Abstract/Executive Summary

Medicaid is the number one health insurer in the United States, insuring more than 1 in 5 Americans. With the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), enrollment in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) increased 29%. Despite Medicaid insuring an immense number of people, many medical practices do not accept Medicaid patients, creating a gap in access to health care. One of the largest gaps is access to specialty care, with only a limited number of specialty physicians accepting established adult Medicaid patients, and even fewer accepting new adult Medicaid patients.

Literature review and meetings with community stakeholders were used to examine the causes for, and solutions to, the lack in access to specialty care for people insured by Medicaid. It was discovered that the largest barriers to Medicaid acceptance were related to the billing process and impressions that Medicaid patients are socially complex, medically complex, and non-compliant with treatment plans. The solutions proposed include increasing care coordination, systemically changing how Medicaid is billed, and providing further education during training in insurance coverage, billing processes, and social determinants of health.

Currently healthcare reform is a huge point of contention in the United States and, specifically, Colorado. Healthcare reform is at a pivotal point, and it is important to ensure that the changes made will increase access and decrease stigma associated with being a patient of a lower socioeconomic class. This three-pronged approach of how to proceed will not be an overnight solution to the issue of specialty acceptance for

Medicaid patients, but will open a dialogue between patients and providers and will bring health equity one step closer.