

# MICHELLE HAAS, M.D.

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4/10/2017

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 17-1230, which is concerning protection for Colorado residents from federal government overreach based on a person's status. I am a physician who practices in the Denver Metro area and my opinions expressed in this email are my own and do not reflect those of my institution or academic affiliation. My specific area of expertise is in HIV and Tuberculosis.

I am highly committed to ensuring that my patients have the best care possible and to protecting the health of our community. Some of my patients are immigrants, largely because tuberculosis or "TB" is very common in many countries. TB infection can lay dormant for years, or in some cases over a person's lifetime. It's estimated that 1 in 10 individuals infected with TB will go on to develop disease unless they take preventative treatment. While the number of people who are sick with TB is very low in Colorado, there are an estimated 158,000 individuals who are infected with TB who are not yet sick and thus don't know they are infected. If they can access healthcare and receive preventative treatment, they will not go on to become sick and potentially infect others.

Several weeks after the presidential election, I had a patient who broke down sobbing in my clinic, saying repeatedly, "please don't take me from my home". In the several years I have worked in this clinic, this was the first time I had someone terrified that they might be deported. I started wondering whether other patients who would normally come to receive the low-cost services we provide for TB care might be too fearful to come at all. I performed a search of the medical literature for any data on the threat of deportation and health outcomes. A rather disturbing study published in 1998 found that when patients who were later found to have active/infectious TB feared deportation, there was a trend towards delaying their care. This delay in care was estimated to have led to an additional 8 people being infected with TB.

I strongly urge you to support HB-17-1230 and protect our community from federal government overreach. I believe that HB 17-1230 will allow for clear boundaries to be set between our state and local government practices and those of the federal government. When Coloradans understand where the federal government ends and local law enforcement begins this will allow for safer and less fearful communities. Maybe, just maybe, people will be less fearful of seeking healthcare, the latter of which just might protect the health of us all.

Sincerely,



Michelle Haas, M.D.

Physician, Denver Metro Area