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Dear Chair Brown May and Members of the Assembly HHS Committee,

My name is Carissa Pearce and I am representing the Children's Advocacy Alliance. CAA is an independent voice for Nevada's children with a mission to ensure every child in Nevada thrives.

CAA **strongly supports SB138**, to provide presumptive Medicaid coverage for newborns who require NICU care. No family should face the devastating reality of financial ruin simply because their child was born premature and/or with medical complications.

When a newborn is admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), parents are immediately confronted with overwhelming stress, medical costs, lost income from time off work, and uncertainty about insurance coverage. A single day in the NICU can cost thousands of dollars, and for many families, waiting for Medicaid approval means delayed care, mountains of medical debt, and financial insecurity at an already stressful time.

Many NICU babies require lifesaving interventions, surgeries, and prolonged hospital stays. Presumptive Medicaid coverage ensures that babies get the care they need immediately, without forcing parents into impossible financial situations.

The long-term financial impact of NICU stays can be devastating, particularly for middle-class families who don't qualify for immediate Medicaid but cannot afford the astronomical costs of neonatal care. Presumptive Medicaid helps ensure every baby gets equal access to care, regardless of their family's financial situation.

We know that early medical intervention leads to better long-term outcomes, reducing disability rates, future hospitalizations, and long-term health care costs. Ensuring Medicaid coverage for NICU babies is not only the right thing to do—it is a smart investment in their future and our healthcare system.

I urge you to support presumptive Medicaid coverage for NICU babies and ensure that no family has to choose between their child's health and financial survival. Every newborn deserves the best possible start in life.

Thank you for your commitment to Nevada's children and families, please pass SB138.

Carissa Pearce
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