Written Testimony as Prepared for Delivery in Support of **SB21-025: Expanded Income Eligibility for Medicaid Family Planning** Services by Erin Miller, Vice President, Health Initiatives, Colorado Children's Campaign

Senate Health and Human Services
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1:30 PM
Virtual Testimony

- Thank you, Chair Fields and members of the committee.
- My name is Erin Miller and I'm Vice President of Health Initiatives at the Colorado Children's Campaign, where we fight for every chance for *every* child.
- I am here in strong support of this bill and with appreciation to Senators Pettersen and Coram for bringing it forward.
- This bill will expand access to needed family planning services across Colorado and is a critical piece of the COVID response in our state. The pandemic has jeopardized access to family planning services while demand for those services has grown.
- This policy will build on our state's success and the good work of our legislative partners to help Colorado maintain is position as a leader in reducing unintended pregnancies – helping people finish their educations, grow their careers, chart their own futures, and have healthier pregnancies and babies.
- In fact, our state Maternal Mortality Review Committee specifically recommended expanded access to family planning services in the report they published last summer. The Maternal Mortality Review Committee noted that – and I quote -- "the ability to choose if and when to have children and in what ways, is essential to the health and wellbeing of people before, during, and after a pregnancy. Culturally appropriate family planning care should be covered by insurance and include options for preventing pregnancy and options for building a family."
- This policy would provide coverage for family planning services for families with low incomes but who make just a little too much to qualify for Medicaid, and who lack other forms of insurance coverage for these services. People between the Medicaid income eligibility level and CHIP eligible levels would be eligible for this coverage. If the people in this income range were to become

pregnant unintentionally, due to lack of access to services, their prenatal and delivery care would be covered by our state CHIP program.

- The most important part of this policy is that it will allow people to seek family planning care at their local clinics, receive all necessary services, and better plan their families and chart their own futures. However, it is also likely to save the state money. Under this policy, the federal government covers 90 percent of family planning costs, drawing down millions in federal funds.
- 28 other states as diverse as Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland and New Mexico have already taken up this state option and numerous studies have found these programs to be cost-saving to state and federal governments. In 2018, North Carolina Medicaid officials, for example, estimated the program saves the state about $15 million a year.
- The Colorado Health Institute estimated that the expansion of a comprehensive family planning benefit to this population through the Medicaid program would save the state more than $3 million dollars in health costs during the program's first fully implemented year.
- While we hope that more Coloradans take up full health insurance coverage through our state exchange now that enhanced financial assistance will be available through the American Rescue Plan, we realize that folks will continue to remain uninsured in our system for a number of reasons, and we appreciate that this benefit would also be used to connect people to full insurance coverage options, including those through Connect for Health.
- I urge your support of this bill and I am happy to take any questions.