



March 20, 2015

Colorado Joint Budget Committee

Dear Joint Budget Committee Members:

The Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) urges you to accept the recommendation of the Capital Development Committee to provide some funding toward the Colorado Mesa University (CMU) Nurse Practitioner project in this year's budget.

You may be aware that Western Colorado communities have found themselves in the unenviable position of having the highest insurance premiums in the entire country. Cost of health care and access to health care providers drive these costs and place a burden on those least able to afford them in our state. The CMU Nurse Practitioner program will go a long way toward providing access to health care for not only rural areas of Western Colorado but throughout the state as well. A robust program could help change the cost dynamic over time and result in more affordable health care costs in this region.

The CMU Nurse Practitioner program is a critical tool in meeting the needs of underserved populations. The CMU Health Sciences program is currently filled to capacity and without being able to expand as recommended by the Capital Development Committee, the needs of Western Colorado and the rest of the state will continue to go unmet.

AGNC urges that you restore at least \$3,000,000 in the upcoming budget to get the CMU Nurse Practitioner Center started this year. This program enjoys significant local and regional support including healthcare providers like St. Mary's Regional Hospital in Grand Junction and the Pioneer Medical Center in Meeker.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Please contact us if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mike Samson'.

Mike Samson
Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jeff Eskelson'.

Jeff Eskelson
Vice-Chairman