

I am speaking for the League of Women Voters of Colorado (LWVCO). The League of Women Voters (LWV) has promoted social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans since its inception in 1920. Health care reform has been a major goal of the last 15 years. The LWV favors a national health insurance plan financed through general taxes in place of individual insurance premiums. As the US moves toward a national plan we urge Colorado to take a bold leadership role in adopting a proposal that will demonstrate systemic reform and serve as a model for the country. The work of your Commission and the prospect of real reform to provide comprehensive, quality health care at an affordable cost to all Coloradoans is encouraging.

LWVCO believes any proposal for health care reform in Colorado should include the following:

1. Coverage for everyone, guaranteed issue with no barriers for pre-existing conditions or denial of services based on ability to pay.
2. Comprehensive benefits to include prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care, acute care, long-term care, and mental health care, (with dental, vision and hearing care next in priority).
3. Strong cost-containment measures such as minimizing administrative costs, the use of information technology and regional planning for allocation of personnel, facilities and equipment.
4. Health care resources distributed equitably so that no region is underserved.
5. Provision for health care professionals to be trained to fill gaps in understaffed fields of expertise.

The League believes that government, individuals, employers and providers should share responsibility for assuring the health of residents. Providers should continually strive to improve their relationships with their patients and the effectiveness of their treatment. Individuals should be encouraged to partner with their provider, take responsibility for healthy behavior and be held accountable. Employers are the single largest beneficiary of a healthy workforce and should therefore support healthy behaviors in their employees.

Since the task of providing comprehensive, quality care for all is larger than individuals, employers and providers can accomplish alone, we believe there is a role for government in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare. Because the private market in health care has failed to provide affordable insurance for 792,000 people in Colorado (and figures show an equal number are under-insured) increased government involvement is the solution to achieving universal health care access.

Of the 5 proposals, the Colorado Health Services Plan solely meets the LWV concept of true health care reform. The administrative savings realized across many segments of health care will enable universal coverage and a comprehensive health care program for

our residents. The strong cost containment measures help to insure affordability and sustainability for the future.

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the public dialogue and share in the solution of a pressing social and economic problem facing our state.