



Colorado Children's Immunization Coalition 2013 Legislative Summary

2013 Session Highlights

- Passage of CCIC's top legislative priority, SB 13-222 "Improving Access to Childhood Immunizations"
 - Protection of immunization related funding within CDPHE budget
 - Engaged coalitions focused on other CCIC policy priorities
 - Built successful relationships with key legislators

On Wednesday, May 8th after 120 days of deliberation and debate, lawmakers concluded their business and closed the 69th session of the Colorado General Assembly. Over the course of the session there were over 600 bills, resolutions and memorials introduced and over 400 passed into law. Reflecting back, the 2013 session may be remembered as historic for the sheer volume of legislation passed, in addition to the significant policy initiatives debated. From civil unions to marijuana regulations to education reform to gun safety measures, there was no shortage of controversial issues this session.

The beginning of the 2013 session saw leadership from both parties touting jobs and the economy as the key issues up for debate. Indeed there were many bills dealing with business issues, ranging from economic incentives for key industries to labor and employment reforms. Many of the majority party's key initiatives saw stiff opposition, and nearly all saw lengthy debates. All in all, the tone of the session was significantly more partisan than previous years, and that tone affected all areas of the legislative process. While the state budget was not the contentious issue it has been in the past, we still experienced partisan squabbles as members vied for new state revenue.

2013 also saw an unprecedented number of late evening sessions, with committee hearings and floor debate lasting to midnight frequently. This intense pace of work and the sheer number of bills moving through the process combined for short tempers and terse words. Fortunately, there were also moments for legislators to come together to celebrate common interests and pay tribute to Coloradans who serve their communities and their country. At the close, the outcome and accomplishments may differ depending on which party is speaking, but neither can deny the hard work and extraordinary effort put in by lawmakers this year.

CCIC Policy Priorities

CCIC had a banner year in terms of legislative successes at the Capitol. The agenda developed by the policy committee and Board of Directors was aggressive and challenging. However, successful coalitions were built with partner organizations in order to achieve these important policy goals.



Priority One Issues

SB 222: Improving Access to Childhood Immunizations

CCIC took a lead role in this policy priority early in the planning process, and helped to create a strong coalition to support the bill. What began as a bill to implement universal purchase for childhood vaccines was scaled back to accomplish two main objectives (1) Eliminate the statutory prohibition on the state engaging in bulk purchasing arrangements, and (2) Direct CDPHE to convene a task force to study and make policy recommendations on Colorado's vaccine purchasing and delivery system. The coalition supporting the bill was diverse and included many of CCIC's traditional immunization advocacy partners, as well as other child health advocacy organizations. After initial opposition from the pharmaceutical industry, the bill passed both chambers with bi-partisan support and is awaiting signature by the Governor. Along the way, CCIC helped to develop new legislative champions for immunization policy, and 35 legislators signed on as co-sponsors of SB 222. CCIC anticipates continuing in a lead role as CDPHE begins the process of convening the task force over the interim.

Priority Two Issues

Health Care Reform

CCIC actively monitored key health care reform initiatives, including SB 200 (Adult Medicaid Expansion) and HB 1266 (Alignment of State and Federal Health Care Law). CCIC's support for Medicaid expansion was rooted in the fact that additional funds the state receives will be spent, in part, on implementing 12 months continuous eligibility for Medicaid children. CCIC also joined "Insuring Our Future", a coalition of organizations with common messaging on the importance of the Medicaid program. The coalition's work was focused on educating legislators and laying foundational support for Medicaid expansion.

Pertussis Education

CCIC engaged in a series of stakeholder meetings to discuss a broad array of policy ideas to address Colorado's current pertussis epidemic. Meetings are expected to continue throughout the interim, and policy recommendations will be discussed for the 2014 session.

Personal Exemptions

CCIC partnered with CDPHE and The Keystone Group to initiate a series of focus groups which ultimately will lead to a stakeholder process to discuss Colorado's personal exemption policy. Meetings are expected to continue throughout the interim, and policy recommendations will be discussed for the 2014 session.

CIIS Registry Expansion

CCIC initiated two stakeholder meetings with representatives from the Colorado AAP, Children's Hospital Colorado, LiveWell Colorado, COHRIO and CDPHE to discuss possible options to enhance the CIIS registry. Understanding that a larger process would have to take place, CCIC pursued and is awaiting confirmation of grant funding to begin a study of the issue. Meanwhile, CDPHE announced that they will be expanding the registry to include newborn hearing screening



results in 2013; a feature providers have long been advocating for. Pending the grant award, CCIC will begin work to create a long term plan for CIIS, with the goal of including other child health metrics.

FY 2013-14 Budget Overview

Unlike previous years, the state budget was not the main event at the Legislature. While it certainly dominated a significant amount of time and effort, there were not the concerns about revenue shortfalls and budget cuts as in the past. The session began with two positive economic forecasts, signaling an improvement in the state's economic inputs and outputs. The March 2013 revenue forecast followed suit, and gave lawmakers an additional \$900M to work with during figure setting for the FY 13-14 budget. Much of this additional revenue, derived from increased taxes and one time capital gains, was reinvested into departments hard hit by previous cuts. Additional funds were also directed to shore up the state's rainy day fund and the State Education Fund, previously tapped to fill budget holes. Despite the positive news, there does remain underlying concern about the volatility of federal fiscal policy and potential international affairs. With the impact of sequestration cuts beginning to be felt, economists warned we may see a slight slowdown in the June economic projections.

CCIC's budget priorities were held intact, and all Medicaid providers will experience a 2 percent increase in reimbursement. While this is not directly for immunization administration, it covers other key well-child visit codes incenting providers to accept Medicaid patients. Additionally, Medicaid providers will experience a significant bump in reimbursement under a provision of the Affordable Care Act which increased Medicaid rates to be equal to Medicare rates for 2013 and 2014.

Below is a list of key FY 13/14 budget decisions from the Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting¹

- *Protecting Colorado's most Vulnerable Residents* – This budget includes an increase of \$13.5 million in total funds to provide essential services for an additional 765 people with developmental disabilities. This level of funding will eliminate the wait list for all children needing services through the Children's Extensive Services Medicaid waiver. Additionally, this budget includes \$4.0 million in new funding for programs that assist our elderly Coloradans with needs such as meals and transportation.
- *Enhancements to our Mental Health System* – The budget includes \$7.5 million in total funds to provide additional mental health community placements, a jail-based restore-to-competency program, and additional resources for school based mental health services. Funding of \$19.8 million to establish a statewide mental health crisis system is included in a separate bill (SB 13-266).
- *Protecting Colorado's Children from Abuse and Neglect* – This budget includes an increase of \$13.3 million in total funds for the Child Welfare system. These funds were added as part of the Governor's Keeping Kids Safe and Families Healthy 2.0 plan. The plan includes funding to implement and strengthen prevention and

¹ 2013 Budget Approval Letter, April 29, 2013, www.colorado.gov/ospb



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intervention services, improve public awareness about child abuse and neglect, enhance training and technology for child welfare professionals and to improve overall transparency in the system.

- *Support for K-12 and Higher Education* – The passage of the FY 13-14 School Finance Act, increased funding for K-12 education by \$210.2 million, which exceeds the amount required by inflation and enrollment. Average per pupil funding will grow by \$171.80. There is sufficient funding to fund an additional 3,200 pre-school slots. In higher education, this budget adds General Fund appropriations of \$31.0 million in direct support to the College Opportunity Fund stipends and \$5.3 million in financial aid for students. In addition for higher education, the budget allocates almost \$102 million for capital and controlled maintenance projects.
- *Promoting Economic Development* – This budget provides funding to continue the economic development initiatives that were expanded in FY 2012-13. This includes \$2.9 million for new job creation incentives for companies relocating to our state, or for Colorado companies expanding their workforce. Also, the budget provides over \$1.0 million to incentivize film, television, and media production activities that will result in direct expenditures in our local communities. In addition to shoring up existing efforts, the budget includes a \$2.0 million increase for tourism promotion and the development of a branding platform that will be designed to attract tourists, businesses, capital and potential workers to Colorado.
- *Investing in critical infrastructure* –The budget for FY 2013-14 sets aside \$188.1 million for capital construction projects. This amount includes \$44.9 million to perform nearly 70 discrete controlled maintenance projects and an additional \$93.7 million for new construction and renovation projects involving State-owned buildings. Not only will these planned expenditures provide some much needed enhancements to our aging building infrastructure, they will also directly inject funds into Colorado's construction economy.
- *Planning for the future* – With this package of budget bills, the State's General Fund reserve will increase to 5.0 percent of total expenditures. This places nearly \$80 million more in savings than required with the previous 4.0 percent reserve. The last two recessions caused revenue in the General Fund to decline by approximately 15% each time. This increase is a great first step to a reserve that better reflects the risks to the budget in a recession.

Looking Ahead – Interim Activity

As we close out the 2013 session and begin to look towards the future, CCIC will remain busy with the various task forces and stakeholder groups outlined above. 2014 will prove to be a busy year for immunization policy, and CCIC is playing an active leadership role in convening and facilitating relevant conversations. Lawmakers will also remain busy with interim committees and summer work. The Joint Budget Committee will reconvene in June to receive the quarterly economic forecast, and an update on the ongoing improvements to the Colorado Benefits Management System (CBMS).

Statutorily approved interim committees and task forces will also be meeting and discussing their various charges. 2013 saw an extremely high number of interim committees and task forces, as well as a bill (HB 1299) which sought to change the interim committee process. As introduced HB 1299 would have created standing interim committees of reference, which in essence would have extended the legislative session through the summer and fall. Amendments



adopted in the Senate changed the bill to require committees of reference to meet once over the interim to receive departmental SMART Act briefings.

2013 Interim Committees and Legislative Task Forces	Purpose
Early Childhood & School Readiness Legislative Commission	The Commission will work with the Early Childhood Leadership Council (ECLC) to develop policy recommendations related to early childhood education.
Juvenile Defense Attorney Interim Committee	The Committee will study the role of legal defense counsel in the juvenile justice system and make policy recommendations.
Joint Technology Committee	The Committee will oversee state agencies, projects and issues related to information technology. The committee may meet year round.
Legislative Digital Policy Advisory Committee	The Advisory committee will develop plans for converting existing archived recordings of legislative proceedings into a digital format and implementing the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act.
Wildfire Matters Review Committee	The Committee will finish the work of the Lower North Fork Wildfire Commission, and will develop policy recommendations related to wildfire prevention and mitigation in the state
Youth Advisory Council	The Council is comprised of youth members from across the state, and will provide legislators the “youth perspective” on policy issues.
Substance Abuse Trend & Response Task Force	Renames the Colorado Methamphetamine Task Force as the Colorado Substance Abuse Task Force, and changes the emphasis of the task force from solely methamphetamine to all substance abuse.
Criminal Discovery Task Force	The Task Force will study and make recommendations on the feasibility of providing discovery for criminal cases in an electronic format and alternate means of sharing and reimbursing discovery costs.
Economic Opportunity and Poverty Reduction Task Force	The Task Force will assess current state policies and practices that promote economic opportunity and poverty reduction, and make legislative recommendations.
Civil Commitment Statute Review Committee	The Committee will study and prepare recommendations concerning the consolidation of mental health, alcohol, and substance abuse disorder statutes concerning civil commitments.



In addition to legislative work, there will also be significant activity to attempt putting an education funding initiative on the November ballot. This initiative seeks to raise state sales and use taxes approximately \$1B in order to fund school finance reforms adopted in SB 213. Additionally, voters will be asked to approve the regulatory and tax structure referred by the General Assembly to implement A-64 which legalizes recreational use of marijuana.

There are no statewide elections as 2013 is an off cycle year, however we do anticipate both parties will gear up for big races in 2014. Fundraising always remains an important part of interim work, and to the extent your organization can contribute and engage we will be asking for assistance. As always it is an absolute pleasure to represent your interests at the state capitol, and we look forward to continuing to serve CCIC's public affairs needs.