

Background

New federal leadership has committed to bringing substantial change to our federal health policy framework. A broad and diverse group of stakeholders has come together in an attempt to proactively position Colorado to help shape that federal conversation about the future of health care in America. To that end, this collaboration has set forth below clear principles on both the process Congress follows to bring about these changes and the policy they ultimately adopt. Recognizing the interconnected nature of health policy, these principles should be considered of equal importance.

Process Principles

- Repeal the Affordable Care Act and related federal health policies only with a clearly identified and carefully considered replacement plan.
 - Health care is essential to people's quality of life, a significant economic driver in Colorado and nationally and a major piece of all state and local government responsibility and budgets.
 - Consumers, businesses and governments all need the stability of understanding the federal framework in which they will operate going forward.
- Given the interconnected nature of health care, across public programs and private markets, addressing component policy pieces in isolation could have significant, negative unintended consequences.
 - Health care is a complex system that requires comprehensive policy solutions. Making piecemeal changes to select parts of the system can have repercussions throughout the different portions of the health care system and our economy.
- Find a non-partisan path to a new federal health care framework.
 - The partisanship surrounding the enactment of the Affordable Care Act created a major barrier to engage in meaningful policy debate about health care. As a country, we now have the opportunity to change that dynamic.

Policy Principles

- Expand choice, affordability and competition in private markets, while maintaining consumer protections.
 - Colorado and the country have seen historic gains in ensuring meaningful health coverage. Protecting those gains in coverage, as well as the corresponding benefits of improved access for consumers and sustainability for health care providers, is a priority.
- Promote stability in the market in order to help control costs.
 - Continuous coverage for everyone is key to an effective and stable insurance market. Encouraging people to get and stay covered will balance risk pools with healthier people and help to control costs. Because instability creates more costs, ensure any transition provides adequate time for carriers to implement changes and minimize impact to consumers.
- Recognize that promoting access to care at the right time in the right setting by ensuring access to coverage has benefits for people, the health care system and our economy.
 - It costs more to take care of the uninsured in the long term, since delay in seeking health care usually results in costing more than if the person accessed the system early. People without coverage are also unlikely to receive follow up care as well as medications they need to stay healthy.

- Ensuring access to preventive care and integrated treatment services helps to keep people healthy and leads to early detection and treatment, which can improve the quality of health outcomes and save costs.
- Don't adopt strategies that shift cost from the federal government to state budgets without sufficient and sustained federal funding or create an uneven playing field in the health care market.
 - Health care markets and state budgets need certainty to function well and efficiently. Adhering to frameworks that require states to take on greater financial risk or larger portions of cost – without corresponding federal investment – will ultimately hurt states like Colorado, which have unique constitutional budget constraints. .
- Protect the most vulnerable populations.
 - Acknowledge the vital role that publically funded programs play for many including children, seniors and people with disabilities who rely on long term care and services largely not provided by the private market. Ensure a strong health care market through stable funding and federal oversight of comprehensive, affordable coverage.
 - Recognize that publically funded programs are particularly important in rural communities where the payer mix is less robust and health care consumers and providers are more reliant on federal programs.
- Empower rural communities.
 - Efficient delivery of health care is driven at the local level. One-size-fits-all approaches will exacerbate inefficiencies and inequities, further disadvantaging geographies that already struggle to find affordable, quality care.
- Encourage health care transformation at the state and community levels with continued federal investment to lower the cost and improve quality of health care.
 - Colorado has capitalized on opportunities to bring efficiencies and improvements to our health care system through collaboration in both private and public delivery systems particularly by focusing on the integration of behavioral and physical health care. This work can be either fostered or impeded through Congressional efforts. It is critical to promote such innovation, leveraging the resourcefulness of market competition.