

**COLORADO COALITION FOR THE  
MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED**  
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**HEALTH POLICY UPDATE  
FEBRUARY 14, 2007**

***A Note to CCMU Members from the Executive Director and Board President***

Welcome to the first 2007 edition of the Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved Health Policy Update. You will receive this Update on a regular basis during the 2007 legislative session. It will be your source of information on policy issues affecting the medically underserved in Colorado. If you are not currently a CCMU member, we encourage you to join us! Thanks and enjoy,

Molly Markert  
Executive Director

Gary VanderArk, MD  
President, Board of Directors

***2007 Legislative Session Begins***

The General Assembly began the 2007 session on January 11, 2007 with the pomp and circumstance a new legislature and new Governor brings. As of today, 490 bills had already been introduced, along with many resolutions. Two bills have already been signed into law, one has been vetoed, and at least 48 have already died. Despite a pre-session message from the Governor and legislative leadership that major health care reform would wait until 2008 when the work of the Senate Bill 208 Health Care Commission was complete, there are a large number of bills impacting health care.

***Prescription Drug Reform***

Governor Bill Ritter signed his first executive order on January 31, 2007 directing the state to establish a Preferred Drug List (PDL) for the purchase of prescription pharmaceuticals for Medicaid patients. Ritter said establishing the list will save taxpayers 2 percent to 5 percent on the bulk purchase of Medicaid pharmaceuticals, expecting a savings of at least \$1.6 million a year. The PDL is expected to be established by January 1, 2008. It is also the first step toward joining a multi-state drug purchasing pool, which is expected to save even more money. Consumers, physicians, pharmacists and others will be invited to join the Health Care Policy and Finance Department's Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee, which will make recommendations about which drugs should be on the list.

Governor Bill Ritter signed his first bill into law on February 5, 2007. Senate Bill 1 by Senator Hagedorn (D-Aurora) and Representative Madden (D-Boulder) creates the Colorado Cares Rx Program to provide generic and nonpatented prescription drugs to Coloradans below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) who do not have other prescription drug coverage. Eligible Coloradans complete an application and pay an administrative fee of \$20 and are then issued a card they can use at

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participating pharmacies. A similar bill had previously passed and was vetoed by former Governor Owens. It may well be the first time in history that Senate Bill 1 was the first bill a Governor signed into law.

### ***CCMU Convenes the Cover All Kids by 2010 Coalition***

Beginning in September of 2006, CCMU started convening child health advocates, consumers, and providers in a broad based coalition that took on the task of developing a plan to Cover All Colorado Kids by 2010. This coalition and various subcommittees have been meeting ever since, adding new members at each meeting. The work of the coalition will result in 2 bills this year.

SB130 by Senator Betty Boyd (D-Lakewood) will be known as the "Medical Homes for Children" bill. SB130 will define a medical home as a practice that ensures children receive primary care and all other necessary medical, mental health, oral health, and related services. Further, SB130 requires the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, in conjunction with the Medical Home Initiative at the Department of Public Health and Environment, to maximize the number of children enrolled in Medicaid or CHP+ that have a medical home. The bill is likely to have its first hearing on March 1, 2007 in the Senate Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee. The Cover All Kids by 2010 coalition has developed some amendments that will be presented by Senator Boyd at the first committee hearing. CCMU actively supports this bill.

Senator Hagedorn (D-Aurora) and Representative McGihon (D-Denver) will be sponsoring the second bill stemming from the coalition's work. The bill includes a long list of policy changes that would enable Colorado to enroll more eligible children into Medicaid and CHP+, expand eligibility in these programs, and improve the quality of care provided. The bill is expected to propose:

- Establishing an advisory committee to develop and oversee the implementation of a plan to provide health coverage for all low-income children in Colorado by the end of 2010
- Raising Medicaid eligibility for 6-18 year olds from 100 to 133% of FPL on 7/1/08
- Providing 12 months of continuous eligibility for Medicaid kids
- Raising CHP+ eligibility to 300% of FPL on 7/1/09
- Allowing for self-declaration of income for Medicaid and CHP+
- Presumptive eligibility for kids applying for Medicaid or CHP+
- Continuous enrollment if eligibility changes from Medicaid to CHP+ or from CHP+ to Medicaid to assure no gaps in coverage
- One year time out on the CHP+ enrollment fee due to CBMS problems
- Application assistance sites authorized, trained, and certified by the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing in local community based organizations; a mini-grant program for these application assistance sites
- Assuring 18-19 year olds and pregnant women under CHP+ are not subject to HBS06-1023, thus do not have to submit documents proving their lawful presence (note: illegal immigrants have not been and are still not eligible)
- Requiring the Departments of Health Care Policy and Financing and Human Services to report to the legislature about progress toward fixing CBMS problems

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- Requiring HCPF to develop valid outcome measures and standards of clinical performance, collect such data, and regularly disclose such data to the public and legislature with external clinical input
- Allow HCPF to hire a Chief Medical Officer that meets certain requirements.

This bill is expected to be introduced next week.

### ***CCMU Positions on Bills***

The CCMU Health Policy Committee meets two times per month to discuss bills and make recommendations to the Board of Directors on CCMU's position. To date, CCMU has agreed to support the following bills:

SB2 by Senator Sandoval (D-Denver) and Representative Stafford (R-Aurora) provides health insurance through Medicaid to children in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday

SB97 by Senator Fitz-Gerald (D-Golden) and Representative Madden (D-Boulder) allocates tobacco settlement funds currently going to the General Fund (where they flow over the 6% appropriations growth limit and get spent on transportation and/or capital construction) to a variety of health programs.

SJR12 by Senator Hagedorn (D-Aurora) and Representative McGihon (D-Denver) encourages Congress to reauthorize the CHP+ program (called SCHIP in federal law) and provide adequate funding to enroll all low-income uninsured children.

### ***CCMU Membership***

Please support the work of the Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved by joining now. Individual dues are only \$45 and can be sent to: CCMU, PO Box 18877, Denver, CO 80218.

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