

MEDICAID PHYSICIAN PARTICIPATION RATE HIGH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2009

Contact:

Joanne Lindsay

303-866-3144

Joanne.Lindsay@state.co.us

DENVER – May 20, 2009 – The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing announced today that according to a Merritt Hawkins & Associates study, 94% of family physicians in the Denver metropolitan area participate in the Colorado Medicaid program – the highest rate in the study of 15 metropolitan areas in the nation.

Medicaid is public health insurance for low-income families, children, pregnant women, the elderly and people with disabilities. Eligibility is based on income and family size. The program is funded jointly by a federal-state partnership and is administered by the Department.

“The high participation rate in the study demonstrates the commitment that our urban physicians have in serving people who are some of the most vulnerable” states Dr. Sandeep Wadhwa, Medicaid director. “The number of people receiving health care benefits through Medicaid has increased by 60,000 from this time last year for a total of 457,000 clients. The high number of physicians serving Medicaid clients helps to meet this need.”

Denver metro Medicaid clients have a shorter wait time for non-emergent appointments than ten out of the 15 states. New clients wait an average of 14 days to get an appointment for non-emergent care. The longest wait time for a new client in the study was 63 days – 35 days longer than it takes to get an appointment in the Denver metro area.

“The Department is focusing on recruiting providers to increase access to health care. Colorado Medicaid pays providers faster than almost half the states in the nation and is offering more assistance to providers in the application process and with accurate billing”, states Dr. Wadhwa “In an effort to recruit and retain providers, we pay 19% higher than the national Medicaid average and pay 89% of Medicare reimbursement rates which represent huge advances from our ranking five years ago.”

About the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing: The Department administers the Medicaid and Child Health Plan *Plus* programs as well as a variety of other programs for Colorado’s low-income, elderly and people with disabilities. The mission of the Department is to improve access to cost-effective, quality health care services for Coloradans. For more information about the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, please visit colorado.gov/hcpf.

###