

Thank you Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger for the opportunity to participate in today's hearing. Federal spending is a statement of our nation's priorities, and I appreciate this opportunity to highlight investments that will benefit Colorado's Sixth Congressional District and the nation.

In particular, I'd like to highlight requests that seek to improve health equity and access to care. For far too long, communities of color and low-income communities have experienced the negative impacts of healthcare inequality. They experience higher rates of disease, disability, and even death, and were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. To build back better, we must address the systemic inequalities in our healthcare system.

First is my request for nearly \$500,000 for the Black Health Initiative Infant Prematurity and Infant Mortality Project at Children's Hospital Colorado. The Black Health Initiative Project aims to combat the maternal and infant mortality racial disparities in Colorado by investing in peer-to-peer support for Black moms and simulated scenario training, which is crucial to identify gaps in provider knowledge and care. By supporting mothers and training providers, we can combat national trends and improve outcomes for Black mothers and babies.

Second, I am requesting nearly \$1,000,000 dollars for the Underrepresented Minority Pipeline for Health Professions at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. Nationally, and in Colorado, our healthcare providers do not reflect the populations they serve. According to the American Association of Medical Colleges, only 2.6% of physicians nationwide are Black; only 3.8% are Hispanic. This funding would help CU Anschutz scale up its collaboration with local communities in Aurora and Denver to help underrepresented minority students pursue health and science professions.

As we emerge from the pandemic and continue efforts to tackle the opioid epidemic, it's important that Congress continue to eliminate barriers to care for individuals struggling with substance abuse and mental health issues. I am requesting \$1,000,000 to support planning and design costs for a new health campus for the Aurora Comprehensive Community Mental Health Center. The health campus model will enable clients to access mental health, detox services, primary care and oral health services at a single location, eliminating barriers to care.

Research has shown we can help stop community violence and the revolving door of violent injuries in emergency departments through hospital violence intervention programs. These programs connect emergency room patients with hospital and community-based resources aimed at addressing an individual's underlying risk factors for violence. I am requesting nearly \$500,000 to expand the At-Risk Intervention and Mentoring Program operated by UC Health. With this funding, UC health will be able to continue and expand its pilot program to reduce community violence and improve individual outcomes in the greater Aurora community.

In addition to these requests that address health equity and access to care, I'd also like to highlight my additional community project funding requests, including:

- \$750,000 for the 2-1-1 Program to upgrade the call system connecting Coloradans to 8,000 local service providers, such as emergency shelter, transportation assistance, and substance abuse treatment;
- \$948,000 for the purchase of an Immune Monitoring Station to enhance the Crnic Institute's research into Down Syndrome and to potentially benefit the 7-8 million people with Down Syndrome across the world;
- \$1,000,000 for the Douglas County Generational Opportunities to Achieve Long-Term Success Program to construct more housing for housing-insecure families;
- \$1,350,000 for the City of Aurora Safe Outdoor Spaces Project, to provide sheltering options and hygiene facilities for those experiencing homelessness in the Aurora community;
- \$1,700,000 for the Village Exchange Center to expand services by renovating its facilities. This local nonprofit provides workforce training, food services, and other supports for the Northwest Aurora community and serves primarily immigrants and refugees; and
- \$2,000,000 to create a Domestic Violence High Risk Team in Adams County to improve services for domestic violence victims. I was joined in submitting this request by my friends and colleagues, Representatives Perlmutter and Neguse.

These projects directly benefit some of the most marginalized communities in Colorado's Sixth Congressional District, and promise systemic improvements that will strengthen not just our community, but countless others across the country. I urge the committee's support and I look forward to working closely with you to ensure these projects are included in the annual appropriations bill. Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I yield back.