel us forward on paths we have already taken including supporting disabled people to be full participants which includes employment, the ability to live wherever they see fit including rural areas, and the ability to raise families and be a true part of our chosen communities. When this happens and when the people that support us are treated fairly, it is a win for our state.

We appreciate your anticipated unanimous support of this excellent legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julie Reiskin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Julie Reiskin, LCSW

Co-Executive Director