



2014 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 2014 session, we identified priority areas in which we would actively engage, including:

- Medicaid and CHP+ funding, expansions, protections, and improvements
- Pediatric dental benefits through our All Kids Covered collaborative
- Safety net protection and enhancement
- Provider payment as part of budget negotiations
- Innovative models of care, such as telemedicine
- Costs of care and charity care transparency
- Social determinants of health awareness

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

MOVEMENT IN THE 2014 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.

IMPROVING HEALTH COVERAGE


- **SB 180** – Transferring Colorado Dental Health Care Program for Low-Income Seniors from the Department of Public Health & Environment to the Department of Health Care Policy & Financing and changing it into a grants program better streamlines the administration and benefits for low-income seniors in Colorado.
- **HB 1053** – Authorizing the Division of Insurance to promulgate rules around the required purchase of pediatric dental benefits better aligns Connect for Health Colorado with the non-exchange marketplace in Colorado.
- **BUDGET** – In the fiscal year 2014-15 budget, the Department of Health Care Policy & Financing (HCPF) received funding to:
 - Cover legally present immigrant pregnant women and children to enroll in Medicaid and CHP+ as authorized by 2009 law
 - Align CHP+ dental benefit with federal standards
 - Enhance Medicaid eligibility determination activities
 - Cover full dentures for adults on Medicaid



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

IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

- **SB 187** – Creating a 12-member bipartisan and diverse commission will enable Colorado to understand key cost drivers in health care as well as effective strategies for addressing them.
- **BUDGET** – The fiscal year 2014-15 budget allowed for scholarships for organizations to analyze data made available through the All Payers Claims Database as well as for funding Electronic Medical Records to be linked up to the Health Information Exchange.



IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

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 50** – Authorizing the Department of Public Health & Environment to enforce and gauge compliance with the charity care requirements from a 2012 law gives our remaining uninsured residents the ability to afford needed hospital care.
- **SB 144** – Extending the Commission on Family Medicine allows experts to create more slots in rural and underserved areas for family medicine residency opportunities, and thereby increase primary care physician access in underserved areas of our state.
- **HB 1288** – By providing transparency on immunization rates in schools and daycares, parents can be more informed about the facilities they choose for their children.
- **BUDGET** – Through the fiscal year 2014-15 budget, the Department of Health Care Policy & Financing (HCPF) will be able to increase payments for Medicaid providers, specifically:
 - Primary care providers
 - Dental providers
 - Behavioral Health providers
 - Specialty Providers

Denver Health also received increased funding for their residency training program.



IMPROVING HEALTH

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

- **HB 1017** – By creating tax credit opportunities for affordable housing development, Colorado can address key determinants of health: housing and income.

Reflections on the Session

Several 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 change the whole system more effectively. 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 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/2014session.

***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.



Colorado Coalition for the
Medically Underserved

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