

NEWS STATEMENT
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Statement attributable to:
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Hickenlooper Takes the Right Step for Health of Colorado Kids

DENVER— On behalf of Colorado's Community Health Centers (CHCs), I wish to express our thanks to Governor John Hickenlooper for vetoing SB11-213, which would have imposed monthly premiums to Coloradans enrolled in the Child Health Program Plus (CHP+).

SB11-213 sought to impose monthly premiums for children enrolled in CHP+ whose families earn between 206 percent to 250 percent of the federal poverty level, of \$20 on the first child, and \$10 for each additional child, up to \$50 per family. These monthly premiums would create a barrier to participation in CHP+ and drive implementation costs that exceed the expected savings.

I second Gov. Hickenlooper's statement that while this legislation was intended to reduce the budget impact of increasing CHP+ costs and did not intend to put children at risk, it would have a real-life, negative impact on children of low-income families. If implemented, SB11-213 would have resulted in:

- Higher rates of Colorado children living without health insurance,
- Additional burdens on Colorado CHCs who would do all they can to continue caring for these uninsured children, without adequate reimbursement, and
- Increased utilization of expensive and inefficient emergency departments for families unable to access timely and more affordable care.

Because the true cost of living is not reflected in the decades-old complex formula used to compute the federal poverty level, many states tie public assistance for individuals and families to income levels above 100 percent of the federal poverty level. Research such as the Colorado Self-Sufficiency Standard shows that for most counties in Colorado, incomes above 200 percent and sometimes above 250 percent are necessary in order to pay for life's necessities, including health care, without government assistance.

Monthly CHP+ premiums proved to be costly and cumbersome for Colorado in the past. Gov. Hickenlooper did the right thing to veto this bill and to direct the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to conduct an analysis of cost-sharing and evaluate possible changes to CHP+ to achieve cost-savings.

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To interview Ms. Kowal, please contact Maureen Maxwell at (303) 861-5165, Ext. 259, cell (303)913-9078, or maureen@cchn.org.

To view Governor Hickenlooper's veto statement, please go to <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=GovHickenlooper%2FCBONLayout&cid=1251593304636&pagename=CBONWrapper>.

The Colorado Self-Sufficiency Standard is a report of the Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute. Please go to http://www.cclponline.org/pubfiles/SelfSufficiency08_FinalProof.pdf to view the report.

The Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN) is the collective voice for Colorado's 15 Community Health Centers (CHCs) and their patients. CHCs provide a health care home to more than 500,000 of their community members - one in 10 people in Colorado - from 58 of the state's 64 counties. Without CHCs, hundreds of thousands of Colorado's low-income families and individuals would have no regular source of health care.

CCHN's mission is to increase access to high quality health care for people in need in Colorado. For more information about CCHN, please visit www.cchn.org.

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