

## Colorado Affordable Health Care Option (HB20-1349)

Testimony to the House Health & Insurance Committee

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Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of [HB20-1349](#). My name's Andrea Kuwik, and I'm a policy analyst with the Bell Policy Center. The Bell Policy Center provides policymakers, advocates, and the public with reliable resources to create a practical policy agenda that promotes economic mobility for every Coloradan.

As an organization dedicated to advancing policies supportive of economic opportunity for all, we're excited to be here in support of legislation that will create a more affordable health care option for Colorado. One of the fundamental questions much of our work at the Bell revolves around is—why, in one of the best economies in the country, do so many Coloradans feel stuck. What we've found is something far too many Coloradans feel and understand on a daily basis — and that's the cost of many essential, non-discretionary services, like health care, are growing faster than wages.

In [a report prepared for the Bell](#), researchers from the University of Colorado specifically found that the growing cost of higher education, housing, and health care are straining even middle-class families' ability to afford basic necessities. As middle class report documents, family incomes for two adult, two child homes grew by 24 percent between 2000 and 2016. During the same period, however, health care costs grew by 70 percent.

You've already heard stories this afternoon about the very real, immediate costs to family health and finances when there's a lack of affordable, quality health care options. But we also know there are long-term, generational implications which stunt economic mobility and opportunity. Yes, the growing, and continually high cost of health care can force difficult, immediate choices. But it's also preventing Coloradans from investing in their own, and their families, long-term futures. It keeps people from investing in retirement accounts, buying a home, or setting aside money for their own, or their children's, education — all actions that build generational wealth for our families and communities.

We believe the new health care option, created through HB20-1349, offers a meaningful way to bring needed financial relief to thousands of Colorado families. With [projected premium reductions of 10 percent across the state](#), the Colorado Affordable Health Care Option will put money back in the pockets of thousands of Coloradans. But more than just providing a one-time benefit, this bill also makes systemic changes to the cost of health care, providing needed long-term financial relief to Colorado families.

We appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of HB20-1349, a Colorado-specific proposal specifically designed to meet our state's needs with the resources we have. Thank you to Representatives Roberts and Kennedy for bringing this bill and for the opportunity to testify. I'm happy to answer any questions.