

Personal Belief Exemption Policy in Colorado: Lessons in How to Leverage Coalition Partners to Advocate for Change

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Stephanie Wasserman, MSPH

Executive Director

Colorado Children's Immunization Coalition



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- CCIC's mission is to strategically mobilize diverse partners and families in order to advance children's health through immunizations
- Program Areas:
 - Provider Education
 - Coalition Building
 - Outreach and Awareness (www.ImmunizeforGood.com & www.VacunaLosPorSuBien.com)
 - Community Immunization Clinics (Shots for Tots and Teens)
 - Public Policy



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CCIC Policy Committee: Purpose

- **Monitor** policy activities
- **Maximize** state and local legislation
- **Actively present** the views and perspectives of CCIC
- **Inform and engage** the CCIC Board, coalition members and the stakeholder community
- **Ensure** that the CCIC Board and coalition members are informed and educated



CCIC Policy Committee: Governance, Membership and Methods

- Co-chaired by Board Member and health care provider
- Committee Membership includes any interested party except employees of vaccine manufacturers or distributors.
- Methods include:
 - Hiring contract lobbyist
 - Conducting outreach to stakeholders, media and public officials
 - Activating networks to support/oppose policies
 - Creating and disseminating resources



CCIC's Annual Policy Priorities

- **Process**

- **October:** Policy committee prioritizes recommendations based on strategic plan
- **November:** Board approves policy recommendations
- **December:** Staff communicates agenda to coalition members
- **January-May:** Staff monitors and implements agenda
- **Ongoing:** Engagement, outreach, messaging, media strategies, testimony and technical assistance



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Colorado Political Climate 2014

- 2012 election first time in 40 years Democratic controlled Legislature and Democratic Governor
 - Recreational marijuana ballot measures passes
- 2013 Historic session
 - Highest number of freshman legislators
 - Wide array of issues debated
 - Health care reform
 - Education reform
 - Gun control***
- 2013 recall election of two Democratic State Senators and resignation of one. Democratic majority still stands (18 Democrats; 17 Republicans)
- 2014 Election Year



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CCIC Personal Belief Exemptions Policy Priorities

- 2012: *“Evidence shows that exemptions result in higher risk of vaccine preventable disease to both the children who take the exemption and to others in the community. CCIC supports meaningful exemptions after consultation with a health care provider.”*



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Why Address PBE's in Colorado 2014?

- Political Climate
- Lenient Exemption Policy
- Exemption Rates
- Literature Review
- Pertussis Epidemic and VPDs in the News
- Funding Opportunities
- Stakeholder Recommendations



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What is an immunization exemption?

- Process of opting out of immunizations required for school entry
 - All 50 states have school-required immunizations
 - All 50 states have exemptions in place
 - Medical
 - Religious
 - Personal Belief

Exemptions		
Medical 50 states	Religious 48 states	Personal Belief 20 states



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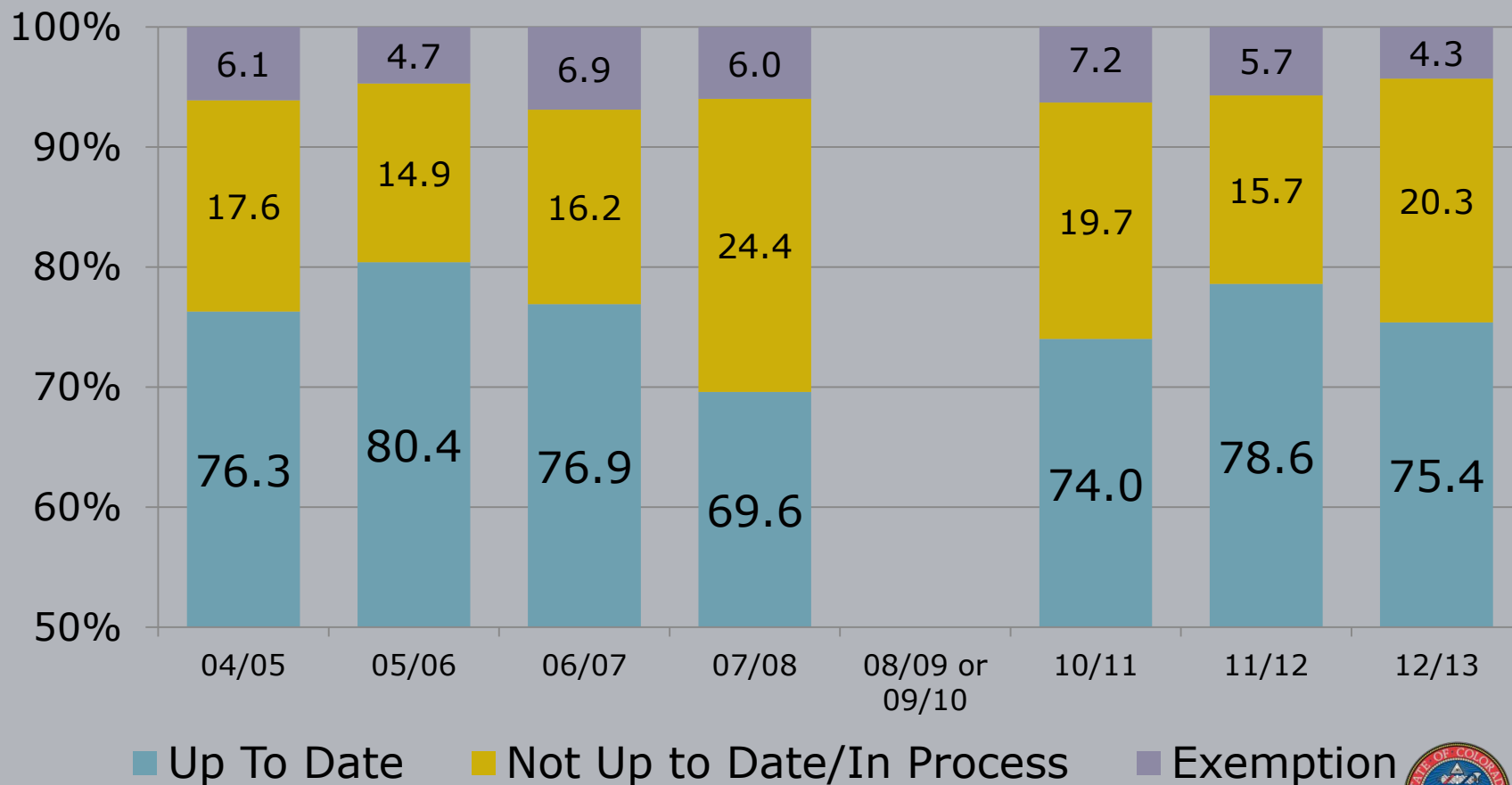
Colorado's Lenient Exemption Policy

- Only Requires Parent Signature
- Only Required to Be Completed Once Upon Enrollment in School
- One of the Most Lenient Policies in the Nation



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Current Exemption Rates: Colorado Kindergartners School Survey 2004/2005 – 2012/2013



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Current Literature: Negative Public Health Consequences of PBEs

- States with PBEs have higher overall exemption rates^{1,2}
- Ease of PBE process associated with higher PBE rates^{1,3}
- Children whose parents claim PBEs more likely to get and transmit vaccine preventable diseases (VPD)^{4,5,6,7,8,9}
- Increased PBE rates result in increased VPD incidence in communities^{1,4,10}

¹Omer et al., JAMA 2006;296(14)

²Omer et al., N Engl J Med 2012;367(12)

³Rota et al., Am J Public Health, 2001

⁴Feikin et al., JAMA 2000 (Colorado 1987-1998, Retrospective Cohort)

⁵Salmon et al., JAMA 1999 (U.S., Retrospective Cohort)

⁶Glanz et al., Pediatrics 2009 (Colorado 1996-2007, Case-Control)

⁷Glanz et al., Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med (Colorado 1998-2008, Case-Control)

⁸CDC MMWR, 2008 (U.S., Descriptive Analysis)

⁹Fiabelkorn et al., J Infect Dis 2010 (U.S., Descriptive Analysis)



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Current Pertussis Epidemic

- Since 2012, Colorado observed a sustained increase in reports of cases of pertussis
- 1466 cases in 2013, remaining at 'epidemic' level
- Baseline 5-year average of 324 cases/yr between 2007-2011 (almost 5X increase)



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Funding Opportunities

- CDC funding initiative to examine school immunization best practices
 - Awarded funds to CO Dep't Public Health to evaluate current PBE process
 - Passed through to CCIC
- Colorado Trust Convening for Colorado Grant Program
 - CCIC Awarded a Grant
- CDPHE and CCIC hired The Keystone Center to facilitate Stakeholder Process



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Stakeholder Process

- CDPHE, the Colorado Children's Immunization Coalition, and The Keystone Center planned and implemented the process to:
 1. Gain a better understanding of the current state of PBE attitudes and opinions
 2. Participate in facilitated discussions on current PBE policies and practices
 3. Generate potential policy and/or rule changes to the PBE system.
 4. Make final recommendations to be formally submitted to CDPHE in a written report.



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Participants

- 57 participants in 8 sector-specific focus group and key informant interviews
- 25 stakeholders – 3 meetings
 - Local/state public health, physicians, nurses and healthcare providers, state legislative representatives, school nurses and administrators, parents/guardians, and advocacy organizations



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Participant Opinions

Should Colorado Have a Personal Belief Exemption
Policy for Immunizations?

65% responded Yes



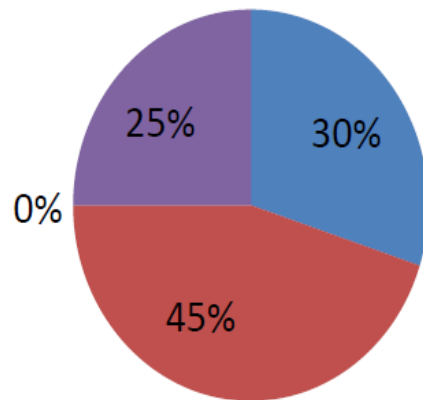
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Participant Opinions

Should Colorado Make Changes to the Personal Belief Exemption



- Opinion Changed, Should Make Changes (30%)
- Opinion NOT Changed, Should Make Changes (45%)
- Opinion Changed, Should NOT Make Changes (0%)
- Opinion NOT Changed, Should NOT Make Changes (25%)



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Final Recommendations

- Hold school districts accountable for immunization policy
- Establish joint policy between state agencies on immunization data collection and sharing
- Require education and/or counseling prior to exemption
- Make publicly available rates of immunization and exemptions by schools and licensed childcare centers
- Require medical practitioner or health official signature for exemption
- Require annual renewal of exemption



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Responses to Report

Denver Post and Boulder Daily Camera wrote editorials supporting recommendations in report:

“Colorado has long been at the back of the pack when it comes to vaccination rates. Its loose laws and policies are a public health problem that should be remedied”

Denver Post Editorial December 11, 2013



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Stakeholders Move Recommendations Forward

- CCIC
- Colorado Children's Campaign
- Colorado Chapter of AAP
- Children's Hospital Colorado
- Vaccinate for Healthy Schools



Vaccinate for Healthy Schools

Colorado Parents Supporting the Passage of Common-Sense Vaccine Legislation: HB 1288

Home	Update	About the Legislation	Why Should I Care?	FAQ	How Can I Help?	Media	Resources	Contact Us	Myth Busting
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JANUARY 3, 2014

Sign Up Now!

Please click here for an important update on HB 1288.

We know that science and medicine are on the side of vaccination, but that's not enough. Our legislators need to hear from YOU!

Signing up with Healthy Schools, Healthy Kids will allow you to get periodic updates about the legislation and "Action Alerts" for your legislators. We'll let you know when and how you can contact your elected officials to let them know that you want safe schools and daycares for our kids.

Note: Please use your full 9 digit zip code (xxxxx-xxxx) when signing up, because that is the only way that we can correctly identify your State House and Senate districts.

If you don't know your full zip code, you can [find it quickly by clicking here](#).

Recent Posts

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Recent Comments

Archives

[January 2014](#)

HB1288

- To obtain PBE, parents must:
 - Get a statement of exemption signed by health care provider or health department acknowledging receipt of information on benefits and risk of immunization, OR
 - Complete on-line education module
- Schools and daycares must disclose exemption rates when requested



Supporters

- All Kids Covered
- American Academy of Pediatrics – Colorado Chapter
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Colorado Chapter
- Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield
- Boulder County Health Department
- Children's Hospital Colorado
- Clayton Early Learning
- Colorado Academy of Family Physicians
- Colorado Association for the Education of Young Children
- Colorado Association for School-Based Health Care
- Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials
- Colorado Association of School Nurses
- Colorado BioScience Association
- Colorado Children's Campaign
- Colorado Children's Immunization Coalition
- Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved
- Colorado Medical Society
- Colorado PTA
- Democrats for Education Reform
- Denver Health
- Denver Public Health
- Early Childhood Summit
- Every Child By Two - Carter/Bumpers Champions for Immunization
- Healthy Child Care Colorado
- Immune Deficiency Foundation
- Immunization Action Coalition
- Larimer County Board of Health
- March of Dimes, Colorado Chapter
- Meningitis Angels
- Mile High United Way
- National Jewish Health
- Nurses Who Vaccinate
- Padres & Jovenes Unidos
- Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society
- Public Health Nurses Association of Colorado
- Qualistar Colorado
- The Colorado Health Foundation
- The Immunization Partnership
- Rocky Mountain Health Plans
- Vaccinate for Healthy Schools
- Voices for Vaccines



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Media

- [Local TV Coverage](#)

“Tightening up the so-called ‘Personal Belief Exemption’ Policy is the aim of the bill and we are glad to see it.”

- *Denver Post Editorial*
February 21st, 2014

- Bloomberg media
- NPR
- Mother Jones
- Wall Street Journal
- USA Today
- Denver Post
- CBS
- NBC
- Associated Press
- Huffington Post
- Salon
- Boulder Daily Camera
- Paonia public radio
- Rocky Mountain public radio
- Health News Colo (Health policy solutions)
- Chalkbeat (EdColo)
- Citizen Survey Project
- Shot of Prevention



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Alternative Fuel Powered Vehicle

RTD named #1 Transit Agency in North America 2006-2003-1993

FREE MallRide

Vaccinations?
KNOW THE RISKS AND FAILURES.
NVIC.org

THIS AD PAID FOR BY NATIONAL VACCINE INFORMATION CENTER

Wynkoop

RTD MallRide
Map
Fares
Hours
Locations

FREE MallRide



Legislative History

- 3/13 House HIE Committee Hearing
 - 70 people provided testimony for 7-hour hearing
- 3/24 Passes House with Amendment
 - 42-19 wide bi-partisan
- 4/9 Senate State Affairs Committee Hearing
 - 40 people provided testimony for a 5-hour hearing
- 40 lobbyists work on the bill
- Legislators VM and emails flooded



Amended Bill

- Eliminates proposed requirements around **personal belief exemption**
- Requires **schools and child care centers to provide immunization and exemption rates upon request**
- Directs state to **create an online, evidence-based education module about the benefits and risks of vaccine**



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Amended Bill

- Directs the Board of Health to promulgate rules regarding the **frequency** that child care centers and schools must collect vaccine exemption forms
- Directs CO Health Dep't to work with other state agencies to establish a **policy on immunization data collection**
- Directs CO Health Dep't **to provide technical assistance to schools** regarding how to analyze and interpret immunization data



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Final Outcome

- 4/23 Senate passes amended bill
 - 19-16 (picked up one Republican)
- 5/2 House passes bill on concurrence
 - 39-25 (lost some Democrats as they felt the bill did not go far enough, but gained some Republicans)
- 5/21 Governor signs into law



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Representative Dan Pabon

“Though the bill no longer achieves its original intent, the current form of this legislation is still good public policy. It is still a step in the right direction to provide the public with information about vaccination rates, which is especially important for protecting medically vulnerable children. Though I am disappointed that the original intent of this bill will not be realized, I am pleased that the end result will still have a positive impact on Colorado families.”



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Why HB14-1288 Still Matters

- More IZ resources, data and TA
- New rules on frequency of exemptions
- Data transparency arms parents with info
- Mobilized statewide coalition
- Raised awareness through massive media effort
- Created new parent advocacy organization

Lessons Learned

- Take into account political climate and election considerations
- Plan for change over multiple years
- Realize that incremental change is still change
- Identify pro-vaccine parents because they are your strongest advocates
- Ensure that providers and IZ experts are available for testimony
- Don't underestimate a small minority of fringe voices



Next Steps

- Assist with implementation, including identifying funding
- Download with partners to discuss lessons learned and next steps
- Continue to leverage and strengthen new partnerships for future efforts
- Remain optimistic!



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Questions?

Stephanie Wasserman, MSPH
Executive Director

Colorado Children's Immunization Coalition

Stephanie.wasserman@childrenscolorado.org

720-777-3270



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