



# NARAL Pro-Choice Colorado

## Fact Sheet

Reproductive Rights &  
Comprehensive Health Care  
Reform in Colorado

As a result of legislation enacted in 2006, the Blue Ribbon Commission for Health Care Reform was created to study and establish health care reform models to expand coverage, especially for the underinsured and uninsured, and to decrease health care costs for Colorado residents. The Commission is charged with examining health coverage and reform models designed to ensure access to affordable coverage for all Colorado residents and completing a final report with recommendations to state legislators in January 2008. During the summer of 2007, the Commission has analyzed four proposals, and developed a fifth on its own, to put forth a plan for comprehensive health care reform in Colorado for the General Assembly to consider in 2008.

### REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS & COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE REFORM IN COLORADO

NARAL Pro-Choice Colorado believes that any proposal for comprehensive health reform must protect the rights of all Colorado women to have access to the full range of reproductive health care options. Any recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Commission for Health Care Reform to the Colorado General Assembly as part of its final report should reflect the following principles:

- All Colorado women have the right to access the full range of reproductive health care options, including comprehensive family planning services; prenatal care; neo-natal services; and safe, legal abortion.
- All Colorado women and their families must have access to comprehensive, scientific and medically accurate information to enable them to make responsible, informed decisions about preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, or choosing safe, legal abortion.
- Health reform plans should emphasize prevention first in reproductive health care to address the barriers and challenges to preventing unintended pregnancy in Colorado without denying women the fundamental right to receive safe, legal medical care.

In crafting its final report and recommendations to the General Assembly, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care Reform should clearly demonstrate how the recommended model(s) achieve the following:

- 1) Enable Colorado to meet its stated goal of reducing the rate of unintended pregnancy to no more than 30% by 2010.
- 2) Maximize the number of Coloradans able to use Title X and Medicaid programs for primary preventive care services and secondary pregnancy prevention for at-risk populations.
- 3) Increase access to comprehensive, medically and scientifically accurate family planning services.
- 4) Ensure that Colorado women and their families are not penalized for accessing preventive care, such as family planning services, through subsequent rate increases for health coverage.
- 5) Provide accessible and affordable coverage for all forms of contraceptive methods, including birth control pills, emergency contraception, injectibles, the NuvaRing, IUDs, and surgical methods such as tubal ligation and vasectomy.
- 6) Ensure that Coloradans are not denied coverage for complications resulting from reproductive health care services, including abortion, high-risk pregnancy, pre-term delivery, or contraceptive methods requiring surgery.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Each year in Colorado, more than 27,500 births result from unintended or unwanted pregnancies.<sup>1</sup> In 2004, unintended pregnancies among just teens cost Colorado taxpayers \$101 million.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Colorado Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)," Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, accessed at <http://www.cdph.state.co.us/hs/prams>.

<sup>2</sup> "By the Numbers: The Public Costs of Teen Childbearing in Colorado," 2006, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, accessed at <http://www.teenpregnancy.org/costs/pdf/COLORADO.pdf>

- In 2002, Medicaid covered costs for more than 28,000 births -- just over 40% of all births in our state.<sup>3</sup>
- Nationally, birth-related costs are estimated at anywhere from \$8,239 for healthy births to \$280,000 for births with complications when covered through a consumer-driven health plan; plus up to \$41,000 in infant care costs for complications related to pre-term delivery.<sup>4</sup>
- Beyond the dollars associated with births, unintended pregnancies also are known to correlate to factors associated with long-term health consequences, including pre-term and low-birth-weight babies and higher rates of early term alcohol and tobacco use by women who don't know they're pregnant.<sup>5</sup>
- By emphasizing prevention first in reproductive health care policies, Colorado can lead the nation in: reducing unintended pregnancy; empowering women to make healthy choices to prevent the spread of dangerous diseases; ensuring women have access to the full range of reproductive health services; increasing the likelihood that women receive appropriate prenatal care when they become pregnant; promoting responsible health practices within families that can be passed on to future generations; and reducing costs for health care services that are related to preventable conditions.

### **ABOUT EFFORTS TO REFORM COLORADO'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

The State of Colorado established a Web site to educate Coloradans about the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission for Health Care Reform. The Web site includes information about meetings of the Commission, task forces, and other groups involved in evaluating health-reform proposals; all proposals submitted for consideration by the Commission; and dates for public meetings. Visit <http://www.colorado.gov/208commission> for more details.

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<sup>3</sup> "Births Financed by Medicaid as a Percent of Total Births, 2002," Kaiser Family Foundation, accessed at <http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparemaptable.jsp?ind=223&cat=4>

<sup>4</sup> "Maternity Care and Consumer-Driven Health Plans," June 2007, Kaiser Family Foundation, accessed at <http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/upload/7636ES.pdf>; "Costs of Maternity and Infant Care," 2007, March of Dimes, accessed at <http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/upload/whp061207othd.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> "Health Watch 43: Unintended Pregnancy: Colorado Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)" 1997-1999. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, accessed at: [http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/hs/pubs/brief43Web\\_ps.pdf](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/hs/pubs/brief43Web_ps.pdf).