

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Sen. Hickenlooper, State Lawmakers, Advocates Call for Expanded Access, Lower Costs of Health Care for CO Families**

*Stop is part of Protect Our Care's Nationwide "Lower Costs, Better Care" Bus Tour"*



*Sen. Hickenlooper speaks at Protect Our Care Rally Today*

**DENVER, CO** - This afternoon, Protect Our Care's "Care Force One" arrived at Colorado's State Capitol building to demonstrate the need for lowering Coloradans' health care costs, expanding coverage, and reducing racial disparities in care. Headlined by U.S. Senator John Hickenlooper, the event highlighted action already taken and next steps to continue making quality health care more accessible to Coloradans.

"The American Rescue Plan saved Coloradans thousands of dollars on health care. It lowered health insurance premiums by 49 percent on Connect for Health Colorado," said **Colorado Senator John Hickenlooper**. "We've got to make sure these changes are permanent."

Throughout the nationwide "[Lower Cost, Better Care](#)" bus tour, Protect Our Care is fighting to ensure critical health care measures supported by President Biden remain in upcoming budget reconciliation legislation. These priorities include giving Medicare the power to negotiate for lower drug prices for all Americans, getting more Americans covered by closing the Medicaid

gap, expanding Medicare benefits to include hearing, dental, and vision, and further reducing health care premiums for millions of Americans who purchase coverage on their own.

The Colorado State Legislature also passed landmark health care legislation in the 2021 session, including [The Colorado Option](#) to increase access to quality, affordable health care and [Senate Bill 175](#), to create a prescription drug affordability board. Senator Julie Gonzales, who spoke at today's event, sponsored Senate Bill 175.

"Many of the people I talk to are deciding between keeping the lights on and purchasing a life-saving medication, which is why we had to take action to lower the costs of prescription drugs," said **State Senator Julie Gonzales**. "I'm proud to have sponsored Senate Bill 175 which is estimated to save Colorado families up to 75% on the costs of the most unaffordable drugs."

"Coloradans depend on affordable health care, expanded access to coverage, and drug pricing reform to live healthy lives," said **Colorado Option sponsor Rep. Iman Jodeh**. "The Colorado option is a landmark step toward helping families afford critical health care, but now we need federal action to reduce costs and expand coverage."

The lawmakers were also joined today by Colorado health care advocates and patients.

"I have personal experiences with the high cost of healthcare and prescription medications," said **Coloradan Mariah Zebrowski Leach**. "I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis at the age of 25, and since my diagnosis, figuring out how to pay for expensive prescriptions has become a huge part of my life. Once I received a bill for over \$10,000 for the medication used in a single infusion. We need policies that lower the cost of vital prescription medications and make healthcare more accessible and affordable for everyone."

"When I was fighting stage 4 cancer, I had to forego medication that would boost my immune system because the price tag was simply too high." said Denver health care **advocate Laura Packard**. "I wound up in the hospital, and nearly died. Sadly, stories like these are all too common in our country. Patients should be able to focus on getting well, not struggling to pay for medications. That's why we need Congress to act now to lower the cost of prescription drugs, including allowing Medicare to negotiate prices on behalf of all Americans."

[You Can Watch the Event Here](#)

**The Protect Our Care "Lower Costs, Better Care" Bus Tour is making stops in:**

**Bangor, Maine** on Monday, August 9, 2021

**Portland, Maine** on Monday, August 9, 2021

**Burlington, Vermont** on Tuesday, August 10, 2021

**Concord, New Hampshire** on Wednesday, August 11, 2021

**Bethlehem, Pennsylvania** on Thursday, August 12, 2021

**Teaneck, New Jersey** on Friday, August 13, 2021  
**New York, New York** on Friday, August 13, 2021  
**New Brunswick, New Jersey** on Monday, August 16, 2021  
**Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania** on Monday, August 16, 2021  
**Burlington County, New Jersey** on Tuesday, August 17, 2021  
**Wilmington, Delaware** on Tuesday, August 17, 2021  
**Dover, Delaware** on Tuesday, August 17, 2021  
**Morgantown, West Virginia** on Wednesday, August 18, 2021  
**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania** on Wednesday, August 18, 2021  
**Youngstown, Ohio** on Thursday, August 19, 2021  
**Columbus, Ohio** on Thursday, August 19, 2021  
**Milwaukee, Wisconsin** on Friday, August 20, 2021  
**Madison, Wisconsin** on Friday, August 20, 2021  
**Parkersburg, West Virginia** on Monday, August 23, 2021  
**Charleston, West Virginia** on Monday, August 23, 2021  
**Raleigh, North Carolina** on Tuesday, August 24, 2021  
**Charlotte, North Carolina** on Tuesday, August 24, 2021  
**Columbia, South Carolina** on Tuesday, August 24, 2021  
**Atlanta, Georgia** on Wednesday, August 25, 2021  
**Savannah, Georgia** on Wednesday, August 25, 2021  
**Orlando, Florida** on Thursday, August 26, 2021  
**Tampa, Florida** on Thursday, August 26, 2021  
**Denver, Colorado** on Monday, August 30, 2021  
**Flagstaff, Arizona** on Tuesday, August 31, 2021  
**Phoenix, Arizona** on Tuesday, August 31, 2021  
**Tucson, Arizona** on Wednesday, September 1, 2021  
**San Diego, California** on Thursday, September 2, 2021  
**Anaheim, California** on Thursday, September 2, 2021  
**Las Vegas, Nevada** on Friday, September 3, 2021