



2013 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.

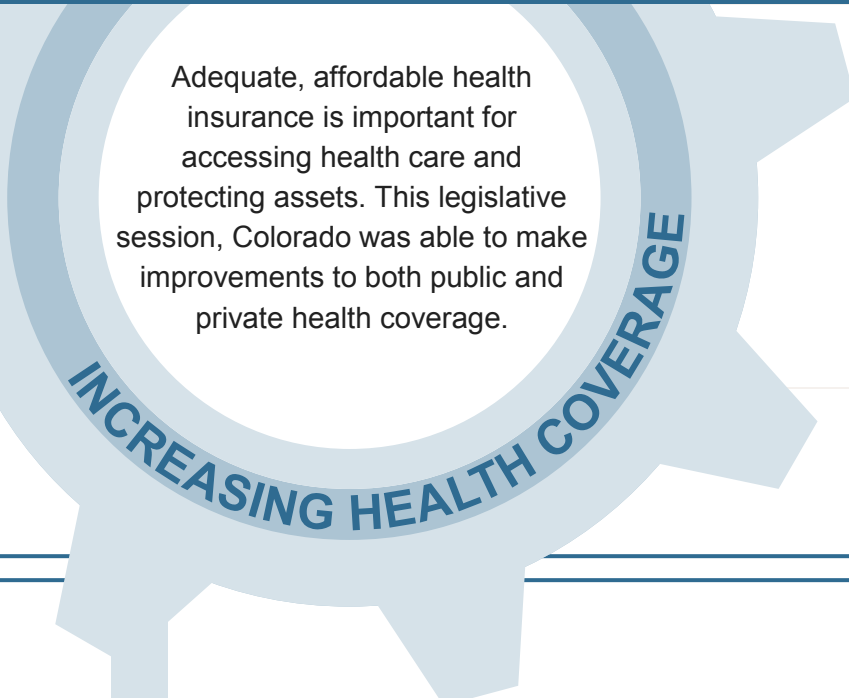
For the 2013 session, we identified priority areas in which we would actively engage, including:

- Expanding the income limits of eligibility for Medicaid to 133% of federal poverty level
- Removing the three-month waiting period to enroll in CHP+
- Developing Medicaid benefits for preventive dental and behavioral health needs
- Improving systems for public coverage programs
- Maintaining and strengthening the Accountable Care Collaborative
- Improving the overall health care system and maximizing health care resources

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

MOVEMENT IN THE 2013 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 health care resources and improving personal health.**



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

INCREASING HEALTH COVERAGE

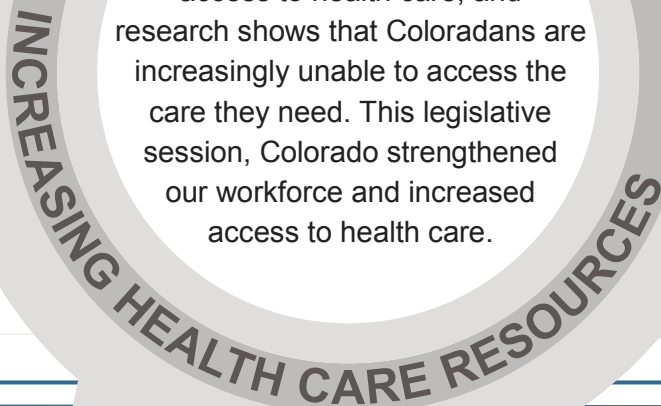
- **SB 8** – Eliminating the rule that a child be uninsured for three months before enrolling in CHP+ keeps kids from experiencing unnecessary coverage gaps.
- **SB 200** – Making Medicaid available to low-income, non-disabled, adult Coloradans strengthens our safety net.
- **SB 242** – Adding dental benefits for adults on Medicaid increases access to preventive services, reducing reliance on inappropriate and costly emergency room treatment.
- **HB 1245** – Establishing funding sources for the Colorado Health Benefit Exchange by allowing for a broad revenue approach helps ensure its sustainability.
- **HB 1266** – Aligning state law with federal health care statutes for private insurance better prepares us for full implementation of state and federal health care reform.
- **HB 1290** – Updating regulation of stop-loss insurance for self-insuring employers ensures a strong small group insurance marketplace.



IMPROVING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

It is important that we continue to improve the health care system's quality, efficiency, and affordability. This session, Colorado worked to enable better choices for providers and patients.

- **HB 1015** – Including small group claims in the All-Payer Claims Database increases transparency of the health care system's costs.
- **HB 1196** – Reporting regularly about the savings and costs to Medicaid of the Accountable Care Collaborative (ACC) contributes to a better functioning system.



INCREASING HEALTH CARE RESOURCES

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

- **SB 178** – Allowing Red Rocks Community College to continue offering a Physician Assistant (PA) master’s program maintains our health care workforce with a strong PA pipeline.
- **SB 222** – Promulgating a public stakeholder process for establishing rules around better administration and purchasing policies for childhood vaccines improves access to immunizations.
- **SB 264** – Requiring the commission on family medicine to support development of rural medicine residency programs helps build a strong primary care workforce throughout our state.
- **SB 266** – Coordinating a statewide behavioral health crisis response system, including a hotline, walk-in crisis services, and a public information campaign, improves access to mental health services.
- **HB 1065** – Allowing mental health professionals licensed in other states to practice in a federally operated facility in Colorado adds important resources to the mental health workforce.
- **HB 1074** – Updating statutory requirements for the Primary Care Office within the state public health department aligns regulations with federal law.



IMPROVING HEALTH

Many factors affect a person’s health, such as where we live, work, and play. This legislative session, Colorado worked on these factors in conjunction with medical care to improve health outcomes.

- **SB 261** – Allowing the state public health department to award grants to community programs for oral health improvements strengthens the resources available to make progress on one of Colorado’s Ten Winnable Battles.
- **HB 1088** – Changing the name of the Office of Health Disparities to the Office of Health Equity focuses attention on what we aim to accomplish rather than the barriers.

Reflections on the Session

Many beneficial bills passed this session that impacted the Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved's priority areas. By recognizing the inextricable connection between all the different components of the health care system, we are able to affect change on 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 overall health. Now, we will focus on executing these new laws to reap the benefits, and continuing to identify and resolve gaps either through our work in the community or through additional policy change. While we recognize that our work is not yet complete, we are pleased with the advances made this legislative session to improve the health care system 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/2013session.

***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 ensure health care systems meet the needs of the medically underserved and the needs of those providers and systems of care dedicated to caring for the underserved.

