



**Testimony SB23-298 – Support
Senate Health & Human Services
April 27, 2023**

Good evening, Madam Chair and Members of the Committee. My name is Bridget Garcia and I serve as public policy manager for the Colorado Hospital Association. On behalf of our 105 member hospitals and health systems, I am here to share our support of Senate Bill 298.

Rural hospitals provide vital health care services for their communities and contribute to the overall economic and social well-being of rural Colorado. However, Colorado's rural communities face a number of challenges with regard to health care delivery. These challenges include workforce shortages, low reimbursement rates, financial strains, high technology and labor costs, smaller patient volumes, and higher rates of chronic illness. These economic pressures and other environmental factors are leading many health care delivery systems in Colorado to consolidate in order to keep their doors open. Independent rural hospitals are currently at a disadvantage with price negotiations for supplies and services when compared to larger health systems with more purchasing power. This legislation would encourage collaborative efforts that reduce costs, improve access to specialty care, and strengthen the overall health of our rural health care delivery system. Our rural safety net providers play a key role in helping to meet the needs of our rural communities. Collaboration among rural providers can actually enhance service delivery and improve coordination by building economies of scale and leveraging the strengths of each individual facility.

Ultimately, CHA desires for each of its members to be in a healthy enough place that they are able to make long-term decisions that are in the best interest of rural Coloradans. This legislation would encourage a collaborative environment that would ultimately strengthen the rural health care safety net.

We respectfully ask for your yes vote today on Senate Bill 298 and thank you for your time and consideration of this important legislation.