

<b>Date:</b> January 18, 2018	<b>MEMO</b> TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS <b>BOARD ACTION REQUESTED</b>	
<b>Staff:</b> Alyson Williams		

## iDRIVE CAMPAIGN:

### Access to Licenses for Undocumented Immigrants

#### Policy Issue Summary

The Community Road and Community Safety Act (SB13-251) passed the Colorado legislature in 2013. The act allowed up to six DMV offices to offer undocumented Colorado residents driver's licenses. The program was designed as a self-funded model as the licenses cost \$79 per applicant. Since 2013, the General Assembly has cut the program's budget and used the funds generated from the license fees to fund other priorities. Therefore, the number of participating DMVs in the state has decreased from six to three. This budget cut for the program also included a directive that after the disbursement of 60,000 licenses the Grand Junction and Colorado Springs DMVs are to stop participating in the program. This cap of 60,000 licenses is expected to be reached in 2018, meaning the only participating DMV would be in Denver.

Another issue that has arisen from the original legislation is that the drafting of the bill erroneously excluded immigrants that have Social Security Numbers (SSNs). During the 2017 legislative session, HB17-1206 would have allowed SSNs (which were allowed for some people in the 1990s) to be used to meet the documentation requirement in addition to the current use of taxpayer identification numbers and to allow for licenses to be reissued or renewed with the same process as other licenses (i.e. online). That bill failed to pass, but the issue will again arise in the 2018 legislative session as both a budgetary and legislative issue.

A statewide coalition called the iDrive Colorado Campaign has formed to support the attempt to restore access to licenses for all undocumented Coloradans.

#### Request for Involvement by the Health District of Northern Larimer County

The Health District has been approached by staff from the Center for Health Progress (formerly known as the Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved) with a request to sign on as a supporter of the iDrive Colorado Campaign.

#### Possible Points for Support

There are significant public health and safety benefits of providing Colorado's undocumented immigrants with a form of identification and the ability to drive legally. First, in order to receive a driver's license an individual must pass practical and written examinations, which improve a driver's safety on the road and protect other drivers. Research has demonstrated that California's similar policy in the year after implementation reduced the occurrence of hit and run accidents in the state.<sup>1</sup>

Second, access to transportation can impact the ability of individuals and their families to access health care and secure basic necessities. The 2017 Colorado Health Access Survey documented that challenges with transportation resulted in no care or delayed care for 5.5 percent of Coloradans.<sup>2</sup> Access to health care is not only important to the patient, but the community as a whole. When the patient has a communicable disease, stopping the spread of the illness is an urgent public health issue.

<sup>1</sup> Lueders, H., Hainmueller, J., & Lawrence, D. (2017). Providing driver's licenses to unauthorized immigrants in California improves traffic safety. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 114 (16), 4111-4116. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7910/DVN/NVRBC9>

<sup>2</sup> Colorado Health Institute (2017). *Colorado's New Normal: Findings from the 2017 Colorado Health Access Survey*. Retrieved from [https://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file\\_attachments/2017%20CHAS%20DESIGN%20FINAL%20for%20Web.pdf](https://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file_attachments/2017%20CHAS%20DESIGN%20FINAL%20for%20Web.pdf).

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Third, without access to transportation there may be barriers to accessing healthy foods. There are four Census tracts in Larimer County that are designated food deserts by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.<sup>3</sup> These areas include low-income communities that lack ready access to healthy foods; therefore, many have to depend on transportation to access these foods.

The attached white paper entitled “Why providing drivers’ licenses to immigrants is a public health and health care issue: The case for supporting the iDrive Colorado Campaign” provides further detail.

### **Possible Points for Opposition**

Some might say that driver’s licenses are a privilege and not a right to every person within the state. Furthermore, expanding this program could provide another incentive for undocumented immigrants to reside in Colorado. Some have raised concerns that providing licenses would allow these individuals to access public benefits or vote in elections; however, the Colorado program includes a clarifying phrase on the front of the license that makes them invalid for those purposes.<sup>4</sup>

Others fear that expanding the program would allow the licenses to clearly identify undocumented immigrants and deport them to their country of origin.

### **Staff Recommendation**

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For the protection of public health, staff recommends that the Board of Directors sign on as a supporter of the iDrive Campaign and support the associated forthcoming legislation, if consistent with the intent of the white paper.

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<sup>3</sup> Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (March 2017). *Food Access Research Atlas*. Retrieved from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data/fooddesert>. Accessed on January 15, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> The phrase states “not valid for federal identification, voting, or public benefit purposes”