

HB07-1347 Pro/Con Analysis

For the Health District of Northern Larimer County Board of Directors

March 27, 2007

Bill Title:	Concerning the Immunization Tracking System in Colorado, and, in connection therewith, authorizing the Department of Public Health and Environment to address issues related to access to the existing immunization registry.
Issue Summary:	Expands Registry to include adult information, receive newborn screening results, and directs CDPHE to study vaccine procurement, distribution, and administration practices.
Sponsors:	House – A. Kerr Senate – Brendan Shaffer
History:	HB07-1347 passed House third reading on March 26, 2007
Date of Analysis:	March 23, 2007
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Bill Summary

The bill requires the results of newborn screening tests (i.e. phenylketonuria, cystic fibrosis) to be sent to the immunization tracking system where they could be accessed by the physician or other primary health care provider and amends the Colorado Revised Statutes to include adults in the immunization registry. The bill also authorizes the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to address:

- a) mechanisms for maximizing federal funds to purchase, distribute, and deliver vaccines for individuals in Colorado;
- b) methods to reduce the administrative burden of providing immunizations by reviewing current immunization activities and strategies
- c) options for Colorado to more effectively purchase, distribute, and deliver vaccines to underinsured and uninsured individuals;
- d) the pursuit of private and public partnerships for funding for the immunization registry infrastructure;

Background

Almost every state has developed a population-wide immunization registry that allows health care providers to electronically monitor children's vaccinations as well as maintain an ongoing and complete record of those vaccinations. Computerized information systems of this type work to ensure that children remain current on their shots, keeping them from being both under or over-immunized. An immunization information system is an important tool to increase and sustain high immunization coverage by consolidating immunization records of children from multiple providers, allowing providers to generate recall notices for children who are not up-to-date, and producing official school forms. The registry is an opt-out system meaning that parents have to proactively opt-out of the system rather than consent to have their child's information included.

The University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, on behalf of Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), operates Colorado's immunization registry. The registry, also known as the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS), is a confidential web-based system capable of centrally collecting, consolidating and disseminating vaccination data for Colorado children. Birth certificate information is sent to the registry when a child is born, creating a record that can be used by any healthcare provider. CIIS currently has immunization records for 68% of all children under the age of six in Colorado. These records are not, in all cases, complete because CIIS has not had sufficient funding to implement in all provider offices. Currently, 95% of publicly funded clinics, 51% of pediatric practices, and 21% of family practice sites participate in CIIS. In addition, CIIS receives immunization data from Kaiser Permanente, Rocky Mountain Health Plans, Anthem BC/BS and United Health Plans.

The primary sources of funding for the development and operation of CIIS are federal (the annual immunization grant from the Centers for Disease Control, through a contract with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment), grants from private foundations (through a contract with the Colorado Children's Immunization Coalition), and in-kind contributions from the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, integrated health plans and health care providers. The Colorado Legislature appropriated \$250,000 in 2005 and \$386,400 in 2006 to support expansion of CIIS to additional providers and recall of children who have not received recommended immunizations.

Who can access the registry?

- The child's parent
- The child's physician
- A school or day care where the child is enrolled
- A managed care organization or health insurer where the child is enrolled
- Hospitals
- Organizations that have an agreement with the State of Colorado under the Colorado Immunization Act (The Colorado Department of Health Care)
- Policy and Financing for children enrolled in Medicaid.

Why is this issue important?

The Centers for Disease Control rank vaccination as one of the top ten most effective public health measures in the last 100 years. Despite the proven efficacy of vaccination, childhood immunization rates remain surprisingly low in several regions of the United States. Colorado ranked 50th among the states in overall childhood vaccination rates in the 2002 and 2003 National Immunization Surveys (NIS). Colorado still falls below the Healthy People 2010 goal of having 90% of Colorado's children fully immunized in a timely manner. At present, nearly 25% of preschool-aged kids in Colorado have not received all of their routine vaccinations. A study conducted by epidemiologists at The Colorado Children's Hospital determined that hospitalization costs in the state for vaccine-preventable diseases among children in 2004 exceeded \$23 million.¹

Historically, the Board has strongly supported the creation, funding, and maintenance of statewide immunization registries, reported to by all providers, with the capacity and permission to perform reminder and recall activities. The Health District's Immunization Outreach program supplies an outreach coordinator for the registry who is charged with improving registry use among Northern Larimer County providers.

Reasons to support bill:

- The registry is an important piece of public health infrastructure with large potential to help in the event of a large outbreak of communicable disease such as pandemic flu. In the event of pandemic flu, a registry containing adult information could track who has received a vaccination, what dose if the vaccine is a two-dose vaccine, how much vaccine should be ordered, and which parts of the population have not been covered giving public health workers information to efficiently use resources and target disease containment efforts.
- The transfer of newborn screening results to the registry will allow providers access to the results in a timely manner. This may have some clinical value such as eliminating the need for a provider to re-do a screening test to get results.
- The capability to enter adult vaccination histories into the registry has the ability to help ensure patients have access to information about their immunization history that may otherwise be forgotten or lost. For example, an adult may receive the three-dose Hep B series as an infection control measure for a job and then change jobs and not remember when he or she was vaccinated resulting in the need to repeat the series.
- Entering adult vaccination histories into the registry would also allow young adults receiving the new HPV vaccine to ensure they have received all three doses at the appropriately timed intervals. For example, a young woman may get one dose at her family doctor's office and then head to college where she would need proof of where she is in the series to get the second and third doses.

¹ J. Todd et al, Vaccine-preventable Diseases in Colorado's Children, 2004, State of Health of Colorado's Children, The Children's Hospital, Volume II, Number 1: May 11, 2005

- Finally, the direction to CDPHE to study assorted issues with vaccine procurement, distribution and administration will let the department set up an advisory task force that has long been advocated by the Colorado Children's Immunization Coalition.

Reasons to oppose bill:

- Citizens still have concerns about the confidentiality of the Immunization Registry. Expanding the registry to adults adds to those concerns. However, thus far there has not been any unauthorized access to the registry and the system has numerous safeguards in place to address those concerns. Unauthorized access of or use of registry data is a crime and sanctions are outlined in the Immunization Act.

About this Analysis

This analysis 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. Analyses are based on bills or issues at the time of their consideration by the Board and are accurate to the best of staff knowledge. It is suggested that people check to see that a bill has not changed during the course of a legislative session by visiting the Colorado General Assembly web page at www.state.co.us/gov_dir/stateleg.html. To see whether the Health District Board of Directors took a position on this or other policy issues, please visit www.healthdistrict.org/policy.

About the Health District

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.

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