



The Children's Hospital



2009

Kids' Health Annual Check-Up

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Each year The Children's Hospital works to positively influence public policy decisions related to children's health and well-being. Now that the 2009 state legislative session has ended, it's time for a "check up" on how children's issues fared this session. There are many issues related to children that elected officials considered and that Children's engaged on - here are some of the highlights:

Children's Grassroots Advocates

"A Clean Bill of Health"



- During the 2009 session, members of The Children's Hospital Grassroots Advocacy Network made over 4,700 contacts to state legislators on bills related to children's health and safety! Thanks to each and every one of you who took the time to be a voice for kids!

Keeping Kids Safe and Healthy

"A Healthy Outlook"



- Passage of legislation to require single and multi-family residential properties to have an operational carbon monoxide alarm installed within a specified distance to each room used for sleeping purposes.
- Legislation passed which will ban all drivers from text messaging while driving and will also prohibit all drivers under the age of 18 years from using a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle.

"Follow-Up Visit Recommended"



- Several child wellness/nutrition efforts failed to pass in the 2009 session; stakeholder discussions this summer can help shape priorities for 2010.
- Colorado failed to pass primary safety belt legislation, which would have made it a primary offense to not buckle up in a motor vehicle. This is disappointing because we know that safety belts save lives, and that when adults buckle up, kids are more likely to be buckled up too. A measure to require safety belts on school buses was also defeated.

Enhancing Access to Quality Health Care for Children & Families

"A Healthy Outlook"



- At the federal level, passage of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) will help ensure that many more Colorado children have access to health care services.

- Passage of the Colorado Healthcare Affordability Act is expected to generate \$1.2 billion to expand state health coverage for more than 100,000 uninsured Coloradans. Additionally, this legislation will help mitigate losses for Medicaid hospital providers by leveraging federal dollars to improve compensation for hospitals caring for Medicaid and low income populations.
- Legislation passed which will establish a process for re-enrollment in Medicaid and the children's basic health plan (CHP+) over the telephone and through the Internet. This will help more children retain their health coverage.
- Passage of legislation to increase motor vehicle registration fees to fund the emergency medical services account within the highway users tax fund. This will help ensure that Colorado families across the state have medical responders available to help them in an emergency, and that these responders have the specialized equipment they need to care for them.
- Legislation passed which will direct private health plans to provide coverage for the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of autism services.
- Reauthorization of the Child Mental Health Treatment Act which will continue to provide mental health services for children and their families.
- Legislation passed which will allow legally present pregnant women and children who meet the financial qualifications to be covered by Medicaid and CHP+ without the five-year waiting period that currently exists for legal immigrants.
- Legislation passed which expands the definition of a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) to include BLAST injuries and also grants the Colorado TBI Program greater flexibility with regard to how it spends its funds.

Continued



“Showing Signs of Improvement”



- Although there is still work to be done in the realm of expanding access to quality health care for children, we are encouraged by the strides being made as previously noted, as well as the continued emphasis on medical homes for children. The Children’s Hospital is committed to continuing our work with community partners, as well as the Executive Branch and the Colorado General Assembly, to identify opportunities to improve quality, enhance eligibility for and enrollment in health insurance plans, and strengthen Colorado’s health care provider network.

Ensuring a Strong Provider Network for Consumers

“Follow Up Visit Recommended”



- Although we applaud the restoration of proposed cuts to the Pediatric Specialty Hospital line item for The Children’s Hospital (which will assist Children’s in absorbing annual losses of over \$62 million related to inadequate Medicaid reimbursement), it is concerning that health care provider reimbursement cuts were still made in order to help the state balance the FY09-10 budget. We will continue to work with state officials, health advocates and our fellow health care providers to address this issue going forward so Colorado families have a strong health care provider network available to provide the care they need.



The Children’s Hospital Grassroots Advocacy Network

The Children’s Hospital is committed to serving children through the provision of high-quality, coordinated programs of patient care, education, research, and **ADVOCACY**.

What is Advocacy? Advocacy means to support or defend a cause, or to plead on another’s behalf. Children’s uses three distinct strategies to advocate effectively for kids: **Grassroots Advocacy** – mobilizing people who care about kids’ health to influence policy issues that concern them, **Raising Public Awareness** – educating the general public about pediatric health care issues through the media and other communication channels, and **Direct Lobbying** – talking with policymakers personally about issues that affect kids’ health and acting as an information resource.

For more information on Children’s mission to advocate for kids, please visit www.TheChildrensHospital.org/advocacy or email advocacy@tchden.org.