A ballot initiative to establish a single-payer health care system in Colorado has been approved for the Nov. 2016 ballot. Supporters turned in 158,831 signatures and after reviewing a five percent sample, the secretary of state's office certified Initiative 20, the “State Health Care System.”

High profile supporters of the ballot initiative include Colorado Senator Irene Aguilar, who is also a physician. "Colorado deserves a better option, and now they can vote on one," Sen. Aguilar said to the Denver Post. "Health care costs continue to rise every year, hurting Coloradans' chances to get ahead. It's time we get the insurance industry out of the driver's seat and put families in charge of their health care."

Consumers would choose their providers but the bills would be paid by the new single-payer ColoradoCare instead of private insurance companies.

The Colorado Foundation for Universal Health Care, the chief supporter of the proposal, projects that Colorado residents and employers would pay $4.5 billion less in 2019 for health care. The group also projects a $1.5 billion state budget surplus to offset future costs or refund to taxpayers.

"A single-payer system would destroy our industry. I don't think there's any question about it," the Colorado State Association of Health Underwriters president Byron McCurdy told the Denver Post. He predicts there would be problems recruiting physicians to the state.

Opponents of the Colorado proposal call it a gamble, going down a road no other state has.

In fact, Vermont started down the single-payer road but it abandoned plans about a year ago for what the 2011 legislation called Green Mountain Care. The system was to be paid for through taxes rather than premiums. Tax increases would have included an 11.5 percent payroll tax as well as income tax hikes ranging up to as much as 9.5 percent, according to the Daily Caller.

In his Dec. 2014, announcement, Gov. Shumlin, a supporter of the health reform, admitted that achieving projected savings of “hundreds of millions of dollars” was not practical. Expected federal help from the Obama administration – falling from a projection of $267 million to $106 million – didn’t materialize.
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