

SB13-222 – Improving Access to Childhood Immunizations.

For the Health District of Northern Larimer County Board of Directors

Bill Title:	Concerning Improving Access To Childhood Immunizations.
Issue Summary:	This bills seeks to increase children’s’ access to vaccines by lowering costs and making vaccine administration simpler for providers in the state. The bill creates a task force to look at the possibilities of creating a statewide vaccine purchasing system and removes legislative barriers to creating such a system. If the task force finds that such a system would be effective and efficient, it allows CDPHE to create such a system.
Bill Sponsors:	Sen. Aguilar (and 2 others), Rep. Pabon (and 10 others)
Bill History:	March 20, 2013 – Introduced in Senate
Date of Summary:	April 5, 2013
Prepared by:	Dan Sapienza, Policy Coordinator

BILL SUMMARY - This bill creates a task force to look at the possibilities of creating a statewide vaccine purchasing system and removes legislative barriers to creating such a system. If the task force finds that such a system would be effective and efficient, it allows CDPHE to create such a system. If created, HCPF would purchase all vaccines for children enrolled in CHP+ and Medicaid through the statewide purchasing program.

BACKGROUND AND WHY THIS ISSUE IS IMPORTANT – Childhood vaccination is an effective and efficient means of preventing disease and keeping children health. In 2012 in Colorado, only 78.5% of preschool-age children received all recommended doses of six key vaccines, higher than vaccination rates of 20 years earlier (50-55%), but this rate still ranks Colorado in the bottom half of all states. Vaccination costs have risen from approximately \$300 in 2000 to almost \$1,500 per child in 2010. These high costs and the states existing funding system presents a large barrier to access for many Colorado children.

Especially in rural areas, many doctors’ offices are unable to afford the increasing costs and enormous administrative burdens and do not stock standard vaccines. They instead refer patients to local public health agencies, which have their own difficulties in covering costs and providing vaccines. In 2012, Colorado experienced a whooping cough epidemic in addition to a flu season that cost five children their lives. In 2011, vaccine-preventable diseases led to more than \$11.5 million in hospitalization charges in the state.

Universal purchasing of vaccines by the state is an idea that is thought would reduce costs to providers and allow more providers to stock and administer vaccines. As a sole purchaser, the state could negotiate lower costs and resell the vaccines to providers. In addition to reducing costs, this would reduce administrative burdens on providers in procuring and stocking the vaccines.

SUPPORTERS – This bill is supported by the Colorado Children’s Immunization Coalition, the Colorado Children’s Campaign, the Colorado Academy of Family Physicians, the Colorado Medical Society, and the Colorado Public Health Association.

OPPOSITION – There was concern among some Denver-area doctors that a universal state vaccine purchasing system would raise their costs “by eliminating their ability to negotiate prices between vaccine distributors and would leave them unable to go to multiple providers in order to keep their supply in stock if they find themselves running low.” (Denver Business Journal) The introduced bill, however, removed the mandatory and universal nature of a potential purchasing system in an effort to quell this resistance.

About this Summary

This summary was prepared by Health District of Northern Larimer County staff to assist the Health District Board of Directors in determining whether to take an official stand on various health-related issues. The Health District is a special district of the northern two-thirds of Larimer County, Colorado, supported by local property tax dollars and governed by a publicly elected five-member board. The Health District provides medical, mental health, dental, preventive and health planning services to the communities it serves. For more information about this summary or the Health District, please contact Dan Sapienza, Policy Coordinator, at (970) 224-5209, or e-mail at dsapienza@healthdistrict.org.

