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MEDIA CONTACT:

Gurdev Rai, MD
President, Colorado Society of
Anesthesiologists
devrai@gmail.com

**Colorado Society of Anesthesiologists Voice Strong Opposition to Removal of
Physician Clinical Oversight of Anesthesia Care**

Concerns that Recent Decision by Governor Polis Could Jeopardize Patient Care and Safety.

DENVER, CO – The Colorado Society of Anesthesiologists (CSA) strongly opposes Governor Polis' decision last Thursday to remove physician clinical oversight of anesthesia care, known as an “opt-out” under Medicare. Governor Polis' notice to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that he was fully waiving the federal requirement for physician oversight throughout Colorado comes despite unanimous opposition from the experts of the Colorado Medical Board.

The CSA believes that the highest quality anesthesia care is delivered under the direct oversight of anesthesiologists, who have undergone extensive medical training alongside their surgical colleagues. “The decision to opt-out disregards the critical role of physician anesthesiologists in cases involving Certified Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) and is contrary to numerous peer-reviewed journal articles,” said Gurdev Rai MD, CSA President. “It will result in lowering the standard of care, and needlessly jeopardizing patients' lives.”

According to the Governor's Office, the decision was made to save money. However, data indicates that an “opt-out” fails to save patients or taxpayers money because the cost is the same regardless of who provides the service. “In fact,” said Dr. Rai, “it may be more costly to use nurse anesthetists in certain situations due to the need for additional physician consultations since nurse anesthetists are not qualified to make medical evaluations and judgments.”

Other medical associations such as the American College of Surgeons and the American Medical Association also have stated their opposition to removing physician clinical oversight of anesthesia care.

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