



2016 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 2016 session, we identified priority areas in which we would actively engage, including:

- Covering the remaining uninsured
- Strategically increasing and maximizing health care workforce to improve access to care
- Protecting and enhancing the safety net, including preserving the Hospital Provider Fee
- Supporting innovative models of care to increase access and better inform patients
- Removing barriers in access to quality care, specifically with medical transportation, health literacy, and health care affordability
- Improving health outcomes, especially for patients facing health disparities

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 2016 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 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.

- **HB 1148** – Giving the health exchange legislative oversight committee increased oversight on rules and policies proposed by the exchange regarding items like contracts, carrier participation, broker participation, and more
- **HB 1277** – Requiring the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to give notice to Medicaid patients of at least 10 days before changing or ceasing their benefits, and extending the deadline from 30 days to 60 days for Medicaid patients to appeal the intended action after the date of notice
- **HB 1336** – Creating a study to examine the feasibility of a single geographic rating area for health plan premiums in Colorado
- **HB 1081** – Allowing Medicaid to eliminate obsolete reports, because they reference discontinued programs or are redundant, streamlining administrative efficiency
- **HB 1407** – Allowing HCPF to continue Medicaid payment reform and innovation pilot programs in Colorado



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 69** – Clarifying rules for community paramedic providers and programs in order to increase access to patient- and community-centered care and reduce high-cost utilization of the emergency room and 911 response system
- **SB 158** – Outlining duties that a physician can delegate to a physician assistant for the purpose of allowing PAs to practice at the top of their training
- **HB 1047** – Allowing Colorado to enter into a compact that expedites licensure for physicians to practice in multiple states
- **HB 1103** – Clarifying training requirements for psychologists, therapists, social workers, and counselors before they receive their professional licenses, in order to improve access to behavioral health services
- **HB 1142** – Rewarding a \$1,000 tax credit to preceptors in rural areas for health care professionals-in-training
- **HB 1408** – Modifying the allocation of revenues for primary care rate enhancements, to increase access to preventive services, office visits, counseling, immunization administration, and health risk assessments for Medicaid patients



IMPROVING EQUITY IN ACCESS

Many factors affect a person's ability to access good health care, including transportation, health literacy, affordability, and more. This session, Colorado worked on some of these important issues.

- **SB 27** – Allowing Medicaid patients to receive 90 days of maintenance medications via mail for chronic conditions, with the same copay
- **HB 1097** – Removing a barrier for non-emergent transportation providers to serve Medicaid patients, without changing safety or accessibility requirements
- **SB 190** – Creating performance measures and a bonus structure for administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Reflections on the Session

Several beneficial bills passed in the 2016 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/2016session.

***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

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