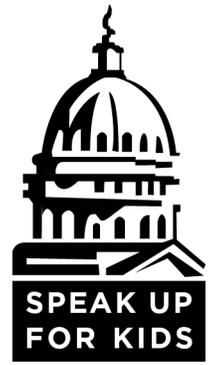


Priority Bills



Cover All Coloradans (Reps. Gonzales-Gutierrez and Sen. Moreno)

Background: 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.

Tell legislators to support Covering All Coloradans

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Insurance access improves physical and mental health and lowers infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) are critical for the health access of pregnant people, new parents, and children.

What does the bill do?

The bill will expand full health care coverage coverage by 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. The bill will also provide full health care coverage to children, regardless of immigration status, through age 18. It will provide pregnancy and postpartum support by improving access to parental support programs. All Coloradans Covered will also collect data for improved health care equity by strengthening and permanently authorizing CDPHE's Health eMoms Survey, as well as expanding 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.

Reasons to support Covering All Coloradans:

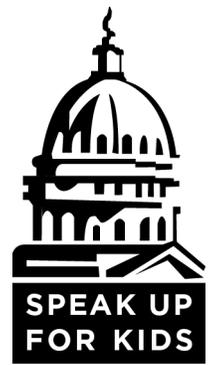
- The ongoing pandemic has exposed the disparities that communities of color face when they are routinely and systematically denied access to care they need. Expanding access to all children, pregnant people, and postpartum people, regardless of immigration status, is fundamental to achieving health equity in Colorado.
- Communities of color in Colorado experience some of the biggest disparities in health care including wide disparities by race and ethnicity in insurance coverage, despite efforts to expand access, higher rates of preventable, pregnancy-related deaths, and fear of enrolling in coverage for mixed-status families.
- While efforts to expand access to health insurance in Colorado have reduced uninsured rates, wide disparities by race and ethnicity remain. 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.

HB22-1295: Implementation of Universal Pre-K Implementation of the Early Childhood Department (Rep. Sirota and Speaker Garnett/Sen. Buckner and President Fenberg)

Background: This bill makes Colorado's early childhood system easier to navigate for families and early childhood program providers by aligning all early childhood and family support programs within the Department of Early Childhood. It will also elevate and implement the state's vision for a mixed delivery universal preschool program, providing access for families to a high-quality range of preschool options, including community and school-based, while prioritizing additional resources for low-income and at-risk children.

Priority Bills

Status as of March 9: The bill was introduced on Friday, March 11 and is likely to be heard by the House Education Committee on March 17, 2022.



Tell legislators to support the Implementation of the Department of Early Childhood and Universal Pre-K

- ✓ With Colorado's early childhood programs spread across multiple state agencies, eligibility requirements, and funding streams, families face numerous challenges in accessing the high-quality early childhood experiences their children deserve. Many families struggle to navigate the application and enrollment processes of various preschool and child care, and family support programs and services. Families do not know what is accessible and spend unpredictable amounts of time on multiple applications. We can and must do better for families and providers!
- ✓ The lack of a unified and accessible system for early childhood services also places a large burden on early childhood program providers in opening, recruiting, and retaining staff – despite the significant need in Colorado for the critical services they provide. **HB 22-1295** can solve these problems for families and providers!
- ✓ **HB22-1295** follows the Early Childhood Leadership Commission's unanimous recommendations to implement the new Department of Early Childhood so that our early childhood system is high-quality, accessible, and capable of better serving young children, their families, and Colorado's early childhood providers.
- ✓ The new Department will align Colorado's current fragmented early childhood landscape, which includes various early childhood authorities, programs, and funding streams, under one system designed to give every child and their family access to high quality early care and learning experiences. Colorado's programs, early childhood authorities, and funding streams will be administered through one unified entity, instead of being spread through three different state agencies as they are today.
- ✓ Please vote yes on **HB 22-1295** and urge your colleagues to do the same.

What does the bill do?

The bill requires local coordination and leadership for early childhood to ensure that every Colorado community's needs are met. It also establishes a nimble governance system for early childhood that ensures that families and providers have a voice in regulations and rules that will affect them. In keeping with the unanimously-approved recommendations from Colorado's Early Childhood Leadership Commission, the legislation will do five major things: 1) establish the department's scope, mission, requirements, structures, and accountability in statute, prioritizing a whole-child and

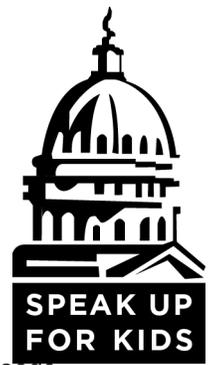


whole-family approach to early childhood 2) move statutory programs under the authority of the department so that it can align the many parts of Colorado's early childhood system, 3) establish the policy infrastructure for local coordinating organizations so that they can nimbly respond to the needs of their communities, 4) establish the policy infrastructure to implement a mixed delivery system of universal preschool, and 5) align existing programs to more seamlessly integrate under the new department. This will allow Colorado's youngest children, their families and their providers a chance to thrive.

Reasons to support the new Department of Early Childhood and Universal Preschool Program:

- Prioritizes parent choice by supporting a mixed-delivery system of early childhood program providers

Priority Bills



- Makes the early childhood system easier for providers to navigate, improving our early childhood system's capacity, so more families can have access to high-quality services and more providers feel they can stay open, hire, and retain staff
- Advances equitable access to early childhood programs and services, with an approach designed to reduce stigma and prioritize trauma-informed programming for children facing the greatest barriers to opportunity
- Empowers local communities and local leadership to innovate to best meet their community's needs
- Supports the early childhood workforce, who are critical to supporting children, families and communities

Behavioral Health Funding Request

Background: The state has \$450 million in existing federal funding set aside for behavioral health programs. We are requesting that one-third –\$150million– of those funds be allocated to specifically address the needs of children, youth, and families.

Status as of March 9: Multiple bills targeting children, youth, and families are starting to be introduced, , but the recommendation currently only allocates one-fourth of funding to children, youth, and families specifically.

Ask legislators to support allocating one-third of behavioral health funding to youth

What could this funding do?

Funding is being allocated to expand the care continuum to ensure that kids get the behavioral health services they need in the right place, at the right time. Funding is also anticipated to support the behavioral health provider workforce and caregivers, and provide support for care coordination and the integration of physical and behavioral health. These bills should include pediatric-specific language and ensure targeted support to those that care for children and youth.

Reasons to support the allocation of one-third of behavioral health funds to specifically address youth needs

- ✓ Youth represent one-third of the population in Colorado 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.
- ✓ Investments in Colorado kids will pay in dividends over the years. Prevention and early intervention efforts can change the lives of children and families, and truly transform the state's behavioral health system.

