



May 13, 2024

The Honorable Jared Polis
 Governor, State of Colorado State
 Capitol 200 E Colfax Ave.
 Denver, CO 80203

RE: SUPPORT for Medicaid Coverage of Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) Systems

Dear Governor Polis:

The undersigned organizations are writing to request your leadership and support to improve health equity, access, and outcomes for the multitude of Coloradans across the state suffering from diabetes.

As you know, SB24-168 was approved by the Senate and the House on May 7th to require HCPF to provide coverage of CGMs to members under the Medicaid, Medical, and pharmacy benefit to address the diabetes epidemic in our state. Your signature of SB24-168 will ensure that Coloradans suffering from diabetes will have equitable access to lifesaving CGMs.

Today, 322,900 residents (6.9% of our adult population) have been diagnosed with diabetesⁱ and another estimated 27,500ⁱⁱ new patients are diagnosed each year. The consequences of diabetes and inadequate blood glucose monitoring are severe, including blindness, limb

amputation, kidney failure, heart disease – and death.

Commercial plans, Medicare and almost every state Medicaid program has expanded coverage of CGMs because they improve diabetes monitoring and management, thus effectively lowering instances of emergency room visits and hospitalization by as much as 70 percentⁱⁱⁱ. In fact, improved outcomes, health equity, and dramatic cost savings are the driving factors why California, the nation's largest Medicaid provider, expanded CGM coverage in 2021 and continues to broaden eligibility as a pharmaceutical benefit today.

While we are encouraged by the passage of SB24-168, we remain concerned about the delayed implementation. This means our state will not be taking advantage of this nationally recognized standard of care to improve health outcomes and to reduce public health care costs, until November 2025.

Those suffering most are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) who run nearly double the risk of diabetes.

Rates of diagnosed diabetes in adults, by ethnicity

Native American	13.6%
Black	12.1%
Hispanic	11.7%
Asian	9.1%
White	6.9%

Source: American Diabetes Association: Statistics About Diabetes

The consequences of this will fall on the next generation too. Poorly managed diabetes is a leading cause of pregnancy complications, pre-term birth, and maternal and infant mortality. Due to high diabetes prevalence Black moms are three times more likely to die in childbirth than their White counterparts. In Colorado, the pregnancy-associated maternal mortality ratio for Native American women is 156.3 per 100,000 live births compared to the average state ratio of 54.7 per 100,000 live births.

Our work also encompasses health access and affordability for the 700,000 Coloradans in frontier rural communities. In its annual report for 2023, the Colorado Rural Health Center noted:

“Rural areas have insufficient access to primary care and other healthcare services which results in poorer health outcomes, higher costs, and higher acuity conditions at the time of treatment.”

For example, the report went on to say that while there is an overwhelming diabetes prevalence in Southeastern Colorado, the region has only two facilities that assist diabetes patients with self-management, education, and support. It is essential that Coloradans with diabetes living in rural areas who already struggle with limited access to critical medical care, have access to innovative, lifesaving CGMs, as soon as possible.

Governor, you have a longstanding record of supporting health equity and access and reducing health care costs. We ask you to continue your tradition by increasing access to CGMs and protecting our most vulnerable, sooner rather than later. We stand ready to work with you and the Legislature to ensure health equity, access and a more cost-effective health care system for our great state.

Sincerely,

American Association of Retired Persons Colorado
Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists
Barbara Davis Center for Diabetes
Centennial State Prosperity
Children Diabetes Foundation
Children with Diabetes
Chronic Care Collaborative
Colorado Coordinating Body of the Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists
Colorado Health Equity Collaborative
Colorado Hospital Association
Colorado Pharmacists Society
Environmental Justice League
DiabetesSisters
Diabetes Leadership Council
Diabetes Patient Advocacy Coalition
Divine Birthright
Frontline Doulas
Health Equity Alliance
Healthier Colorado
Mental Health Colorado
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
National Minority Quality Forum
One Colorado
Reproductive Health Impact
SisterReach
Soul & Soil Doulas
The Diabetes Link
Young Invincibles

ⁱ Colorado Rural Health Center

ⁱⁱ American Diabetes Association: State Fact - Colorado

ⁱⁱⁱ Charleer S, Mathieu C, Nobels F, et al. Effect of Continuous Glucose Monitoring on Glycemic Control, Acute Admissions, and Quality of Life: A Real-World Study. The Journal of clinical endocrinology and metabolism.