

Thank you Chair Michaelson Jenet and Representatives McCluskie, Gonzales-Gutierrez and Senator Moreno for bringing this bill forward.

Hello, my name is Linda Medina Martinez and I have been a resident of Colorado since 2001. When my family and I migrated to the United States, I was fortunate enough to have family members who helped us navigate various systems of our new home - education, housing, etc. However, I remember the challenges my family experienced when it came to access to healthcare.

Shortly after we moved to the U.S, my mom got pregnant with my youngest sibling. I remember hearing her phone conversations with my grandma from Mexico and reassuring her that she was healthy. My grandma was very worried because she knew the barriers my mom was facing when it came to pregnancy and then postpartum healthcare. My parents played off the "everything is okay" role well, but deep down I know they worried.

Although I was in elementary school, I still remember the explicit instructions to protect myself from illness or injury because we couldn't afford a visit to the doctor much less a specialist or the ER. I never knew what it was like to come to school late because I had just gone to a doctor's appointment or saying no to candy because I had just visited the dentist or show off my new glasses or braces. All of those privileges were just things I saw on television or movies.

It wasn't until college that I experienced the privilege of access to healthcare. I had just received my DACA status and enrolled in a limited healthcare plan for college students. I was able to access routine healthcare that had been long overdue along with dental, vision and gynecological care. For once, I felt taken care of, valued and in a healthy state of mind - both physically and mentally. I only imagined what it would be like for my undocumented family to receive the same opportunity.

I am currently a school social worker at an elementary school in southwest Denver. It deeply saddens and angers me when my families experience the same barriers and lack of access to healthcare as I did 20 years ago. I work with families that express the need for healthcare, including mental health services, and are denied access because of their immigration status. As a former undocumented person, now DACAmented, and beneficiary of access to healthcare through my employer, I feel both empathy and guilt.

My mother deserved access to healthcare when she was pregnant. My sister and I deserved access to healthcare when we were in grade school. All of the families and students I work with deserve access to healthcare. Access to healthcare allows parents and kids to thrive and HB22-1289 is one way Colorado can support this. We must ensure health equity across our state and it starts with access for some of our most vulnerable populations.

I ask for a YES vote on HB22-1289.

Thank you for your time

Linda Medina Martinez

Representative Jenet and Representative Sirota  
Public and Behavioral Health and Human Services

Abigail Seipel, SPT  
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus  
Email: [aseipel2016@gmail.com](mailto:aseipel2016@gmail.com) Phone: 660-651-3085  
Friday, March 25, 2022

In support of HB22-1289, "Health Benefits for Colorado Children and Pregnant Persons"

My name is Abigail Seipel. I am a student Doctor of Physical Therapy at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. I live in Aurora, CO in Adams County. I support HB22-1289 because I believe that all people have the right to affordable comprehensive healthcare coverage.

Health insurance matters. Comprehensive, affordable healthcare supports optimal outcomes. Covered children are healthier children and they grow up to be healthier, more successful adults with a greater understanding of their health, which decreases their use of healthcare in the long run. As a physical therapy student, I have seen the benefits quality healthcare can have on a child's development and the health and wellbeing of their family. The health choices and movement patterns we develop as children have a huge impact on the way we engage with healthcare as an adult. I have seen the negative impact the absence of mental health services can have for young mothers as they not only deal with postpartum depression or marital challenges, but also the difficult news of a new diagnosis for their child or continued delays in their movement. All these things take a toll on families and impact the health habits and success of their children in adulthood. If families are uninsured or underinsured, they may be less likely to seek early intervention physical therapy or other healthcare services, simply for a lack of resources or a lack of knowledge of the importance of these early interventions. The more kids and their mothers are covered by Medicaid, the more kids will graduate high school and go on to college, start businesses or go on to lead their communities. Colorado's future depends on all our kids getting a healthy start from the very beginning.

I ask that you vote YES on HB22-1289 for the health and future of Colorado families and our community.

Sincerely,

Abigail Seipel, SPT

Thank you Chair Michaelson Jenet and Representatives McCluskie, Gonzales-Gutierrez and Senator Moreno for bringing this bill forward.

My name is Adriana Miranda and I am a resident of Lamar, CO. I arrived in the U.S. in 1999. At that time, I was a young person and did not have health issues. But I was diagnosed with diabetes and have had to see a doctor/ seek medical services consistently since 2007. In this small rural town, we do not have many specialists. Therefore, I have had to go to other towns and places to seek medical care. Gas bills, medical bills, and having to coordinate to attend medical appointments has created a lot of financial and emotional stress for me. I don't think I am the only one in this situation in Colorado.

I was sick last year in January and had to travel to La Junta every morning to see an orthopedic specialist because there are none in Lamar. La Junta is 1 hour away. There were a lot of gas costs and a lot of medical bills, and because I was not physically able to drive, I had to find someone to drive me. If in Lamar we had more specialists, we would not need to leave. I have had a terrible experience trying to access healthcare services in a small rural town like Lamar. In La Junta, they have a program that supports low-income people that covers 70% or more of their medical bills.

Everyone, regardless of immigration status or financial resources, should be able to access healthcare. The stress that these barriers cause is exhausting. One is afraid to get sick. There are other people that want to see improved healthcare access for immigrant people.

We all have the right to be happy. If we don't have as much stress, we can be happy. This is why I want this bill to pass because I want others to be treated equally and receive the healthcare they deserve.

I want you to support this bill because it will benefit so many people and expand medical coverage to those most in need in Colorado! Thank you for your time. I urge a YES Vote on HB22-1289

Sincerely,  
Adriana Miranda  
Lamar Unidos Member, community leader



COLORADO ACADEMY OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS  
**STRONG MEDICINE FOR COLORADO**

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

Members of the Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services:

My name is Dr. Daniel Wells-Prado, and I am a family physician in Colorado. I am submitting written testimony on behalf of the Colorado Academy of Family Physicians, which represents over 2,500 family physicians, residents and students across our state in support of bill number “HB22-1289” because it provides comprehensive health insurance for children and pregnant women, no matter immigration status, eliminating a barrier to health equity in our state.

When I provide prenatal care, my main goal is the well-being of the mother and baby, but unfortunately, this is in part influenced by their health insurance coverage. For example, I took care of a young woman living in Denver who was seeking asylum from Venezuela and was in her third trimester of pregnancy. She did not have health insurance nor was enrolled in a discount program to help cover medical costs. She needed repeat ultrasounds to monitor a complication of pregnancy, but the cost of the multiple studies was so high, she could not do them all to help, which would have helped prevent life-threatening complications. Thankfully, she delivered a healthy baby boy, but her story could have turned out so differently.

Her story is not just one but is one of many women living in Colorado. The uninsured rates for women, age 18-44, are drastically different based on race/ethnicity. For non-Hispanic whites, rate of uninsured 4.8% while for Hispanic/Latinx women their rate of uninsured is nearly triple at 14.1%. I am speaking up as a physician because I can only do so much to take care of patients. Often, I am limited by health insurance status to care for communities. This inequity in health insurance exacerbates the racial disparities affecting the people of Colorado.

This bill will address the gap where many pregnant women and children cannot obtain health insurance. Seventeen states cover undocumented pregnant people, and ten states and Washington, DC have already passed coverage expansions for undocumented youth. It’s time that Colorado does the same. Adequate health insurance coverage that allows people to have their health care needs met rather than not be able to obtain necessary care due to costs.

Representatives, thank you for reading my testimony. Your consideration of these matters and solutions is very much appreciated.”

Sincerely,

Daniel Wells-Prado, MD  
Denver, Colorado  
District 6

Hello chair and members of the committee, my name is Carolina Diaz and I am writing to testify in support of HB22-1289.

My husband and I have political asylum in the United States, we have two girls, a US citizen baby, and a six-year-old girl. My oldest daughter still does not have the same status as us, so she does not have access to insurance.

Although my husband, my minor child and I have medical insurance, my eldest daughter, due to her immigration status, was not eligible to receive the benefit. She was born in Colombia and we have not yet received a response on the adjustment of status that corresponds to her... As a mother I would prefer for my daughter to have these benefits because she is in a growth stage. I would like to know that her health is fine, that she has access to her medical check-ups and everything she needs, but it is very sad to know that no, that she is at a disadvantage for the simple fact that she was not born here... Annie, that's what her name is, we are always limiting her to games and sports because we are afraid that she will get hurt or fractured and we have no way to pay for the service. Thinking about this makes me feel powerless and frustrated because she deserves to run, swim, play and do all the sports activities that a "normal" girl would do, but she is not "normal" she is undocumented and since she was little she has paid the price for this.

One of the experiences that has marked me the most was an accident that my daughter had in the bathroom playing with the tub. She got hurt and I couldn't take her immediately to the hospital. She was 3 years old and we had never taken her to any medical service. We didn't even know where to go. We didn't speak the language, and in general we didn't know what to do...and it was only when a relative arrived who guided us that we decided to take her to the hospital, fortunately it wasn't serious, however, the bills that came later created so much financial uncertainty.

Sadly, our children who do not have access to insurance are so vulnerable to accidents and illnesses, and we do not have the possibility of preventing them, of doing routine check-ups, of knowing their health problems in time, the system puts them in a state of complete defenselessness. ... It pains me a lot to admit that my daughter, who is an American citizen, has had all the privileges to access vaccines, check-ups, she even had her first dental appointment, but with my oldest daughter we are always having difficulties taking her to these services because we have to pay 100% of the services that she uses and the prices are not affordable at all. We have to save and decide which resources to prioritize to see if we can get her to the doctor but we never go on time, they are always asking us for exams for her that we can't afford and in general there are tests that we have had to consciously refuse because of costs...it is a cruel reality that among children, even between sisters, there are so many differences in access to a service as vital as health.

I urge you to vote yes on HB22-1289.

**Carolina Diaz**

## CIRC Organizational Testimony in Support of HB22-1289

Thank you Chair and members of the committee for hearing testimony on this important piece of legislation. We are **testifying in support of HB22-1289 to expand critical access to Medicaid & CHP for low-income children and pregnant people in Colorado.**

The Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition (CIRC) is a statewide, membership-based coalition of immigrant, faith, labor, youth, community, business and ally organizations founded in 2002 to improve the lives of immigrants and refugees by making Colorado a more welcoming, immigrant-friendly state. Every year our members vote by region for 2 priorities for the coalition to focus on. This year our members across the state *resoundingly* chose to focus on the expansion of healthcare access for immigrants.

In Colorado, Medicaid and CHP+ coverage is limited to certain lawfully present immigrants, such as legal permanent residents, refugees and asylum seekers *after* completing 5 years in the US. This means thousands of low-income Colorado children and pregnant people who are undocumented or who have DACA are not eligible to enroll in CHP+ or Medicaid. This barrier to affordable healthcare has contributed immensely to the disproportionate rates of uninsurance and rates of COVID hospitalizations and deaths for the immigrant community.

A national report found that over “1,700 children in Colorado have experienced the loss of a caregiver due to COVID between Jan. 1, 2020 and Nov. 17, 2021.”<sup>1</sup> **The rates of loss for Latinx youth were highest at 860 of the total vs 575 for white Colorado youth.** The report also found that, nationwide, Black and Hispanic children lost caregivers from COVID at almost 2.5 times the rate of white children. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed deep and pervasive inequities in our healthcare system, which has been especially notable for immigrant communities who face additional barriers and fears when trying to access healthcare.

Immigration status should not determine whether or not someone is able to access the care they need. In Colorado, Latina women of reproductive age are three times more likely to be uninsured, compared to their non-Hispanic peers, and Latinx children are twice as likely to be uninsured as the state average. Many immigrants are more likely to **put off seeking critical treatment until it is an emergency** – when care is more expensive and time-sensitive. For far too many families, these decisions around when and where to seek care are a matter of life and death.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.covidcollaborative.us/assets/uploads/img/HIDDEN-PAIN-FINAL.pdf>

Colorado has an opportunity to invest in the collective health of our state by closing these gaps in health insurance coverage for low-income children and pregnant people. **Access to quality health insurance and prenatal care is one of the most important determinants of birth outcomes.**

Early investments in healthcare access also lead to increased future wellness, educational opportunities, and financial stability for children and families who are able to have their health needs met. Expanding access will also save Colorado money on health care overall by increasing access to preventative care and reducing the likelihood that families will wait until something is an emergency before seeking care.

The cost of not providing accessible healthcare to Colorado families based solely on their immigration status is incomprehensible. **Families are being forced to make life-altering choices, postponing critical care and life saving treatments.** Children and pregnant Coloradans are unable to meet their health needs which has life long rippling effects on their physical, mental, and financial wellbeing. It is time that Colorado invests in the future of all children and families in our state, ensuring that low-income children and pregnant people are able to have access to Medicaid and CHP for a healthy start.

Thank you for your time. **We urge a YES vote on HB22-1289.**

Raquel Lane-Arellano

Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition  
2525 W. Alameda Ave.  
Denver, CO

Representative Jenet and Representative Sirota  
Public and Behavioral Health and Human Services

Graciela Salinas, MS  
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus  
gracielajsalinas@gmail.com  
March 25, 2022

In support of HB22-1289, "Health Benefits for Colorado Children and Pregnant Persons"

My name is Graciela Salinas. I am a Physical Therapy Student and I live in Aurora, Colorado. I support HB22-1289 because I have not only seen the pain in parents' eyes when they feel they cannot fully provide for their children, but I too have had to see family members leave the country due to barriers in healthcare access.

As a Physical Therapy Student, I have had the privilege to be able to care for children and families of low socioeconomic status in their own homes all over the Denver-metro area. Not only have I seen the smiling faces of mother and child, as their baby takes their first steps, but I have also seen the stress these families are under as they try to figure out how to make ends meet as healthcare bills begin to increase.

Parents without documentation status are some of the least likely to have access to paid health leave through their jobs in order to take care of sick children, and often there are language barriers that make accessing health care more difficult and expensive. Currently, there are thousands of parents trying their hardest to provide for their families as much as they can, however, many families are of mixed immigration statuses, leaving parents to make impossible decisions for their children when one or more is covered and others are not. Health insurance is one of the most fundamental supports a child needs for a healthy start in life, and Colorado can and should ensure that for all pregnant people and kids. Early investments in health leads to high returns when people, regardless of immigration status, are able to achieve a greater level of education and opportunity. This increased financial stability for the individual rewards society through higher tax revenue and decreased pressure on the social safety net.

I ask that you vote YES on HB22-1289 because all children deserve healthcare and the right to a healthy life.

*Graciela Salinas, MS*

House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services  
 03/25/2022 Upon Adjournment  
 HB22-1289 Health Benefits For CO Children & Pregnant Persons  
 Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Virginia Gebhart For Colorado Foundation for Universal Health Care	<p>The Colorado Foundation for Universal Health Care supports this bill because it expands public financing of essential health benefits to underserved communities. Because it will provide prenatal and postnatal care, improving maternal mortality rates. Because it will provide care for infants, children and adolescents, improving health outcomes for children and establishing healthy habits for life. This pro-family bill will strengthen our communities and state,</p> <p>This bill will deliver simple, guaranteed health care to vulnerable members of our community, regardless of immigration status. Wouldn't it be great if we had simple, guaranteed health care for all for life? This expanded prenatal care, postnatal care, care for infants, care for children and adolescents would be automatically extended to everybody without the need for another band-aid bill. Wouldn't that be great?</p>
Jamie Pfahl For Self	<p>Dear Chair Michaelson Jenet and Members of the Committee:</p> <p>I have worked in public health here in Colorado for a decade and am now a medical student at University of Colorado School of Medicine. I am reaching out today to ask you to support House Bill 1289 – Cover All Coloradans. As a wealthy country, we should be ashamed at the terrible gaps in our healthcare system. It is a severe injustice that so many people in our country lack access to health insurance. People deserve access to health care regardless of their employment, income, age, medical conditions, marital status, family composition or immigration status. Inadequate health insurance coverage is one of the largest barriers to health care access, and the unequal distribution of coverage contributes to disparities in health. The consequences of these gaps in coverage affect all aspects of our society, not just the lives of those who are unable to access adequate care.</p> <p>Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during childhood and pregnancy. Without health insurance, many families are one medical emergency away from financial ruin. Insurance coverage improves socioeconomic security, health status, mental health and access to health care. It also decreases infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults. I hope that you will join me in supporting House Bill 1289 to advance health insurance coverage for all Coloradans.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>

<p>Nicole Brasseur For Self</p>	<p>Jamie Pfahl</p> <p>Dear Chair Michaelson Jenet and Members of the Committee:</p> <p>I am reaching out to ask you to support House Bill 1289 – Cover All Coloradans. Not only do I work in public health but I also happen to be actively pregnant myself, making this bill very near and dear to my heart.</p> <p>All people need access to health insurance regardless of their employment, income, age, medical conditions, marital status, family composition or immigration status. Inadequate health insurance coverage is one of the largest barriers to health care access, and the unequal distribution of coverage contributes to disparities in health.</p> <p>Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during childhood and pregnancy. Without health insurance, many families are one medical emergency away from financial ruin. Insurance coverage improves socioeconomic security, health status, mental health and access to health care. It also decreases infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults.</p> <p>I hope that you will join me in supporting House Bill 1289 to advance health insurance coverage for all Coloradans.</p> <p>Sincerely, Nicole Brasseur</p>
<p>Mealinda Koory Against Self</p>	<p>Until we stop making it easier for undocumented immigrants to remain undocumented, this nation will continue to be inundated by those choosing not to come here through legal channels. Coloradoans work hard for their income and adding another burden to support those choosing not to contribute to the same does no one any good. People have lost pride in hard work and we need to re instill pride in supporting oneself.</p>
<p>Elizabeth Atwood For Self</p>	<p>Dear Chair Michaelson Jenet and Members of the Committee:</p> <p>I work in public health and I am reaching out today to ask you to support House Bill 1289 – Cover All Coloradans. All people need access to health insurance regardless of their employment, income, age, medical conditions, marital status, family composition or immigration status. Inadequate health insurance coverage is one of the largest</p>

	<p>barriers to health care access, and the unequal distribution of coverage contributes to disparities in health.</p> <p>Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during childhood and pregnancy. Without health insurance, many families are one medical emergency away from financial ruin. Insurance coverage improves socioeconomic security, health status, mental health and access to health care. It also decreases infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults. I hope that you will join me in supporting House Bill 1289 to advance health insurance coverage for all Coloradans.</p> <p>Sincerely, Elizabeth</p>
<p>Lisa Filipczak For Self</p>	<p>Dear Chair Michaelson Jenet and Members of the Committee:</p> <p>I work in public health and I am writing today to ask you to support House Bill 1289 – Cover All Coloradans. All people need access to health insurance regardless of their employment, income, age, medical conditions, marital status, family composition or immigration status. Inadequate health insurance coverage is one of the largest barriers to health care access, and the unequal distribution of coverage contributes to disparities in health.</p> <p>Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during childhood and pregnancy. Without health insurance, many families are one medical emergency away from financial ruin. Insurance coverage improves socioeconomic security, health status, mental health and access to health care. It also decreases infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults. I hope that you will join me in supporting House Bill 1289 to advance health insurance coverage for all Coloradans.</p> <p>Sincerely, Lisa Filipczak, MPH</p>
<p>Kamonthip Homdayjanakul For Self</p>	<p>Dear Chair Michaelson Jenet and Members of the Committee:</p> <p>I work in public health and I am reaching out today to ask you to support House Bill 1289 – Cover All Coloradans. All people need access to health insurance regardless of their employment, income, age, medical conditions, marital status, family composition or immigration status. Inadequate health insurance coverage is one of the largest</p>

	<p>barriers to health care access, and the unequal distribution of coverage contributes to disparities in health.</p> <p>Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during childhood and pregnancy. Without health insurance, many families are one medical emergency away from financial ruin. Insurance coverage improves socioeconomic security, health status, mental health and access to health care. It also decreases infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults. I hope that you will join me in supporting House Bill 1289 to advance health insurance coverage for all Coloradans.</p> <p>Sincerely, Kamonthip Homdayjanakul</p>
<p>Rachel Povilus For Self</p>	<p>Dear Chair Michaelson Jenet and Members of the Committee:</p> <p>I work in health care and I am reaching out today to ask you to support House Bill 1289 – Cover All Coloradans. All people need access to health insurance regardless of their employment, income, age, medical conditions, marital status, family composition or immigration status. Inadequate health insurance coverage is one of the largest barriers to health care access, and the unequal distribution of coverage contributes to disparities in health.</p> <p>Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during childhood and pregnancy. Without health insurance, many families are one medical emergency away from financial ruin. Insurance coverage improves socioeconomic security, health status, mental health and access to health care. It also decreases infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults. I hope that you will join me in supporting House Bill 1289 to advance health insurance coverage for all Coloradans.</p> <p>Sincerely, Rachel Povilus</p>
<p>Emma Grant For Self</p>	<p>Dear Chair Michaelson Jenet and Members of the Committee:</p> <p>I work in public health and I am reaching out today to ask you to support House Bill 1289 – Cover All Coloradans. All people need access to health insurance regardless of their employment, income, age,</p>

	<p>medical conditions, marital status, family composition or immigration status. Inadequate health insurance coverage is one of the largest barriers to health care access, and the unequal distribution of coverage contributes to disparities in health.</p> <p>Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during childhood and pregnancy. Without health insurance, many families are one medical emergency away from financial ruin. Insurance coverage improves socioeconomic security, health status, mental health and access to health care. It also decreases infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults. I hope that you will join me in supporting House Bill 1289 to advance health insurance coverage for all Coloradans.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Gillian Grant</p>
<p>Austin Collins For Self</p>	<p>Dear Chair Michaelson Jenet and Members of the Committee:</p> <p>I work in public health and I am reaching out today to ask you to support House Bill 1289 – Cover All Coloradans. All people need access to health insurance regardless of their employment, income, age, medical conditions, marital status, family composition or immigration status. Inadequate health insurance coverage is one of the largest barriers to health care access, and the unequal distribution of coverage contributes to disparities in health.</p> <p>Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during childhood and pregnancy. Without health insurance, many families are one medical emergency away from financial ruin. Insurance coverage improves socioeconomic security, health status, mental health and access to health care. It also decreases infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults. I hope that you will join me in supporting House Bill 1289 to advance health insurance coverage for all Coloradans.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Austin</p>
<p>Jennifer Smith For Self</p>	<p>Dear Chair Michaelson Jenet and Members of the Committee:</p>

	<p>I work in public health and I am reaching out today to ask you to support House Bill 1289 – Cover All Coloradans. All people need access to health insurance regardless of their employment, income, age, medical conditions, marital status, family composition or immigration status. Inadequate health insurance coverage is one of the largest barriers to health care access, and the unequal distribution of coverage contributes to disparities in health.</p> <p>Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during childhood and pregnancy. Without health insurance, many families are one medical emergency away from financial ruin. Insurance coverage improves socioeconomic security, health status, mental health and access to health care. It also decreases infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults. I hope that you will join me in supporting House Bill 1289 to advance health insurance coverage for all Coloradans.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Jennifer Smith, MPH, CDPHE</p>
<p>Rachel Weber For Self</p>	<p>Dear Chair Michaelson Jenet and Members of the Committee:</p> <p>I work in public health and I am reaching out today to ask you to support House Bill 1289 – Cover All Coloradans. All people need access to health insurance regardless of their employment, income, age, medical conditions, marital status, family composition or immigration status. Inadequate health insurance coverage is one of the largest barriers to health care access, and the unequal distribution of coverage contributes to disparities in health. I have spent every day of this COVID pandemic in Colorado working for the citizens of our state in the public health department. I know the impacts on being uninsured and underinsured extremely well and it breaks my heart to watch this unnecessary suffering.</p> <p>Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during childhood and pregnancy. Without health insurance, many families are one medical emergency away from financial ruin. Insurance coverage improves socioeconomic security, health status, mental health and access to health care. It also decreases infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults. I hope that you will join me in supporting House Bill 1289 to advance health insurance coverage for all Coloradans.</p>

	<p>Sincerely, Rachel Weber, MPH</p>
<p>Liza Patrick For Self</p>	<p>Dear Chair Michaelson Jenet and Members of the Committee:</p> <p>I work in public health and I am reaching out today to ask you to support House Bill 1289 – Cover All Coloradans. All people need access to health insurance regardless of their employment, income, age, medical conditions, marital status, family composition or immigration status. Inadequate health insurance coverage is one of the largest barriers to health care access, and the unequal distribution of coverage contributes to disparities in health.</p> <p>Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during childhood and pregnancy. Without health insurance, many families are one medical emergency away from financial ruin. Insurance coverage improves socioeconomic security, health status, mental health and access to health care. It also decreases infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults. I hope that you will join me in supporting House Bill 1289 to advance health insurance coverage for all Coloradans.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Liza Patrick, Certified Nurse Midwife</p>
<p>Marta Loachamin For Boulder County / Counties and Commissioners Acting Together</p>	<p>Dear Chair Michaelson-Jenet and Members of the Committee,</p> <p>I am pleased to submit this testimony on behalf of Counties and Commissioners Acting Together (CCAT) and Boulder County in support of House Bill 1289, Cover All Coloradans.</p> <p>Counties collaborate with the state of Colorado to help enroll members in Health First Colorado (Medicaid), and the Child Health Plan Plus program. These health care coverage benefits have a significant impact on the health of members by providing very low-cost access to quality health care. Our staff provide extensive outreach, education and personalized meetings on the benefits available in these plans and support individuals and families as they apply.</p> <p>As counties, we see a need for access to health care that is greater than what current statute allows us to offer. The increased access for all eligible pregnant women and children in Colorado within HB-1289 will improve long term health outcomes for these enrolled Coloradans, as well as improve mental health, and help address long-standing health disparities for them and their families.</p> <p>Coloradans who have immigrated here from other countries contribute significantly to the state’s economy, our counties, our communities, and</p>

	<p>the vitality of this state. A person’s immigration status must not be a barrier to accessing health care services.</p> <p>More than 15 other states, with conservative and progressive legislatures, have already enacted similar laws to increase access to health care coverage and through that coverage, access to care.</p> <p>We believe expanding health care coverage access to all children and pregnant and postpartum people, regardless of immigration status, is fundamental to achieving health equity in Colorado.</p> <p>Thank you for your considerations of counties’ input and we respectfully request for your yes vote in support of HB 1289.</p> <p>Marta Loachamin, Chair, Boulder County Board of County Commissioners and member of Counties and Commissioners Acting Together</p>
<p>Kory Thomas For Self</p>	<p>Dear Chair Michaelson Jenet and Members of the Committee,</p> <p>I am a committed public health professional and I am reaching out today to ask you to support House Bill 1289 – Cover All Coloradans. I firmly believe that all people need access to health insurance regardless of their employment, income, age, medical conditions, marital status, family composition or immigration status. I have personally witnessed that inadequate health insurance coverage is one of the largest barriers to accessing health care. This has been devastating for my family and my community.</p> <p>I've personally seen the financial ruin that can come without health insurance. There is significant research to support the fact that insurance coverage improves socioeconomic security, health status, mental health and access to health care. Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during childhood and pregnancy because it decreases infant, child, and adult mortality rates. We also know that kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults. I hope that you will join me in supporting House Bill 1289 to advance health insurance coverage for all Coloradans.</p> <p>Sincerely, Kory Thomas, MPH, ACC</p>

Representative Jenet and Representative Sirota  
Public and Behavioral Health and Human Services

Irene Jaw  
Women's Health Nurse Practitioner  
irene.jaw@gmail.com  
Friday, March 25, 2022

In support of HB22-1289, "Health Benefits for Colorado Children and Pregnant Persons"

My name is Irene Jaw and I am a women's health nurse practitioner working in a full spectrum OBGYN office here in the Denver greater area. Over the course of my career, I have worked in healthcare in Colorado for almost 10 years in various capacities. I am providing my written testimony today in support of HB22-1289 in order to expand access and resources to pregnant individuals and undocumented children.

As a women's health nurse practitioner, a major portion of my job duties and scope of practice is to care for pregnant individuals for the duration of their pregnancy, including care after birth. Studies have shown that healthcare coverage results in better outcomes for both the pregnant patient as well as the newborn - access to healthcare results in less complications and less negative long term effects. Pregnancy can complicate existing health issues or cause new medical problems to arise, so it is imperative that patients be able to access care as soon as they become pregnant. Pregnancy care doesn't just stop when a patient leaves the hospital after delivering their baby and there are many complications that occur from a delivery that often cannot be resolved in the first 6 weeks - this could range from pelvic pain, bladder issues, non healing wounds, breast infections, and postpartum mood issues. As a NP, I have seen these types of issues countless times and I can attest to the value of extending postpartum care beyond the traditional 6 weeks after a delivery. Better mental and emotional health means better outcomes for physical health for the patient and child, which then means better outcomes overall for the child's future.

This is why I so strongly support HB22-1289. Expanding coverage to provide more complete healthcare to pregnant people and children is absolutely crucial. This bill provides specific measures that would directly impact my patients and my ability to support and care for them - adequate resources and supplies like breast pumps, diapers, parenting support, and complete prenatal and postpartum care are incredible ways of creating tangible positive outcomes for at risk individuals. I ask that you vote YES on HB22-1289 because no one, especially pregnant people and children, should have to go without healthcare in our state.

Sincerely,

Irene Jaw, WHNP



**James R. Potter**  
Legislative Coordinator  
Colorado Foundation for Universal Health Care  
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March 24, 2022

Re: **Support HB12-1289 Health Benefits For Colorado Children And Pregnant Persons**

Dear Members of the House Health & Insurance Committee:

The Colorado Foundation for Universal Health Care is a non-profit, non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to improving health care for all Coloradans. We believe that health care is a human right which requires that access be without financial and other barriers. We support legislation that makes health care more just and more accessible, while also realizing that the entire health care system needs fundamental reform to make it truly universal.

The findings and declarations in Section 1 of this bill make a strong case for its passage. We all have better health when all of us have access to health care. That is one powerful lesson that we have all learned during this pandemic. This bill will help to close the gap in health coverage for those that have been left out. It will improve the quality of life for all Coloradans as a result. We urge you to vote in favor of its passage.

Yours truly,

Thank you Chair Michaelson Jenet and Representatives McCluskie, Gonzales-Gutierrez and Senator Moreno for bringing this bill forward.

My name is Miriam and I live in the Denver area. My mom and I came to this country when I was 2 years old and I grew up in a mixed status family. Growing up, my mom and I were never able to access healthcare through the U.S. healthcare system, while my father and brother were able to get the care they needed because they were able to access health insurance. My brother was able to go to the dentist regularly, and when he had asthma he was able to get the inhaler and care that he needed. When I started to develop psoriasis on my scalp, it was a very difficult time in my life. My hair started to fall out and I was bleeding from my scalp. All that my family could do for me was buy me a special shampoo and it's a condition that I am still dealing with today at 22 years old. When you're a kid, you don't realize that all those dr's visits are preventative care. As you grow older, you start to feel the complications of going years and years without having health care, and that's what I am going through now. No child should have to go through what I went through as a young person. That's why we must pass this bill, to ensure that all kids will have access to the care they need to thrive.

I ask for a YES vote on HB22-1289.

Thank you for your time.

Miriam

Thank you chair and members of the committee. My name is Mirta and I am writing to submit testimony in support of HB22-1289.

I live with my husband and our 4 daughters in a trailer in Greeley, Colorado. Our oldest daughter was born in El Salvador and came with us to the US when she was 1 year old. Her 3 younger sisters are US citizens because they were born here.

Our oldest is 10 years old and everything is impacted because she is undocumented and does not have health insurance. She has needed physical exams for school and we usually have to pay entirely out of pocket. When she is sick, we have to keep her at home - we never take her to the doctor if we can help it. She has thankfully never gotten dangerously sick. The clinic allows us to take her to the dentist but the bills are really high and she doesn't have dental coverage or vision insurance.

My daughter cannot do a single sport because she doesn't have health insurance. We tried to enroll her in martial arts when she was 8 and they asked if she had health insurance and we had to say no. They told us we'd have to pay out of pocket for any accidents or injuries that might happen to her and we had to make the tough decision not to let her do martial arts. We have set this rule for all our daughters to be fair. So she does not feel different and discriminated against, we don't allow any of our daughters to play in sports.

The school is currently asking for her to have her vision checked. We have not been able to take her yet. It has been 3 years since our oldest daughter has had a check up. The only regular check ups we've been able to provide have been through free health clinics at her school. That's how we found out she was having problems with her hearing. Because she doesn't have insurance, we have not been able to take her to the doctor to help with her hearing. We are waiting until our financial situation is better to take her. Sometimes we have to yell so that she can hear us.

With the pandemic, our finances have been very low which adds to the stress. My husband works in construction and there were many weeks during the pandemic when there was no work. He sustains the household at the moment. I work but the pay is very minimal. I make \$300 every 2 weeks, \$600 a month. That's not enough for us to survive, let alone make medical payments. It costs as much as I make in 2 weeks, \$345, to see the doctor at our local clinic. I am undocumented so I don't qualify for support, food stamps, etc.

My husband's new job is going to give health coverage for our children but only for our daughters who are citizens. Our oldest daughter is not able to get coverage from his work because she is undocumented. We have to limit ourselves. Our older daughter is not allowed to play rough because we can't afford to take her to the doctor. I have to tell her, "mija, you don't have health insurance. Please be careful." When our younger daughters get sick we don't have to second guess, we can take them to the doctor.

Once my younger 7 year old daughter broke her arm playing at school and I was able to take her to emergency care. I thank God I was able to get her the care she needed right away. My oldest daughter has a different life. I always have to limit her from doing many things. As a parent, I am constantly afraid of what will happen if she gets hurt. I try to do my best to take care of her. The difference is huge in how they are able to grow up.

My other 3 have health insurance, so I can take them to the doctor. If they need medicine I can get it. If my oldest needs medicine I have to buy her medicine completely out of pocket. I can really only get her over the counter medicine because we cannot just take her to the doctor to get a prescription if she needs it.

Right now, as the weather is cold, we have to make sure they don't go outside too much because we don't want them to get sick. We have to be very cautious to avoid accidents to make sure we won't need to rely on the doctors. When my oldest was small she had a pulmonary infection because of the cold. We had to take her to a clinic doctor directly. Someone knew of the doctor, had told us he was affordable and we went right to him. It was \$800 with medicine and everything. Going to the hospital might have cost us \$3,000 or more.

As a parent, it is incredibly stressful to not be able to provide the same care for all of my children. If we could pass HB22-1289 for children, like my oldest daughter, who were not born here, it would be such a huge blessing and a weight off our shoulders.

Mirta

Dear Members of the Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services Committee:

On behalf of Rose Community Foundation, I write to express our support for House Bill 22-1289 (Health Benefits for Colorado Children and Pregnant Persons) and respectfully encourage members of the committee to vote in favor.

As a community foundation representing and investing in the seven-county Greater Denver region, we work closely with a wide range of nonprofits that are on the ground serving people and communities furthest from opportunity. Because of these organizations' longstanding relationships with and work on behalf of populations most excluded or disadvantaged by existing systems and policies related to child and family wellbeing, economic opportunity, health, and immigration, Rose Community Foundation greatly values their perspectives on emerging needs and policy solutions designed to close gaps in opportunity and improve outcomes for *all* Coloradans.

We support HB22-1289 because over a dozen of our nonprofit partners have stated loudly and clearly that expanding health-care access to all children and pregnant and postpartum people, regardless of immigration status, is fundamental to achieving health equity of Colorado. In fact, no single other bill this session has so united our diverse collection of community partners as this critical legislation.

Health insurance is an important social determinant of health and a building block of family financial stability. Insurance access improves physical and mental health; lowers infant, child and adult mortality rates, and correlates positively with higher income security. Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during pregnancy and childhood, and Medicaid and CHIP play vital roles in improving outcomes for children and pregnant women in families with low and moderate incomes.

Our communities are stronger and fairer when every family gets a chance at a healthy start. HB22-1289 represents an important step toward closing inequitable coverage gaps and cultivating a healthy future for all Colorado families. Seventeen other states provide full health coverage for undocumented, CHIP-eligible pregnant people, and 10 states have extended varying levels of insurance coverage to undocumented children – Colorado belongs on this list.

Expanding health coverage to pregnant people and children who meet Medicaid and CHIP income-eligibility requirements, regardless of immigration status and documentation, is an investment in the health and wellbeing of our entire state. Rose Community Foundation proudly joins our partners in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors, along with service providers and directly impacted individuals, who aspire for a more equitable, just and inclusive health care system in Colorado.

Sarah Kurz  
Vice President of Public Affairs, Rose Community Foundation

I am a single mother living in Telluride, CO. My daughter and I lived in a rural town in Guatemala. When we arrived in the U.S. everything was so different, and it took a while for me to get adjusted to our new life. I was hoping that I would be able to care for my daughter's medical needs. In our rural town in Guatemala, there was no local doctor, and we had never had a dentist visit the town.

I soon came to understand that accessing the healthcare system was difficult and very expensive. My first language is Mayan Chuj and my second language is Spanish. I didn't speak any English, and this made it difficult talking to offices about how to pay for medical care. I became more and more concerned because my daughter was complaining that she had some pain in her back teeth. I had heard so many horror stories of how expensive dental work could be and if we couldn't pay the bill we would be sent to collections, and they would notify Immigration. I don't have any immigration status that allows me to stay here, and I couldn't risk being deported.

I felt embarrassed and hopeless as a mother, who couldn't take care of the needs of my daughter. As a mother, all I wanted to do was take her pain away and comfort her. Unfortunately, I could barely make ends meet and I couldn't imagine adding an additional bill at the time. I knew I had to pay for everything out of pocket and I felt so overwhelmed because I had to choose between buying groceries or taking my daughter to the doctor.

Someone told me that there was some free dental work at the school and that my daughter could possibly be seen the following week. I signed the paperwork to get her enrolled in the SKIPPY program. My daughter was seen, and I received a call from a local non-profit, Tri-County Health Network, who told me that my daughter was in great pain, and she needed to see a dentist for an emergency visit. I was so embarrassed and ashamed that I couldn't pay for any dental work. I wasn't getting paid for a couple more days and I knew I didn't have enough money to pay. I was advised that my daughter had large abscesses in her little mouth. The infections were so bad that they told me she had to get surgery as soon as possible. My heart was torn because all I could think about was not having enough money to cover this visit, let alone find a way to get my daughter to a dentist 3 hours away and afford surgery. At this point, I couldn't believe the level of pain my poor baby was going through, and I felt that all I could do was risk it, even if I could be turned into ICE.

After the visit was over, I recall my baby girl sitting in that large chair, smiling and telling me that the doctor was going to make her pain go away and she would be able to smile again and not have to worry about the pain coming back when she was playing. That was worth all the debt in the world. When we checked out, I braced myself to see how much I would have to pay and anticipated the embarrassment of not being able to provide for my daughter. I was and always will be eternally grateful to hear that there had been an anonymous donor who covered the entire cost of my daughter's visit.

We were scheduled for surgery and the local non-profit helped us make it to our appointment and helped us apply for a sliding scale fee discount and a payment plan for my daughter's surgery and follow up care. Even with all the help I was left with monthly payments I could barely cover. All this was something I had to pay out of my pocket. As a single mother, I only counted with my income to make sure all my bills were covered and that I could continue to cover my daughter's medical bills. My biggest worry and stress was knowing that my income was always changing depending on the amount of work I had that week. There were weeks where I wasn't sure how I was going to afford groceries, pay my rent or utilities, or buy my daughter the jacket or shoes she needed. I felt so alone and so defeated.

To this day I continue to fight for me and my daughter. We are both undocumented and have no health insurance. If Medicaid was expanded to cover children like my daughter, I wouldn't have to choose between putting food on the table or making sure my daughter has the care she deserves. I would be able to take care of her and make sure that problems don't escalate, and my daughter doesn't have to numb the pain she has because she knows her mother can't afford to take her to the doctor. If she could have medical coverage, then perhaps I could potentially think about seeing a doctor for myself. My priority is my daughter, and I will always put her first. But I recognize that I am all she has and if something happens to me who would take care of her? I stay up at night thinking about who would take care of her if something happened to me. I know I too have to take care of myself, but I can't afford to cover both of our medical bills. So, for now I will continue to cover hers. I ask that you hear my story and support this bill and help my family access the care we so desperately need and deserve.

Representative Jenet and Representative Sirota  
Public and Behavioral Health and Human Services Committee

William Mundo, MPH

MD candidate, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Class of 2022

[William.mundo@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:William.mundo@cuanschutz.edu), (303)-517-8529

Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**In support of HB22-1289, “Health Benefits for Colorado Children and Pregnant Persons.”**

Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to let me submit my written testimony. My name is William Mundo. I am a public health professional and a fourth-year medical student graduating in May and will soon be an emergency medicine physician. I am a resident of Aurora, Colorado, and here representing myself. I support HB22-1289 because this bill has evidence-based public health gains and the ability to reduce adverse health and socioeconomic outcomes among Colorado’s most vulnerable populations.

As a public health professional and an incoming medical professional, I have dedicated my life to understanding how to address issues that cause adverse health outcomes. Not only have I spent time taking care and treating patients, but at the same time trying to address the environmental and societal conditions that lead them to the door of the emergency room. This bill aims to change these conditions to ensure Coloradans have the right to healthcare and avoid emergency conditions that can be easily prevented with adequate access to healthcare.

I can easily go into the facts and data that support this bill. However, I want to highlight how this bill has impacted the patients I care for and my own family. As someone who has spent time in clinics, hospitals, and emergency departments – I have seen first-hand the horrible challenges people need to overcome while on the brink of death. I remember caring for a young woman who presented with severe abdominal pain and ended up having an ectopic pregnancy – a life-threatening condition where the embryo implants outside where it is supposed to. She knew she was pregnant; however, she did not seek any prenatal care because she could not afford it. She was looking forward to having a baby, but unfortunately, these situations always end with a pregnancy loss and possible maternal death if not addressed swiftly. No one should have to endure the challenge of having a pregnancy loss while at the same time fighting for their own life.

Unfortunately, this issue also goes beyond the patients I take care of daily. I have seen it impact my family directly. I come from a family of hard-working Mexican immigrants with mixed legal status. My sister almost lost her life and her baby from another life-threatening condition called Pre-eclampsia. She, too, could not access prenatal care, let alone any sort of primary care. Certain risk factors raise the risk of Pre-eclampsia – all of which can be managed with adequate access to

healthcare. She ended up being hospitalized during her third trimester and had to have her pregnancy induced due to the concern of maternal death and fetal loss. Luckily, we had a fantastic group of doctors who cared for her and saved her life. However, I always ask myself – Could this traumatic experience have been prevented if she could see a doctor regularly? Would this even have happened if we had a bill like this already in place? My prediction and instinct tell me that it could have.

**I ask that you vote YES on HB22-1289 because no one should go without healthcare in our state.** Urgent action is needed from Congress to pass this bill to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all Coloradans. Therefore, Congress must act to safeguard the right to adequate and affordable healthcare. This bill will save lives and push Colorado's economy, workforce, and public health gains to new and better horizons.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to submit my testimony. Please support HB22-1289.

Sincerely,

William Mundo, MPH  
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Representative Jenet and Representative Sirota  
Public and Behavioral Health and Human Services

Anne Frank, MD, FAAP  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter  
anne.gabonay@gmail.com  
March 25th, 2022

In support of HB22-1289, "Health Benefits for Colorado Children and Pregnant Persons"

My name is Anne Frank and I am a general pediatrician and internist in a Federally Qualified Health Center in Southwest Denver. I am also an assistant professor of Medicine and Pediatrics and medical educator at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter and my patients, I urge you to support HB 1289.

Daily, in my primary care practice I see families that would benefit from the implementation of this bill. Three-year-old Ana (all names have been changed to protect patient confidentiality), who I recently diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, is currently not eligible for insurance - because... She would, however, be eligible under HB 1289. Without insurance, she cannot receive ABA therapy which is the standard treatment for behavior challenges in Autism Spectrum. If Ana had ABA, speech, and OT at diagnosis and consistently, her ability to succeed in school and in the community would increase greatly.

I see 12-year-old Matt, who has sleep apnea and large tonsils. He is not able to receive treatment for his sleep apnea and surgery to remove his tonsils because of cost and lack of health insurance. He has been falling asleep in school and came to me with high blood pressure as a result of untreated obstructive sleep apnea. With health coverage to help with paying for treatment, this could be easily addressed and aid in improving his quality of life.

Another patient, has a rare eye condition who needs frequent, cost-prohibitive, pediatric ophthalmology appointments to prevent development of blindness. Currently, his family is struggling to pay co-pays for appointments. He would benefit tremendously from insurance coverage and his prognosis would be vastly improved.

We know that all people who have access to health insurance have improved health. Improving access to care for children and pregnant people, will have enormous positive downstream health effects across the lifespan. Routine prenatal care promotes healthy babies. Treatment of childhood conditions such as asthma, diabetes, depression, heart disease allows children to thrive, go to school, engage in activities, and become happy, healthy adults.

Thank you so much for bringing HB 1289 forward, please vote yes.