

# Memo

To: MS Society  
From: Brandeberry McKenna Public Affairs (BBMK)  
Date: January 12, 2017  
Re: Governor Hickenlooper's State of the State

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Following tradition, Governor John Hickenlooper gave his annual State of the State address to the Colorado General Assembly today.

Key highlights include the following.

- While acknowledging that a fix to the hospital provider fee is not popular with everyone, the Governor said that we should take a fresh look at the hospital provider fee to see if it can be modified as a vehicle to control costs, build more transparency and accountability and better serve rural clinics and hospitals.
- Investing in transportation infrastructure is a top priority. In the Governor's words "let's examine all our options. Whether it's new revenue, simplifying or replacing old tax streams or a combination of both...Let's decide what we take to voters in November, and let's make our case to the public."
- He announced the creation of a broadband office to get from 70% to 85% coverage of the state by 2018 and 100% by 2020.
- In terms of education, he highlighted the importance of career and technical education and the need for a "common sense plan to fund education."
- His Administration is focusing economic development efforts on rural parts of the state and small towns. They will ask to establish a point person for rural economic development issues.
- The Governor wants to close loopholes in the home grow and caregiver laws related to marijuana and provide \$6 million in financial resources to local law enforcement. He also plans to propose using some of the marijuana tax revenue to help homeless individuals.
- Affordable housing is key, and part of the answer is to pass the construction defects legislation that almost passed last year.

- In terms of health care:
  - Gov. Hickenlooper highlighted the work of the last six years to control Medicaid costs.
  - He said that “with the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Donna Lynne, we will address underlying drivers of health care costs” but did not provide more specifics.
  - Referencing the changes likely to come from the federal level, he said “I will fight for a replacement plan that protects the people who are covered now and doesn’t take us backward.”
  - Additionally, “we look forward...to working with all of you to pass commonsense proposals to increase transparency, provide more choices, cover more people, and lower the cost of health insurance for all Coloradans.”
  - The Administration will work to create a statewide behavioral health plan that makes the system easier to navigate, more efficient and more responsive.
- Finally, he announced the hiring of the country’s first digital transportation officer and a decision to combine a number of services across multiple agencies into a single, easy to use app.

The prepared version of the Governor’s full speech can be found here.

<https://www.colorado.gov/governor/news/gov-hickenlooper-delivers-annual-state-state-address-1>

All of us at Brandeberry McKenna Public Affairs are grateful for the opportunity to work with you. We look forward to a successful legislative session. Please do not hesitate to contact any of us if you have questions.