

COLORADO PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
2007 LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP REPORT
By Jennifer Miles, CPHA Lobbyist
May 30, 2007

The 2007 Legislative Session yielded a number of new laws impacting the public health of Colorado. The Colorado Public Health Association is pleased to provide this report to our members about the outcomes of the legislative session and our success in meeting our policy goals.

With the input of our members, the CPHA Board established 3 legislative priorities for 2007:

- Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act – keep the new law strong and actively support eliminating the casino exemption, which exposes casino employees to second-hand smoke on a daily basis
- Immigration Reform – advocate for changes to the special session bill and/or implementation that assures Colorado citizens and legal immigrants can obtain the public benefits they are eligible for without undue barriers to accessing those benefits
- Childhood Immunizations – support systems and reforms that improve Colorado's childhood immunization rates, including the new cervical cancer vaccine for young girls

Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act

Anyone who thought the passage of the 2006 Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act would end debate at the Capitol about smoking in indoor areas was sadly mistaken. In 2007 there were 6 bills related to the Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act. CPHA actively supported and led the coalition for House Bill (HB) 1269 – the Smoke Free Casinos bill that eliminates the casino exemption included in the 2006 bill. HB1269 passed with an effective date of January 1, 2008 and has been sent to the Governor for action. Bills to clarify (HB1108) and to eliminate (SB250) the cigar exemption were both defeated, continuing the lack of clarity about what establishments actually qualify as a cigar bar that can allow smoking. Despite the original intent, some bars are taking advantage of this exemption and declaring themselves a cigar bar. Attempts to add more exemptions for bars (SB103) and veterans' organizations (SB120) were both defeated, but HB1196 added a new exemption for enclosed smoking areas in assisted living facilities.

Immigration Reform

CPHA actively participated in the "1023 Coalition", a group of health and human service providers and advocates concerned about the impact of HBS06-1023 from the legislative special session. HB1023 required anyone applying for public benefits to provide documentation proving their citizenship or lawful presence. Public health agencies were among those who became concerned about the barrier this presented. CPHA and the 1023 Coalition actively supported HB1314, which passed and was signed into law by the Governor. HB1314 extended the Department of Revenue's emergency rules regarding additional acceptable documents to prove lawful presence and a waiver process for hardship cases from March 1, 2007 to July 1, 2007. During this time, the Department must pass regular permanent rules with public notice and public input. The hope is that these rules will allow applicants to use a number of different documents to provide their citizenship or lawful presence. A related bill to ease the requirements to obtain a Colorado identification card (HB1313) awaits Governor's action.

Immunization Improvements

CPHA actively supported 4 different bills related to children's immunizations. SB97 provided funding for childhood immunizations, from unused tobacco settlement funds. Two bills included proposals addressing the new cervical cancer vaccine. SB80 proposed an education campaign and a school entry requirement for 6th grade girls. This was defeated in favor of HB1301, which makes the vaccine widely available to underinsured girls, educates the public, and requires Medicaid and private insurance to cover the full cost of providing the vaccine. HB1347 makes updates and changes to the immunization laws, including those governing the immunization registry. It allows the registry to include adult immunization records and to include newborn screening results, broadening its use as a public health information system. Concerns were raised about whether or not parents are appropriately and adequately notified of their option to be excluded from the registry. HB1347 also authorizes the Department of Public Health

and Environment to explore several additional avenues for improving Colorado's immunization system and to make recommendations about needed policy changes. HB1347 was signed into law during Immunization Month in a signing ceremony at The Children's Hospital and HB1301 was signed into law on May 30 in Grand Junction.

Other Bills

CPHA also monitored several other important bills affecting public health, including the following:

- SB97 provides new funding for local public health departments and nursing services from unused tobacco settlement funds. SB97 and last year's budget action to restore funding cuts have significantly increased needed funding for local public health agencies. (CPHA supported)
- HB1117 requires a minor driving or riding as a passenger on a motorcycle or other motorized vehicle to wear a helmet. It appears to have failed to pass in time.
- For at least the second year in a row, a bill to make failure to wear a seat belt a primary traffic offense failed (SB151).
- After numerous attempts under the previous Governor, this year's bill to make emergency contraception available to rape victims (SB60) passed and was signed into law by the Governor.
- The Office of Health Disparities and related advisory councils were created in law by SB242.
- A bill to limit minors' access to artificial tanning narrowly failed (SB23).
- SB229 provides a framework for emergency epidemic preparedness, including authorizing the purchase of stockpiles of antiviral therapies.
- Children will become insured more quickly through SB211, which requires the state to presume children to be eligible for Medicaid and CHP while their application is processed (PE for kids).

The attached bill list shows the legislative result of all the bills CPHA monitored and/or lobbied on this year. Some are still awaiting action from the Governor, who has until June 5 to act on all bills sent to his desk. We will keep you posted on the final results.

CPHA has continued to build momentum with these policy successes and to gain increased visibility as a voice for public health in the legislative process. We look forward to continuing to build on our successes and learn from our experiences. Please let us know if you have any comments or questions on CPHA's 2007 legislative agenda or our future policy efforts. Watch your email in September for a member survey seeking input on 2008's legislative priorities.

Thanks and take care,

Colorado Public Health Association
P.O. Box 460367
Glendale, CO 80246
303-285-9660
www.coloradopublichealth.org
information@coloradopublichealth.org