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DATE:

Dear Ms. Lasky and Ms. Odendahl,

I want to thank Health Management Associates' (HMA) coordination and facilitation of the two rounds of stakeholder engagement meetings. It is our understanding that the information that HMA gathered during these two rounds of stakeholder engagements will be shared with the executive Committee for Colorado's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) and that this information will be considered when HMA writes its recommendations with regard to the formation of the Colorado's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA).

Several members of our Housing Subcommittee for the Task Force Concerning the Treatment of Persons with Mental Health Disorders in the Criminal Justice System (MHDCJS) partook in some of these stakeholder meetings in their individual capacity. The Housing Subcommittee is a group of cross-sector and inter-disciplinary stakeholders committed to understanding the challenges at the intersection of behavioral health, criminal justice, and housing and to developing policy and legislative solutions for communities experiencing these challenges across Colorado. The Subcommittee is a part of the broader Taskforce Concerning Treatment of Persons with Mental Health Disorders in the Criminal & Juvenile Justice Systems (MHDCJS) Task Force and ultimately reports to and advises its legislative MHDCJS Oversight Committee. It appeared to some of the subcommittee members that the recommendations made by other stakeholders during the HMA stakeholder meetings failed to mention housing and responded to siloed needs rather than addressing individuals needing behavioral health care as a whole person.

Housing and the individual's housing status is the first step in addressing a persons behavioral health issues. Our housing subcommittee through its MHDCJS Task Force and Legislative Oversight Committee has sponsored, supported, and been the impetus for many housing bills concerning this vulnerable population.

There is no aspect of a community more ever changing than housing, and no more fundamental in addressing inequity than housing. To have and ensure whole-person care, housing is critical to the wellbeing of individuals and/or family. In order to successfully have and to treat behavioral health, safe, stable, and secure housing with supportive services must be part of the entire process and approach in light of all social determinants.

It is critical that HMA's recommendations are not be siloed, but start from a housing first

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lens and view each person as a whole person in light of their individual social determinants. Please see attached our Housing Subcommittee Platform and our Recommendations for Housing, Criminal Justice, and Behavioral Health that were presented to Governor Jared Polis's Behavioral Health Task Force. We ask that you read our summary of years of research, experience, and working alongside this vulnerable population before you make your final recommendations.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me or our housing subcommittee. Thank you for your consideration to these critical issues.

Respectfully,
Gina K. Shimeall
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Co-Chair Housing Subcommittee
MHDCJS Legislative Task Force
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