

## Kim Bimestefer

Executive Director, Department of Health Care Policy and Financing



Kim Bimestefer was appointed by Governor John Hickenlooper to serve as Executive Director for the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing on January 8, 2018. She was reappointed by Governor Jared Polis in December 2018 and confirmed by the Colorado Senate in January 2019. As Executive Director, Ms. Bimestefer oversees the operations and strategic direction of the Department which administers the Colorado Medicaid (Health First Colorado) and Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+) programs.

Executive Director Kim Bimestefer has been a senior healthcare executive for more than 25 years in not-for-profit, publicly-traded and sole-proprietorship organizations. She has been the local Board Chair, President & General Manager for Cigna Mountain States, responsible for strategy, customer satisfaction, care management, provider contracting, growth and P&L. Prior to that role, she founded and built a \$10 billion, national division inside Cigna to serve more than 1.3 million members. She began her health care career at a nonprofit insurance company, rising to a board-appointed officer overseeing about half the company's membership as well as strategy, product development, member service, and network partnerships.

Director Bimestefer has received numerous industry awards for leadership in business and industry, including: Forbes Women Leaders Issue, one of seven western region leaders recognized for exemplary business leadership, June 2016; Colorado's 25 Most Powerful Women in Business, Colorado Women's Chamber, 2016; Outstanding Women in Business/Healthcare, Denver Business Journal, 2015; Women of Distinction, Girl Scouts of America, 2015.

Bimestefer has been active in community and business organizations, such as the Colorado Forum, Colorado Concern, and the Colorado Women's Chamber. She has served on many boards including the Colorado Association of Health Plans, the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation, the American Heart Association, and the Precious Child Advisory Board. She also has chaired several community events, such as the American Cancer Society's CEOs against Cancer and the CPRD gala fund-raiser.

She earned her bachelor's degree from Towson State University and her MBA from Loyola College of Maryland, both cum laude. She is also a graduate of the Wright Management Group and Darden School of Business, Executive Leadership Programs.

# THE POLIS-PRIMAVERA ROADMAP TO SAVING COLORADANS MONEY ON HEALTH CARE

## THE VISION

Health care is a human right. Nobody should go without care because they can't afford it. To make that vision a reality, Governor Polis created the Office of Saving People Money on Health Care, which is led by Lieutenant Governor Primavera who, as a four-time cancer survivor has dedicated her career to being a champion for patients. Governor Polis and Lieutenant Governor Primavera have an ambitious agenda to reduce health care costs while ensuring culturally responsive and equitable access to care. High premiums, deductibles, and other out-of-pocket charges make it difficult for people to afford care. It's time to get health care costs under control.

## OVERVIEW

Colorado has taken significant steps to increase access to health care and insurance coverage during the past decade. As a result, today only 6.5% of Coloradans don't have health insurance compared to 15.8% in 2013. Despite this improvement, the cost of care has been increasing at an alarming rate, especially in rural areas and mountain communities. For example, in 2016, health care costs accounted for 32% of median household income in Colorado. That is unacceptable. As health care eats up an increasingly larger share of the family budget, people have to make enormous sacrifices just to afford health insurance.

We're also caught in a vicious cycle where more expensive care leads people to avoid coverage and avoid treatment, which makes them less healthy, and eventually more expensive to treat. We have the power to break that cycle and start a new one, where we better the health of Coloradans to both improve lives and reduce costs. If we truly believe that health care is a right, then we must lower the cost of health care to achieve universal coverage for Coloradans.

## ACTION STEPS

✓ Increase Hospital Price Transparency

Establish a Reinsurance Pool to Reduce Premiums

Negotiate to Drive Down the Cost of Health Insurance

Lower Hospital Prices

Reduce Out-of-Pocket Costs

Lower the Cost of Prescription Drugs

Launch a State-Backed Health Insurance Option

Reward Preventive and Primary Care

Expand the Health Care Workforce

Increase Access to Healthy Food

Improve Vaccination Rates

Reform the Behavioral Health System

Support Innovative Health Care Delivery and Reform Models

<sup>1</sup> Income data from Colorado DOLA LMI Gateway, US Census Median Household Income. Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing.

# ACTION STEPS (continued)

## IN THE SHORT TERM

We are taking immediate steps to lower the costs of health care using the following approaches:

- Increase hospital price transparency so we can determine the true cost of care
- Establish a reinsurance pool to reduce premiums for those people who buy their own insurance -- a strategy that has led to double-digit premium decreases in other states that have tried it
- Negotiate to drive down the cost of health insurance by supporting a purchasing alliance in Summit County and testing innovative negotiation strategies with the state employee health plan
- Lower hospital prices through innovative payment models, tools, community engagement to make care more efficient
- Reduce out-of-pocket costs by bolstering consumer protections like prohibitions on surprise, out of network costs
- Lower the cost of prescription drugs by importing prescription medication from Canada

## IN THE MID AND LONG TERM

In the mid and long term, we will need to address underlying, system-wide issues that perpetuate an unaffordable, inefficient, inaccessible health system using the following approaches:

- Launch a state-backed health insurance option to increase competition, and, therefore, bring down costs, give consumers more choices and freedom in the health care marketplace, and reduce the uninsured rate
- Reward primary and preventive care to expand access to behavioral and physical health care to prevent conditions from worsening with cost-effective early identification and treatment
- Expand the health care workforce so patients have access to the health care providers they need
- Increase access to healthy food and support the implementation of the Blueprint to End Hunger
- Improve vaccination rates by sharing evidence with Coloradans so they can make the right choice for their families
- Reform the behavioral health system by launching a statewide strategic action plan to ensure every Coloradan has access to the behavioral health services they need -- including mental health and substance use disorder treatment
- Support innovative health care delivery and reform models like the Colorado State Innovation Model, Peak Health Alliance in Summit County, and Mesa County Model and implement the statewide strategic plan for health information technology

*These strategies will reduce costs, and most importantly, improve the health of Coloradans across the state.*