

*June 7, 2023***NEWS RELEASE***Media Contact: Karen Martsolf, MA
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kmartsolf@gjhosp.org***Community Hospital CEO to Testify at Senate Finance Committee
Hearing on Capitol Hill**

Mesa County, CO - Chris Thomas, Community Hospital's President and CEO, is scheduled to speak at the Senate Finance Committee Hearing on Capitol Hill this Thursday, June 8 at 10:00am EST/8:00am MT. Thomas will be speaking about Consolidation and Corporate Ownership in Health Care: Trends and Impacts on Access, Quality, and Costs.

During his testimony, Thomas will underscore the many challenges independent hospitals face in today's ever-changing healthcare environment. "I am a firm believer in the value of independent, community-owned hospitals," said Chris Thomas, President and CEO for Community Hospital. "Our ability to singularly focus on the well-being of our community and the needs of the patients within our service areas sets us apart. We have proven that by competing when appropriate and partnering when the opportunity presents itself, we can lower the cost of healthcare, improve access, and improve the quality of care our community receives," added Thomas. Thomas contends that fair competition is critical to the sustainability of these gains and must be maintained if independent hospitals are going to continue to improve on all three fronts.

Community Hospital has been able to successfully address community needs, including adding multiple primary care providers, multiple specialists, and adding a primary care and acute care clinic in Palisade that had been a healthcare desert for decades. Under Chris's leadership, Community Hospital is also building an Early Childhood Education Center to address the severe childcare shortage in Mesa County. "We were able to complete these last two projects with the help of Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) from Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper. This is such an amazing example of how federal solutions can help provide for the needs of communities," said Thomas.

"As the healthcare industry continues to consolidate hospitals and large healthcare systems, under Chris's leadership, Community Hospital has stayed independent, fostered positive competition, lowered healthcare costs, and improved quality of care for patients," said Colorado U.S. Senator Michael Bennet. "I was thrilled to help secure funding for Community Hospital to directly address gaps in local services. But if we want independent hospitals to survive, Congress must do more to support them."

Members of the media and public are welcome and encouraged to view the live hearing at <https://www.finance.senate.gov/hearings/consolidation-and-corporate-ownership-in-health-care-trends-and-impacts-on-access-quality-and-costs>.

For more information on the programs and services provided at Community Hospital, please visit YourCommunityHospital.com.

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