



March 24, 2023

Colorado House Health & Insurance Committee

RE: 3/24/23 Public Hearing and United States of Care's Support for HB23-1215

Dear Chair Daugherty, Vice Chair deGruy Kennedy, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Eric Waskowicz, and I'm the policy manager at United States of Care – a national, non-partisan, non-profit organization working to ensure everyone has access to quality, affordable health care regardless of health status, social need, or income. In Colorado, we have been engaged in efforts to expand access to coverage and improve health care affordability and often highlight Colorado as a national leader in addressing everyday people's health care needs.

Today, I am thankful for the opportunity to testify on behalf of United States of Care in **support of HB23-1215**, a commonsense solution that will help protect patients from unexpected medical costs caused by hospital facility fees. We appreciate the work done by Representatives Emily Sirota and Andrew Boesenecker to introduce this bill, collaborate with stakeholders, and make the changes necessary to narrow its scope while still putting people first.

Despite meaningful action taken by this legislature, [more than three in five](#) Coloradans say it would be difficult for them to pay \$500 in unexpected medical costs, an amount not uncommonly charged by hospitals in the form of so-called "facility fees." Colorado ranks [tenth highest](#) in the nation in terms of patients' hospital costs, and these facility fees charged by hospitals more often than not come as a surprise to patients.

These fees don't guarantee any additional quality of care; rather, patients are just paying more for the same service they could receive at an independent clinic with no facility fee. If independent clinics are able to bill for and fully cover their costs without facility fees, why can't well-resourced health systems?

Commonsense limits on facility fees lower people's costs while also serving as a tool to disincentivize hospital acquisitions of outpatient facilities that do little to improve families' access to care. HB23-1215, if amended, represents a narrowed, targeted approach that balances the need to collect more information and protect consumers in limited instances, especially for preventive services, primary care, and telehealth.

There's precedent here: Connecticut and New York have led the way in banning facility fees for telehealth services and preventive care, respectively. Sensible limits on these facility fees would be a financial lifeline for so many families and are supported by more than [80% of Coloradans](#).

United States of Care is supportive of HB23-1215 and strongly encourages a "yes" vote in support of this bill that takes steps to ensure that Coloradans have access to the

medical care they need. We applaud the General Assembly for its work in putting people first with this legislation.

Thank you for allowing me the time to deliver this testimony. I welcome any questions you may have and appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

Eric Waskowicz
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