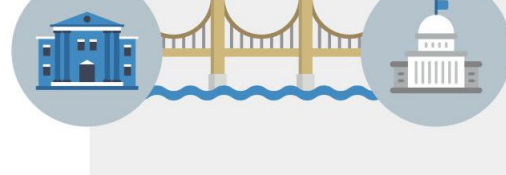


Farley's Features: April 17

Bridging research and policy



Welcome to Farley's Features, the Farley Health Policy Center's monthly newsletter, focusing on key health policy issues that span primary care, behavioral health, and public health practice. Our interprofessional team invites your perspectives as we pursue health policy research, translation, implementation, and education.

Message from the Farley Center



Dear Alison,

Two weeks ago, we had the pleasure of welcoming our steering committee back to campus for our annual meeting. We celebrated four esteemed advisors who have been with us for more than a decade, Dick Krugman, Andrew Bazemore, Tillman Farley and Katherine Mulready, and also introduced our newest steering committee member, Tanya Moore. Equally, we enjoyed hearing from Farley's three current fellows who brought to light their policy work in behavioral health, graduate medical education, and with the Colorado state legislature, respectively.

The opportunity to share diverse insights and wisdom through open and candid conversation and across generations of leaders brought value beyond measure, and quite frankly was just a lot of fun.

The steering committee helped to elucidate national and state health policy priorities. One area of focus is the forthcoming Rural Health Transformation Program and the need for leadership to allocate funds for building rural health infrastructure. Medicaid looms large as a policy area where national changes will deeply influence Colorado, particularly in the face of our ongoing budget crisis in the state. Our ability to strengthen relationships inter professionally, on campus, within the state and beyond remains essential to our persistent drive to improve systems of care.

The Farley team consistently releases policy briefs, technical reports and academic publications. Please dig into the newest offerings included in this edition of *Farley's Features*. We look forward to seeing you at our next legislative update on Monday, April 27.

With gratitude,

Shale Wong, MD, MSPH
Executive Director, Farley Health Policy Center

Upcoming Events

Farley's Legislative Updates

The Farley Health Policy Center offers [monthly updates](#) from noon-1 p.m. on the fourth Monday of each month, January through the third week of May. The next Legislative Update is Monday, April 27, 2026. [Register via Zoom to attend](#). Add the meetings to your calendar using the options included in your confirmation e-mail from Zoom. Questions? E-mail FarleyHealthPolicyCenter@cuanschutz.edu.

Our Recent Publications

[A Framework for Evaluating Primary Care Investment](#), published in the Milbank Memorial Fund blog, offers a practical approach for assessing whether state and federal efforts to increase primary care spending are reaching frontline practices and improving access to high-quality care. The authors urge policymakers to look beyond spending targets to evaluate impacts on workforce capacity, practice transformation, and health equity. The piece was authored by members of the Primary Care Centers Roundtable, including Farley Center State Policy Director Lauren S. Hughes, MD, MPH, MSc, MHCDS, FAAFP, and Scholar Stephanie B. Gold, MD.

[Reforming Graduate Medical Education to Create the Physician Workforce America Needs: 21 Billion Reasons Not to Change](#) is a new report published in partnership with Graduate Medical Education Transformation (GME/T), and is co-authored by Farley Center faculty Sarah Hemeida, MD, Lauren S. Hughes, MD, MPH, MSc, MHCDS, FAAFP, Kyle Leggott, MD, with Mannat Singh, MPA, and Justin Grant, MSW, MPH. It examines how graduate medical education financing, governance, and accountability can be better aligned with community health needs and workforce priorities. The report provides policymakers and educators with a foundation for modernizing GME systems to support a more equitable and sustainable physician workforce. Hemeida disseminated the report at a recent National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine meeting on Graduate Medical Education.

[New Brief: Health First Colorado in 2026: The Impact of Federal Changes on Medicaid and Actions for State Policymakers](#), has been released and is co-authored by Hannah Crook, PhD, Vanessa Case MS-CEP, MSHA, and Shale Wong, MD, MSPH. This issue brief examines the pressures facing Colorado's Medicaid program and outlines five key challenges with corresponding policy actions stakeholders can use to minimize harm as cuts become unavoidable. With one in five Coloradans enrolled in Medicaid, these decisions carry significant implications for the health and well-being of the state.

What We're Reading

Colorado State Legislature

[Lawmakers finish drafting Colorado's budget with final round of major cuts to address roughly \\$1.5 billion shortfall](#) from the Colorado Sun provides a summary of the Long Bill (Colorado's state budget) as it leaves the Joint Budget Committee for debate in both chambers.

[Online gambling is big business in Colorado. Lawmakers want to change that](#) from CPR News examines a bipartisan push at the Capitol to tighten regulations on online sports betting, driven by concerns about problem gambling and gaps in consumer protections that have emerged since legalization.

[Democrats abandon effort to ban distribution of 3D gun instructions to avoid Jared Polis veto](#) from the Colorado Sun reports on amendments to a bill aimed at limiting "ghost guns," as legislators attempt to address the governor's veto threats while maintaining enforcement tools intended to curb untraceable firearms.

Colorado State Agencies

[Head of Colorado's Medicaid program resigns as state Senate was preparing to take "no confidence" vote](#) from the Colorado Sun covers the resignation of Colorado's Medicaid director at the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, following criticism from lawmakers and stakeholders over administrative strain, vendor delays, and program oversight. The Governor's office [has named](#) Gretchen Hammer, MPH, as HCPF's new director.

[Colorado again kicks the can on SNAP soda ban, with anti-hunger groups calling it a victory](#) from the Denver Post explores the state's request for federal approval to restrict sugary beverage purchases with SNAP benefits, reigniting debates over nutrition policy, stigma, and the role of public assistance in improving population health.

Child & Youth Health

[New coalition aims to elevate the voice of Colorado's teens and young adults](#) from KUNC highlights a statewide effort to bring youth perspectives into policymaking around education, mental health, and civic engagement.

[Why Children's Hospital Colorado has not resumed gender-affirming care despite a favorable court ruling](#) from the Colorado Sun explains how legal challenges and conflicting interpretations of state and federal law continue to shape access to gender-affirming care for minors in Colorado.

[Colorado pediatrician and national expert says ruling that halted Trump vaccine schedule 'good news for sure'](#) from CPR News covers a court ruling that temporarily blocks federal efforts to alter the childhood vaccine schedule, raising broader questions about executive authority, scientific review, and public trust in immunization policy.

Health Systems, Coverage & Costs

[Doctors volunteer to help Americans cut off from health care by the cost](#) from 60 Minutes details work from an American nonprofit, [Remote Area Medical \(RAM\)](#), which offers mobile clinics nationwide to provide health, dental, and vision care for Americans in need, free of charge.

[Cost Concerns and Coverage Changes: A Follow-Up Survey of ACA Marketplace Enrollees](#) from KFF finds that most enrollees report satisfaction with coverage and affordability, while also identifying persistent challenges related to plan complexity, provider networks, and out-of-pocket costs.

[One or Two Health Systems Controlled the Entire Market for Inpatient Hospital Care in Nearly Half of Metropolitan Areas in 2024](#) from KFF News investigates market concentration in hospital care, raising concerns about pricing power, competition, and the implications for health care affordability and access.

Behavioral Health & Substance Use

[Health influencers on the harms of social media](#) from STAT News features a discussion with influential content creators and health communicators around how algorithm-driven platforms contribute to anxiety, depression, and disordered sleep, and why clinicians are increasingly urging policy and design changes to protect well-being.

[New funding will allow a Colorado research institute to track psychedelic use](#) from the Colorado Sun explores how poison control data are being used to monitor emerging trends in psychedelic exposure, informing harm-reduction strategies as public interest in these substances grows.

The Farley Center's April health policy journal club explored physician and resident unions and the evolving debate over non-compete clauses in health care. This month's readings highlighted growing workforce pressures, arguments for and against unionization, as well as recent legal developments with implications for physician autonomy and labor markets. See all readings available at the [health policy journal club web page](#).

Subscribe to Farley's Features

Farley's Features is a monthly spotlight on critical and timely health policy issues from the Farley Health Policy Center. We focus on health policy research, translation, implementation, and education. We'd love to hear from you! Reach out to us at FarleyHealthPolicyCenter@cuanschutz.edu with any questions or comments about Farley's Features and our work in general.



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