

# Colorado Citizens for Accountability

## Letter from Executive Director

Dear Friends of CCA,

In recent months CCA has not only passed House Bill 1331. The Michael Skolnik Medical Transparency Act, but we are continuing to review bills CCA will support and possibly get sponsored in the upcoming legislative session.

We are participating on the committee for Long-term care services and supports for Persons with Developmental Disabilities this summer and this interim committee will meet through October 2007. We will keep you updated as we move forward.

CCA was asked to be one of four grassroots organizations at a workshop at the American Association for Justice & National Association of Trial Lawyers Executives in Chicago this past month. The purpose was to discuss what it entails to start a grassroots organization. We felt honored to be a part of this panel.

I also participated on a panel for a Morgan Carroll Town Hall meeting regarding healthcare reform. Patient Safety, in regards to health insurance reform, was among the topics I spoke about. I am looking forward to another Town Hall in November that will focus exclusively on Patient Safety and the importance of having a Patient Medical Journal. CCA has produced these journals and will be giving to attendees as a gift from us.

August 8-10 is the CTLA summer conference and we will be in attendance. It is important to meet with Plaintiff attorneys in order to help their clients through their emotional ordeals. Isaac our legislative policy advisor will be speaking on our behalf.

With limited dollars and staff we are continuing to get the word out about patient safety and access to the justice system. We always hope you will get involved in the organization in some way. We ask for your continued support in order for us to help you.

Warmly, Patty Skolnik

## Ritter Makes Case for Grassroots

With approximately 100 supporters gathered around in the heat, Gov. Bill Ritter spoke from a platform about the need for progressives to continue the momentum they gained in the 2006 elections.

Ritter spoke about the importance of grassroots in the in the state, "Grassroots can put pressure on lawmakers," said Ritter. The event took place on the rooftop of Club Vinyl, downtown and offered the Denver skyline as the ceremonial backdrop Thursday, July 26. Governor Ritter's words should give all of us a great deal of satisfaction. The work that CCA does is not going unnoticed by those in elected power. The successes that have happened this past year show how important it is for both political parties to come together and seek real solutions to problems. Governor Ritter echoed this sentiment when referencing the progress that is being made when the parties are working together to do the right thing. The grassroots efforts that the members of CCA have organized and done this past year is a testament of how effective our voices are to the public debate.

Patty Skolnik, Executive Director for Colorado Citizens for Accountability was at the event to speak with Ritter about CCA's new potential bill for the upcoming legislation.

Patty's complaint that was filed with the Board of Medical Examiners, against Michael's doctor was dismissed earlier this month, igniting a new passion for CCA to look into what it takes to discipline doctors, when complaints are filed with the board.

Patty's son, Michael, was the focus of CCA's bill, The Michael Skolnik Medical Transparency Act. This bill was signed by Gov. Bill Ritter in May 2007. The Colorado Board of Medical Examiners website will make available the entire professional history of a Colorado physician. This bill will go into effect January 1, 2008.



Patty Skolnik, founder of CCA with Governor Ritter

**What to Expect this Month:**  
**How a Bill is Passed - Page 2**  
**Isaac's Letter - Page 3**  
**Media Workshop - Page 3**  
**Important Dates - Page 4**

### Did you miss our Media Workshop?

Are you still interested in learning how to get your organization in the media?

Contact CCA and we will get you a media packet for \$25.00!

Story about Media Workshop Continued on Page 2

## How a Bill is Passed

With new bills getting ready for legislation, some CCA readers might be thinking back to their American Government class trying to remember how a bill becomes Colorado Law. Look at these important steps!

The bill can be introduced to either chamber, the House or the Senate. Depending on which chamber will determine what the general name of the bill is. For example The Michael Skolnik Medical Transparency Act, was introduced in the House and was named, House Bill 1331.

Each chamber is given the task of answering two questions about the bill:

1. Is the bill a good idea?
2. Is the bill worth paying for?

The House or the Senate will read the bill and the bill will be sent to committee, for example the Michael Skolnik Medical Transparency Act, bill went to Health and Human Services.

After the committee approves the bill it goes before the Appropriations Committee, where the fiscal impact is assessed.

If the Appropriations Committee approves, the bill goes back to the chamber. The entire House or Senate will vote on the bill at this point. This is the time when amendments are officially added to the bill.

If it passes in the original chamber it then goes to the second chamber and the bill repeats the process. If the second chamber makes any amendments to the bill then the bill has to go to the original chamber to approve the changes that were made.

Once it passes both chambers it goes to the Governor – to be signed.

Tricky? Yes, however Isaac Camargo, who was principle in the passing of the Michael Skolnik Medical Transparency Act noted “you have to be attentive – you need someone who will sponsor the bill and who will communicate for you and with you.” CCA understands the importance of developing relationships at the capitol with people who understand CCA values and shares those values.

## CCA Media Conference:

Getting an organizations message to the media effectively and in a timely manner was the center issue when an executive producer from NBC came to Colorado Citizens for Accountability’s media workshop July 18.

The packet handed to the participants of the workshop spelled out the foundation in a easy to follow format and style each participant can use.

“When things happen, consumers need to know”, said Isaac Camargo, Director of Public Affairs, “it is important we are effective with the media so the public can get the information they need in order to make educated decisions regarding their healthcare”

Issues discussed were: How to write a Press Release and Media Alerts, 7 Things to avoid in writing press releases and how to communicate with the media

“Communication with the media is essential in helping your organization receive the attention that it needs,” said Isaac.

“The next time it is offered – I will bring more people with me,” said Robin Bruce a workshop participant.

Patty Skolnik, executive director for CCA stated, “more copies of the packet are available for \$25.00.”

If you are interested in the packet please contact CCA also please watch CCA’s website for the upcoming media workshop.

Get your copy of the New Patient’s Medical Journal

## Being Proactive in Your Healthcare has Never been Easier!

CCA has created a great new tool for you and your loved ones to use. The Patient Medical Journal is an historical and contemporaneous record of your health history. A tool valuable to you and your healthcare provider!

There are limited quantities!  
Reserve your copy today for \$5.00  
Call CCA at 303-691-9339 x: 1126

## Letter from Isaac,

As CCA's resident politico, I have been keeping an eye on all things political at our state capital. Even though the state legislature is taking a break for the summer, there are some at the capital whose work never ends. Throughout the summer there are committees that convene so legislators can gather information on any given issue. Healthcare is certainly one of those issues.

State Representative Michael Garcia has assembled a committed group of his colleagues to examine the state of long-term care in Colorado. The committee is named the "Committee on Long-term Care services and Support to Persons with Developmental Disabilities." The committee is comprised of members of both parties in both chambers of the legislature and will focus its efforts on developing ways to streamline the process through which Coloradans can gain Government assistance to help care for loved ones.

Working with CCA can sometimes put blinders on what I know about issues that don't deal with our agenda. Working on 1331 last session really cut down on my time to read a newspaper or watch the news (that is the irony of activism...you become so educated in one area that you can't pay attention to much else).

I was surprised to learn about how hard it is for a parent to deal with such a life altering experience. For a parent of a child with unique needs it is only more of a challenge. One by one, each parent testified about their experience, one could only marvel as each story exemplified both tragedy and triumph. Each narrative told the story of a parent who cares deeply about their child, but doesn't have the expertise to give their child the tools necessary to cope in society independently.

This committee will do great work, and CCA is excited to see what recommendations the legislatures will turn into law this next session.

Best Wishes, Isaac Camargo

## Legislature Looks for Change

There are four issues, which are being examined during the Long-term care services and support to persons with developmental disabilities committee, which started off with public testimony before a packed gallery.

"It is my hope that the bills we create, come out of public testimony," said Michael Garcia the chair of the committee on July 18. "I want public testimony to be focused on solutions," said Garcia before the testimony started.

The four issues addressed in the committee are essential in potential legislation coming out of the committee. This is the first meeting, in a series of meetings taking place in July through October.

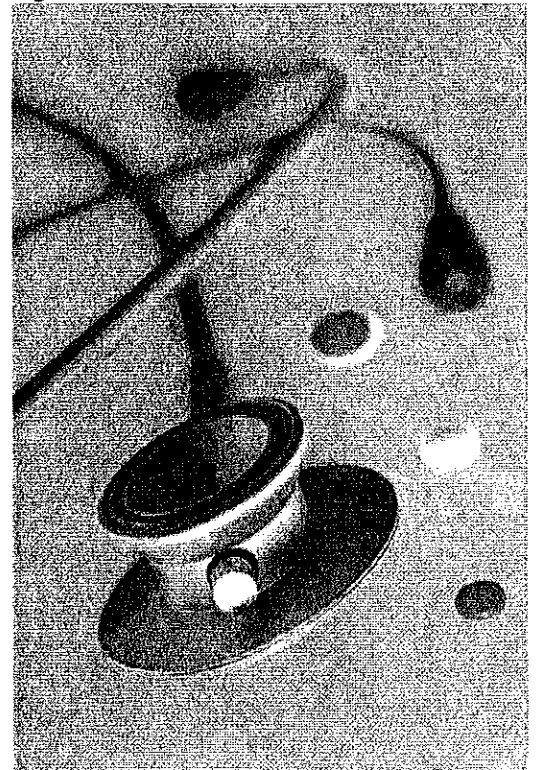
"We are looking at four ways to create more: transparency, reliability, efficiency, and accountability throughout the process of providing long-term health care services and support for people with disabilities and their families," said Garcia.

On top of these four issues is the glaring concern about the waitlist in which there are currently over a thousand names waiting for services. Bob Arnold, from Developmental Disabilities Resource Center, testified before the committee regarding the need for more funding for the organization. "More people are waiting then are actually being served," said Arnold.

The committee hopes to use the testimony to create changes that would be more beneficial to those who need long term care. The committee has the opportunity to recommend up to eight bills to the general assembly. The public is encouraged to present their recommendations for change with in the long-term healthcare of services. Over the next two months the committee will be examining and creating answers and legislation to better serve the developmental disabilities community.

To see the format for the proposals, it is accessible on line at [www.state.co.us/gov\\_dir/leg\\_dir/lcsstaff/2007/comsched/07DisabilitiesSched.htm](http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/leg_dir/lcsstaff/2007/comsched/07DisabilitiesSched.htm), or you can email the proposals to [lcs.ddic@state.co.us](mailto:lcs.ddic@state.co.us).

The next meeting is taking place on July 31 in which the committee will start to review innovative options to change how the healthcare needs of people are being met. Stay tuned to next month's newsletter for all the latest legislative news.



# Important Dates to Watch This Month

**Coming up in the September issue of Colorado Citizens for Accountability's Newsletter:**


True Stories from families about the struggle to take care of their children and loved ones.

Their testimonies being told at the Capitol in Long-term care Committee.

**August 8-11 - Colorado Trial Lawyers Summer Conference:** This conference will be held in Steamboat Colorado and Colorado Citizens for Accountability will be on site to drive support from CTLA members for this upcoming legislative session. Please reference the September newsletter for update about this event

**August 14 - Committee on Long-term Care Services and Supports for Persons with Developmental Disabilities:** Recommendations to eliminate all waiting lists for long-term health care services and supports for persons with developmental disabilities with all deliberate speed. Colorado Citizens for accountability will be at this meeting, please reference the September newsletter for all updates about this event and family testimonies. The meeting will be held in the Legislative Services Building, Room A 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

COLORADO CITIZENS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY  
899 Logan Street, Suite 200  
Denver, CO 80203  
[www.coloradocitizensforaccountability.org](http://www.coloradocitizensforaccountability.org)



**Ready to  
Make a  
Difference?**

Find out how you  
can help by logging  
on to our website