

2010

Kids' Health Annual "Check-Up"



The Children's Hospital

Each year The Children's Hospital works to positively influence public policy decisions related to children's health and well-being. Now that

the 2010 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 with - here are some of the highlights:

TCH Children's Grassroots Advocates

"A Clean Bill of Health"

- In 2010 to date, members of The Children's Hospital Grassroots Advocacy Network made almost 1500 contacts to 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 improve the safety for children while riding in a car by requiring all children under the age of 8 years old to be properly restrained in a booster seat.
- Legislation passed which will both codify street engineering to include bike and pedestrian as modes of transportation and will implement a bicycle safety school curriculum for youth.
- Passage of legislation that creates the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council who will be charged with building strong local food economies in Colorado, preserving and protecting the natural environment, increasing consumer access to fresh, healthy and safe foods, and ultimately providing greater food security for Coloradans.



"Follow-Up Visit Recommended"

- Comprehensive child wellness/nutrition efforts will continue to be priorities in 2010.



Enhancing Access to Quality Health Care for Children & Families

"A Healthy Outlook"

- Passage of legislation which will require public and charter school districts to inform parents about immunization recommendations.
- Legislation passed which improve health care quality and transparency in the health care system by establishing a database of claims to better understand how Colorado is spending its health care dollars. In the future, the database will become a critical tool in driving up quality and driving down cost.
- Passage of legislation that improves that state's existing nurse loan forgiveness program by extending its current eligibility requirements. The new program will result in more nurse faculty and ultimately the number of new nurses that can be trained each year.



- The Children’s Hospital line-item in the state budget, specifically to compensate TCH for their large share of indigent care, was untouched despite concerns that there would be reductions during the 2010-11 budget year.

“Follow-Up Visit Recommended”

- Colorado failed to pass legislation that would create standardization and continuity of care for patients visiting retail-based clinics.

“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 noted above. 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 coverage plans, and strengthen Colorado’s health care provider network.



Federal Health Care Reform

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, into law. While this legislation is robust and will take years to implement, the following are a few insurance reforms that will take effect in the months to come:

- Adults who have been denied insurance coverage because of an existing illness can join a high-risk insurance pool. It’s interim until 2014 when insurance reforms kick in. Older children will benefit from this change.
- Children with pre-existing illness cannot be denied coverage. Dependents up to age 26 will be eligible for coverage under their parents’ plan.
- Insurance companies cannot revoke existing policies if someone gets sick.
- Lifetime limits on coverage will be banned and annual limits restricted.
- Public and private health insurance plans will be required to cover all Bright Futures services for children – the definitive standards for pediatric well-child and preventive care – as an immediate benefit with no cost-sharing. Bright Futures provides guidelines for all aspects of recommended well-child visits from birth through adolescence, including physical, developmental and mental health screenings as well as anticipatory guidance for parents and caregivers.
- Provide new funding for Medicaid medical home demonstration projects.



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.

