

HB19-1038: DENTAL BENEFIT FOR PREGNANT WOMEN COVERED BY CHP+

Policy Issue Summary

Nearly 900 pregnant women with health insurance through the Child Health Plan (CHP+) do not have coverage for dental care. The Medicaid program provides dental benefits for all enrollees, including pregnant women. The CHP+ program provides dental benefits for children only. Pregnant women on CHP+ are the last remaining group in Medicaid or CHP+ without dental benefits.

During pregnancy, changes to a woman's diet and hormone levels increase her risk for a number of oral health conditions, including dental caries, gingivitis, and periodontal disease.¹ Periodontal disease in pregnant mothers has been linked to adverse birth outcomes such as preterm birth and low newborn birth weights.² In Colorado, 17.6 percent of pregnant women reported that they had a hard time going to the dentist because they could not afford to go to them.³

Reason for Involvement by the Health District of Northern Larimer County

Policy Priority

The Health District has a strong interest in establishing a dental benefit for pregnant women that are covered by CHP+ because of the potential health impact, on both woman and child, of not accessing or putting off dental care due to cost.

Involvement Background

This bill is being supported by Oral Health Colorado, Colorado Children's Campaign, All Kids Covered Coalition, as well as the Colorado Community Health Network. This issue was brought to Health District staff's attention by Frontline Public Affairs. During the 2012 legislative session the Health District Board of Directors strongly supported SB12-108, which provided dental services for all pregnant women with Medicaid coverage.

Staff Recommendation

The Health District Public Policy Strategy Team recommends that the Board of Directors strongly support the creation of a dental benefit for pregnant women covered by CHP+ as proposed in HB19-1038.

About this Memo

This memo 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. This memo is not a complete analysis of this policy issue. This memo is accurate to staff knowledge as of date printed. For more information about this summary or the Health District, please contact Alyson Williams, Policy Coordinator, at (970) 224-5209, or e-mail at awilliams@healthdistrict.org.

¹ Kloetzel, M. K., Huebner, C. E., & Milgrom, P. (2011). Referrals for dental care during pregnancy. *Journal of midwifery & women's health*, 56(2), 110-7.

² American Academy of Periodontology. (2013) *Expectant Mothers' Periodontal Health Vital to Health of Her Baby*. Retrieved from https://www.perio.org/consumer/AAP_EFP_Pregnancy

³ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. (2016). *Colorado PRAMS Prevalence Estimates, 2016- Oral Health*. Retrieved from https://cohealthviz.dphe.state.co.us/t/HSEBPublic/views/PRAMSSummaryTables/2016PRAMSSummaryTables?iframeSizedToWindow=true&:embed=y&:showAppBanner=false&:display_count=no&:showVizHome=no