Written Testimony as Prepared for Delivery in Support of **SB21-009: Reproductive Health Care Program** by Erin Miller, Vice President, Health Initiatives, Colorado Children's Campaign

House Health and Insurance
May 26, 2021
1:30PM
Virtual Testimony

- Thank you, Chair Lontine 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 support of this bill and with appreciation to Representative Caraveo for bringing it forward.
- The Colorado legislature in general, and this Committee, this afternoon, in particular, has a number of critical opportunities to move forward policy that will reduce unintended pregnancy in Colorado and help Colorado maintain its position as a leader in helping all people plan their families and chart their own futures.
- As you have heard, unintended pregnancy is associated with several adverse birth outcomes, including preterm birth and low birth weight births that are driving causes of infant mortality in Colorado.
- Policies that reduce unintended pregnancy also meet the moment of the COVID response. Demand for family planning services has grown during the pandemic in the very moment when access to those services is most threatened due to family financial uncertainty and job losses.
- This bill would expand Medicaid to provide contraceptives for undocumented communities in Colorado and improve access to a 12-month supply of contraceptives for everyone on Medicaid.
- Creating a contraceptive Medicaid benefit to improve access to family planning services is critically important for our immigrant community.
- A Guttmacher study found that only half of immigrant women received contraceptive services or information in the previous year, compared to two-thirds of US-born women. This bill will increase access to these services for this community, and help to encourage community members who are eligible for full Medicaid benefits to enroll in the program through the

welcome-mat effect – by creating a program designed for everyone, officials in fact encourage people who are already eligible for benefits to get enrolled.

- Further, this Medicaid program would expand access to family planning services beyond what is available through Title X clinics by removing geographic barriers to care.
- Establishing this program would also allow the state to add additional covered health benefits in future years, improving access to all types of health care.
- Further, reducing barriers to additional months of contraception at one time is evidence-based policy to reduce unintended pregnancies.
- This bill is a critical step in supporting healthy pregnancies and early parenthood in Colorado and we urge its support.