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The Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition wants to thank Congressman Coffman for a more reasonable proposal to address health care reform. While we do not agree with every suggestion and think everyone should have quality affordable health care, we have said throughout this debate that both the AHCA and the BCRA go well beyond anything having to do with the Affordable Care Act. We have continually expressed concerns that these proposals decimate traditional Medicaid that has worked well for 52 years. The severity of the cuts in both bills would have forced states, including Colorado, to cut deeply into the Home and Community Based Services that enable people with disabilities to live in the community. “As a ventilator user I need assistance every day or I die...it is that simple” says Carrie Lucas, an attorney who lives in Windsor. “However the resources provided by HCBS allow me to hire my own help enabling me to work, raise children and be an active participant in my community.” Lucas participates in a program that allows the disabled to work and pay a premium for Medicaid...another program that is at risk under the Senate Bill.

“Keeping the traditional Medicaid intact and not subjecting this population to a per capita cap is a definite step in the right direction” says Josh Winkler, Co-Chair of the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition. Winkler said “We have heard loud and clear from the public over the past two weeks that people do not approve of slashing services for people with disabilities under any circumstance.”

“We do remain concerned about the substantial reduction in the federal match rate for the expansion population” said Julie Reiskin, Director of the CCDC. It is important to understand that there are many people with disabilities in this population, including people recently eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance in their two-year wait period, people with mental illness or cognitive impairment who cannot get through the rigorous social security disability determination and many caregivers of people with disabilities who are out of the workforce but working very hard caring for loved ones. The Expansion population also covers low-wage workers that do not get insurance from their employers. While we appreciate keeping the people covered before 2020 at a higher federal match, we are concerned about how the state will be able to find funds to assist this population after 2020 when the match goes down to 50%. The state decision to cover this population was made based on a promise from the federal government, that promise should not be broken. Moreover, the expansion has brought great economic benefit to Colorado and reduced uncompensated care.

CCDC also appreciates Coffman’s call for a bipartisan approach. Our experience has always been that Democrats and Republicans can work together for the best interests of our state and country. The best disability policy including the implementation of HCBS, Consumer Directed Attendant Services, and the Medicaid Buy-In for Working Adults with Disabilities have all had

bipartisan support. All of these policy decisions are cost effective and reflect Colorado and American values of rights to life, liberty and independence.