



2015 Colorado State Legislative Summary

In health care, good policymaking affects the areas of coverage, care, costs, system transparency, and overall health. Each component is inextricably linked and is critical to supporting a high-functioning health care system.

In our work at the state Capitol, we prioritize legislative issues that impact the medically underserved and the providers who serve them. This includes improving access to health coverage and health care services, strengthening and preserving programs and the workforce that serve the underserved, promoting systems changes to improve affordability and quality, supporting workforce development, and addressing the social determinants of health.


For the 2015 session, we identified priority areas in which we would actively engage, including:

- Medicaid and CHP+ funding, expansions, protections, and improvements
- Connect for Health Colorado protections and improvements
- Maximizing our health care workforce to increase access to care
- Safety net protection and enhancement
- Provider payment as part of budget negotiations
- Innovative models of care, such as telehealth and electronic medical records
- Costs of care transparency
- Health equity and social determinants of health

We consider this session to be largely a success for Colorado's health care system, and applaud the work done by policymakers to strengthen it.

MOVEMENT IN THE 2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

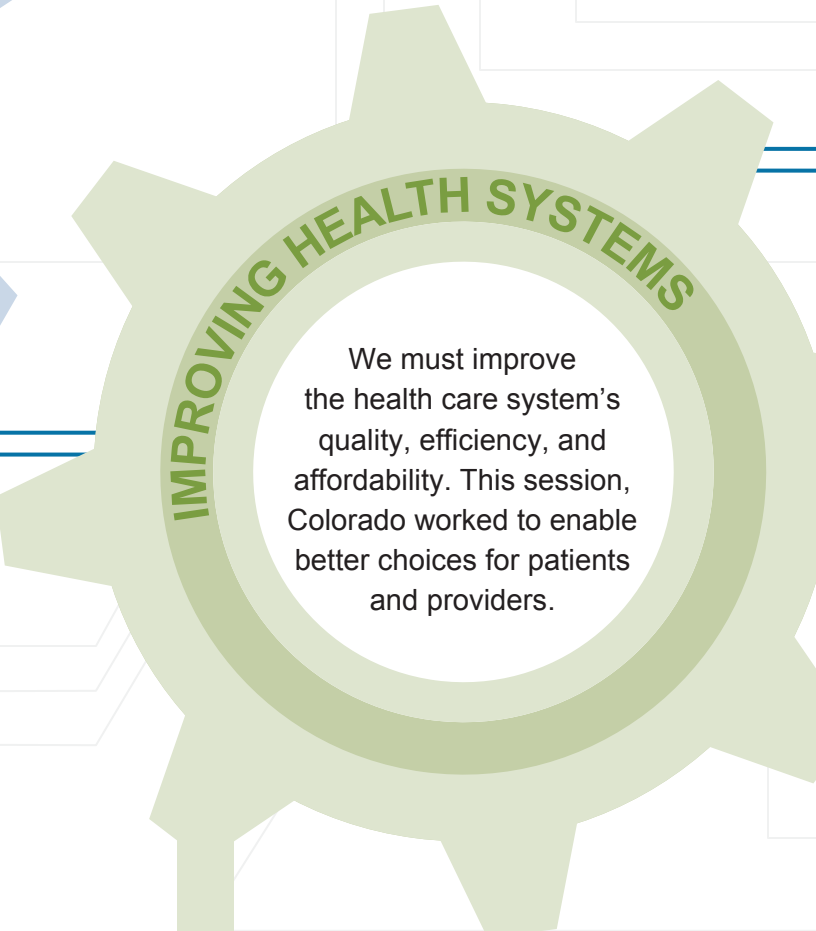
This legislative session, a number of bills passed that will benefit the medically underserved, and Colorado made progress toward: **improving health coverage, improving the health care system, increasing access to health care, and improving health equity.**



Adequate, affordable health insurance is important for accessing health care and protecting assets. This legislative session, Colorado made improvements to both public and private health coverage.

IMPROVING HEALTH COVERAGE


- **SB 19** – Authorizing the state auditor to audit Connect for Health Colorado to assess functionality and effectiveness
- **SB 256** – Changing the name of the “legislative implementation review committee” to “Colorado health insurance exchange oversight committee,” as well as the number of times it may meet per year and bills it may introduce
- **BUDGET** – In the fiscal year 2015-16 budget, the Department of Health Care Policy & Financing (HCPF) received funding to:
 - Change how Medicaid determines income eligibility from monthly to projected annual income, in order to secure stable coverage for temporary and seasonal employees
 - Ensure that children will be continuously eligible on Medicaid for 12 months, by adjusting the state’s funding structure
- **FEDERAL POLICY: HR 2** – Enabling the two-year refinancing of CHIP, refinancing for federally qualified health centers, and new payment methodology for Medicare providers



IMPROVING HEALTH SYSTEMS

We must improve the health care system’s quality, efficiency, and affordability. This session, Colorado worked to enable better choices for patients and providers.

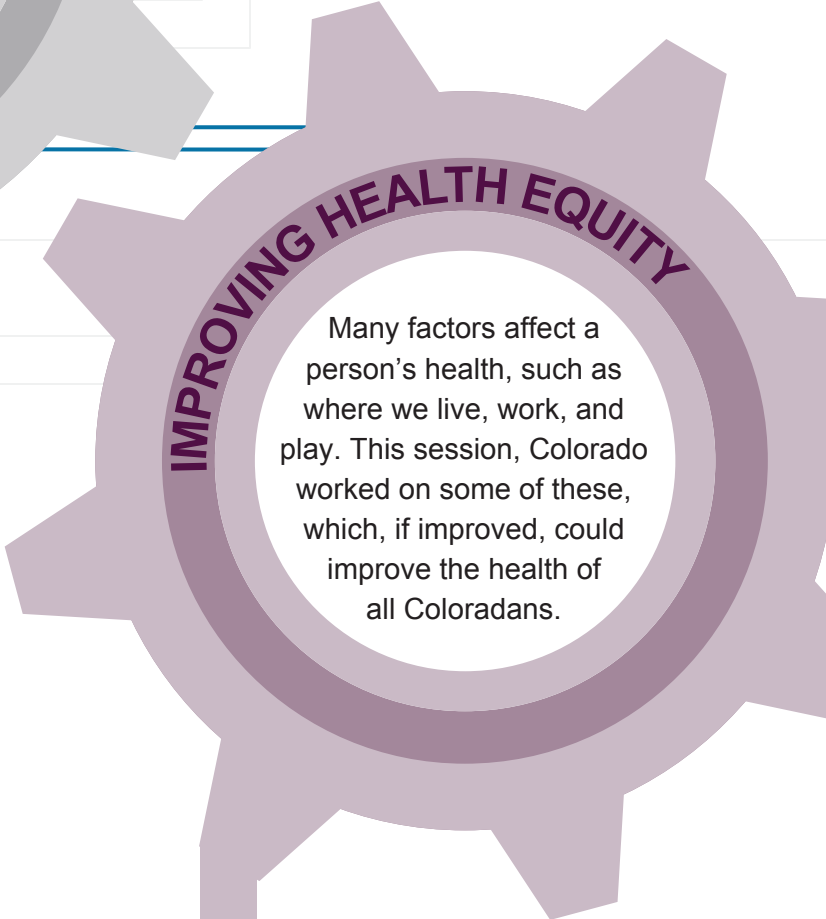
- **BUDGET** – The fiscal year 2015-16 budget allowed funding for:
 - Scholarships for organizations to analyze data from the All Payers Claims Database
 - Personal health records to be offered to Medicaid patients
 - Increasing Medicaid customer service call center FTE to better assist clients with coverage
 - Local public health agencies to maintain electronic health records, linking up to the health information exchange



Coverage does not ensure access to health care, and data shows that some Coloradans are unable to access the care they need. This legislative session, Colorado strengthened our workforce and increased access to health care.

IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

- **SB 197** – Reducing training hours required for full prescriptive authority for advanced practice nurses to 1,000, provided they have 3 years' clinical experience, and allowing experienced APNs to be mentors
- **SB 228** – Requiring HCPF to review fee payment rates for Medicaid providers and set a review schedule of every five years, to ensure fair payments
- **HB 1029** – Enabling plans to pay for telehealth statewide, as chosen by provider and patient, to increase access to care
- **HB 1039** – Allowing licensed facilities to donate unopened and unexpired medication and medical supplies, to benefit patients unable to access or afford them otherwise
- **HB 1242** – Enabling patients to designate a caregiver to receive post-discharge instructions, promoting continuity of care
- **HB 1309** – Enabling dental hygienists to place a temporary filling on a tooth at the direction of a dentist, via tele-dentistry
- **BUDGET** – The 2015-16 budget included funding for loan repayment programs and to increase payments for Medicaid providers, some targeted and some across-the-board



IMPROVING HEALTH EQUITY

Many factors affect a person's health, such as where we live, work, and play. This session, Colorado worked on some of these, which, if improved, could improve the health of all Coloradans.

- **HB 1033** – Creating a group to develop a long-term action plan for Colorado's aging population
- **HB 1233** – Creating a task force to study supply and demand of respite care services in Colorado
- **HB 1275** – Encouraging career growth through enrollment options in apprenticeships and internships
- **HB 1276** – Supporting entities that offer skilled worker training programs that meet existing market needs, improving job opportunities

Reflections on the Session

Several beneficial bills passed in the 2015 Colorado legislative session that impacted the Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved's priority areas.

By recognizing the clear connection between all the different components of the health care system, we are able to more effectively change the whole system.

Policy achievements in health care would be incomplete without continuing to make changes in each area of coverage, care, costs, transparency, and health equity. Now, we will focus on implementation of these new laws to reap the benefits, and continue identifying and resolving gaps, either through our work in the community or through additional policy change. While we acknowledge our work is far from complete, we are proud of the advances made this legislative session to improve care for the medically underserved.

To learn more about our work at the Capitol, visit www.ccmu.org/our-work/policy-initiatives.

To visit the online, interactive version of this document, visit www.ccmu.org/2015session.

***We believe everybody should have the opportunity to lead a healthy life.
We are an agent of change. Thought leaders. Collaborators. Advocates.***

The Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved serves as a bridge, bringing together ideas and resources with people who can make real change happen. We work in collaboration with health care providers, policy and decision makers, industry experts, advocates, and individuals in communities across Colorado and at the Capitol. It is our mission to create opportunities and eliminate barriers to good health for the medically underserved.



Colorado Coalition for the
Medically Underserved

PO Box 18877, Denver, CO 80218 | www.ccmu.org