

COLORADO SENIOR LOBBY RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS YOUR SUPPORT
for SB21-158—"Increase Medical Providers for Senior Citizens"

Sponsors: Senators Danielson and Pettersen, and Representatives Titone and Duran

SB21-158 expands the existing Colorado Health Service Corps Program administered by the Department of Public Health and Environment to include geriatric care providers in health professional shortage areas in Colorado.

What the Bill Does:

The bill adds "Advanced Practice Providers", including advanced practice nurses and physician assistants, to the education loan repayment program because these providers have been identified as critical to meet the level of care required for our growing aging population. Those who obtain a specialty in geriatric care and agree to spend at least 50 percent of their time providing geriatric care in a health professional shortage area (defined by the program as low income or rural) and for at least two years are eligible for loan repayments.

Why the Bill is Important:

We are concerned about the health care that is being and will be provided to older Coloradans, especially as that population is growing faster than any other segment and there is a shortage of geriatric health care providers available to care for them. Just as we seek pediatricians to care for our children, we need geriatricians to care for our older population. Geriatricians better understand the conditions, medications, interactions and coordination necessary to care for older adults.

Geriatrics is defined as the branch of health care dealing with issues related to ***aging and diseases of older adults***; it is related to the science of ***gerontology***, which is the study of the entire aging process. **Geriatric Medicine becomes increasingly important as the percentage and absolute number of older adults swell dramatically in our society, and there is greater need to care for these more complex older patients.**

And it is a **dementia care** issue: according to the Alzheimer's Association, ***17 percent of Americans age 75-84, and 32 percent of those 85+ suffer from some form of dementia.*** Colorado is estimated to have 125,000 dementia-afflicted people by 2030, including about 25,000 in rural areas. Geriatric health care professionals are trained to care for those patients and their families/caregivers.

The program will offer loan repayment contracts of up to \$50,000 each, which are paid in the first year and monitored in the subsequent two years.

ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING SB 21-158:



AARP Colorado



**DISABILITY LAW
COLORADO**
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THE COLORADO
SOCIETY FOR
POST-ACUTE AND
LONG-TERM CARE
MEDICINE



KNOEBEL INSTITUTE
FOR HEALTHY AGING



SENIORS' RESOURCE
CENTER

Archdiocese of Denver

Boulder County

Colorado Catholic Conference

LEADING AGE Colorado

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ed Bowditch, ed.bowditch@bcpublicaffairs.com

303-489-8680

Jennifer Cassell, jennifer.cassell@bcpublicaffairs.com

785-393-0472

Jeanette Hensley, jlhens@hotmail.com

Rich Mauro, rmauro@drcog.org