

# SPEAK UP FOR KIDS

Legislator Leave Behind

## Support Early Childhood and Child Health

**Department of Early Childhood and Universal Pre-K, HB22-1295 (Rep. Sirota, Speaker Garnett, Sen. Buckner, Maj. Leader Fenberg)**

Early childhood is a critical period that dramatically shapes a child's development, education, and life experiences. However, the current early childhood system in Colorado is underfunded and fragmented—but it doesn't have to remain that way. By establishing more streamlined early childhood services through one state agency, we can reduce the burdens families and providers face in navigating these systems, and provide young children with the critical early start they need to thrive.

- ✓ **VOTE YES on HB22-1295:** The passage of House Bill 22-1295 will create better beginnings for all Colorado children and put Colorado on the path to be the best state for kids and families.

### **Funding for Youth Behavioral Health**

The state has \$450 million in federal funding set aside for behavioral health. We are requesting that one-third—\$150 million—of those funds be allocated to specifically address the needs of children, youth, and families. Youth represent one-third of the population and deserve their fair share. Only 22% of youth who have a mental health condition with severe impairment are receiving care. Suicide is now the leading cause of death among Colorado youth ages 10-24. This funding is needed to:

- Expand the care continuum to ensure kids get the services they need in the right place, at the right time.
  - Support the workforce and caregivers who serve children and youth.
  - Ensure efforts to support care coordination and the integration of physical and behavioral health specifically recognizes the unique needs of children and youth.
- ✓ **SUPPORT allocating one-third of behavioral health funding to youth:** Investments in our kids will pay in dividends over the years. Prevention and early intervention efforts can change the lives of children and families and truly transform our behavioral health system.

### **Cover All Coloradans, HB22-1289 (Rep. Gonzales-Gutierrez, Rep. McCluskie, Sen. Moreno)**

Health insurance coverage is an important social determinant of health and a building block of family financial security. Perhaps at no time are these benefits more important than during pregnancy and childhood. In Colorado, Hispanic/Latinx women of reproductive age are three times more likely to be uninsured, compared to their non-Hispanic peers, and Latinx children are twice as likely to be uninsured. This bill will:

- Provide full health care coverage using existing federal funding for pregnant people who would otherwise be eligible for Medicaid and CHP+ if not for their immigration status, and continues coverage through 12 months postpartum. Provide full health care coverage to children, regardless of immigration status, through age 18.
- Provide pregnancy and postpartum support by improving access to parental support programs.
- Collect data for improved health care equity by strengthening and permanently authorizing CDPHE's Health eMoms Survey.
- Expand health insurance enrollment by creating a Special Enrollment Period for pregnancy so that people can sign up for insurance when they become pregnant, and not have to wait until later in the year.

- ✓ **VOTE YES on HB20-1289:**

All people need access to health insurance regardless of their employment, income, age, medical conditions, marital status, family composition, or immigration status. Health care access is especially critical to health and wellbeing during childhood and pregnancy.

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