

April 17, 2025

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senator

The Honorable Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

The Honorable Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

The Honorable Lauren Boebert
Member of Congress

The Honorable Jeff Crank
Member of Congress

The Honorable John Hickenlooper
United States Senator

The Honorable Jason Crow
Member of Congress

The Honorable Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress

The Honorable Gabe Evans
Member of Congress

The Honorable Jeff Hurd
Member of Congress

Subject: Protect Colorado's Youth: Oppose Medicaid Cuts That Threaten Mental Health Services

Dear Colorado Congressional Delegation,

We are writing to respectfully urge you to oppose any federal Medicaid cuts that would jeopardize access to mental health services for children and adolescents in our state.

The Denver Foundation is a community foundation that has spent the past 100 years connecting and collaborating with the community to address current and future challenges. We have supported families and young people since the beginning. Today, we fund organizations working on youth mental health for K-12-aged children with programs in the community and schools. Additionally, we manage the Colorado Health Access Fund, which distributes grants to increase access to behavioral health care to Coloradans with high health care needs across the state.

As a funder, we believe that Medicaid is a cornerstone of youth mental health care in Colorado. Approximately 1.2 million Coloradans—nearly a quarter of our population—rely on Medicaid for essential health services, including behavioral health support for children and teens. Community health centers serve as critical access points and provide care to about 857,000 people statewide, with approximately half their patients enrolled in Medicaid.

Proposed federal budget resolutions threaten to cut at least \$700 billion from Medicaid over the next decade. Such cuts would disproportionately affect vulnerable youth, especially in rural and underserved communities. For instance, Colorado's Early Intervention program, which offers therapies to children under age three with developmental delays, is already facing reductions due to funding shortfalls. These cuts limit therapy hours and delay services, hindering early development and increasing long-term costs.

Moreover, the recent Medicaid "unwinding" process has led to significant coverage losses, with Medicaid enrollment dropping 83,000 below pre-pandemic levels for children and parent caretakers. Further federal cuts would exacerbate these losses, leaving more children without access to necessary mental health services.

The economic implications could also have devastating consequences. Medicaid cuts could lead to service reductions or closures of community health centers, which provide essential care and contribute significantly to the state's economy.

We respectfully urge you to:

- Oppose any federal budget proposals that reduce Medicaid funding.
- Advocate for sustained or increased investment in youth mental health services.
- Support policies that ensure continuous coverage for children and families in need.

Protecting Medicaid is more than health care; it's about safeguarding the future of Colorado's children—and children nationwide.

Sincerely,



Dace West
Chief Impact Officer



Dr. Janet Lopez
Senior Director of Policy,
Partnerships and Learning



Naomi Amaha
Director of Policy and
Government Affairs