



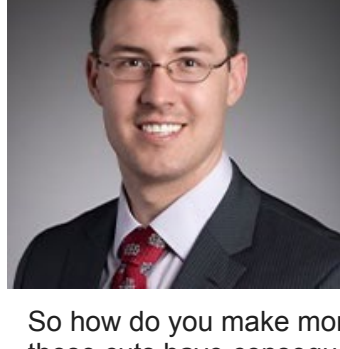
Farley's Features: February 20

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,

With the latest budget crisis Colorado faces during the 2026 General Assembly, painful cuts are under consideration for our health care and our medical education systems.

To maintain Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) including Medicaid, eligibility and services at the same level as last year would have cost the state more than \$630 million, but the Governor's budget proposed an increase of [less than half that amount](#).

So how do you make more than \$300 million dollars disappear? You make cuts. And those cuts have consequences. These decisions are complex, and there are few remaining choices that won't hurt patients, health systems, or health care providers. These decisions will also precede the Medicaid cuts included in H.R. 1, which passed last year but will mainly be implemented starting at the end of 2026.

One such cut under consideration right now is indirect medical education (IME) funds that support our graduate medical education programs (residents and fellows). In its January 2, 2026, budget request [S-07, BA-07 Additional Reductions Package](#), HCPF proposed a reduction to certain hospitals' base rates. Specifically, if approved, HCPF would reduce certain hospitals' base rates by 80% of the Indirect Medical Education (IME) add-on, effective July 1, 2026.

While this would save the state budget about \$33 million, it would cost the hospitals more than \$50 million, the majority of which would come from UC Health and Children's hospital. In a related [Denver Post article](#), Dr. Richard Zane, chief medical and innovation officer at UCHealth, said the system has "hundreds" of residency slots that don't receive funding from Medicare, meaning that if state funding disappeared, it would have to either come up with the money itself or cut those positions. If this " [penny wise and pound foolish](#)" IME cut is enacted, those hundreds of residency slots will be at risk of elimination.

Stay tuned for more information on the state budget and legislative process during our legislative updates, the next one will be this coming Monday. See you soon!

Kyle Leggott, MD

Upcoming Events

Farley's Legislative Updates

The Farley Health Policy Center is offering [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, February 23, 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.

Free Informational Webinar from the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing: H.R. 1 Medicaid Coverage, Eligibility & Implementation Updates

This event will share Medicaid related updates on the most recent CMS guidance, the implementation timeline of H.R. 1 for key changes such as semi-annual renewals and community engagement/work requirements, and opportunities for stakeholders to engage with us in the process. The webinar takes place on Tuesday, February 24, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. [Learn more and register](#).

Gun Policy Research at the Intersection of Epidemiology and Causal Inference

Andrew R. Morral, Ph.D., will discuss gun policy research at the intersection of epidemiology and causal inference on Tuesday, February 24, from 1:00-2:00 p.m. This event is co-hosted by the CU Anschutz Firearm Injury Prevention Initiative, the CU Anschutz School of Nursing, and the CU Anschutz Injury and Violence Prevention Center. This is a keynote lecture for the Firearm Injury Prevention Research in Nursing (FIPRN) Scholars Program, a 12-week hybrid training initiative that prepares researchers in nursing and allied health fields to lead innovative, community-engaged work in firearm injury prevention. [Learn more by visiting the calendar item](#), [register to attend virtually](#), no registration required for in-person attendees.

Our Recent Publications

The Colorado Primary Care Payment Reform Collaborative (PCPRC) has released its [Seventh Annual Recommendations Report](#), coauthored by PCPRC member and Farley State Policy Director Lauren S. Hughes, MD, MPH, MSc, MHCDS, FAAFP, offering timely guidance for strengthening primary care amid shifting federal and state policies. This year's report highlights payment model alignment, the impact of H.R. 1, challenges facing rural, pediatric, and safety-net providers, and the development of a coordinated statewide primary care strategy.

[Engaging in advocacy to promote policy change: Incorporating advocacy-informed research and applying the PRISM implementation science model](#) from the Journal of General Internal Medicine is coauthored by our own Apoorva Ram, MD, offering a comprehensive framework for connecting research to policy using advocacy.

What We're Reading

Medicaid

[Medicaid recipients, advocates furious over state mistake that's costing tens of millions of dollars](#)

from CPR News highlights anxiety among families as billing errors and budget gaps threaten essential disability services.

[Hours of tearful testimony result in pause to some Medicaid cuts for Coloradans with disabilities](#) from the Colorado Sun describes how some proposed cuts to family caregivers were suspended.

[Medicaid Expansion and Overall Mortality Among Women With Breast Cancer](#) from JAMA Network Open found that Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act was associated with lower overall mortality for women aged 40–64 with breast cancer, though the survival benefits varied across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.

Federal Policy

[Investing in primary care: The missing strategy in America's fight against chronic disease](#), a new report from Milbank articulates the cost of the declining share of US adults and children with a usual source of primary care.

[Colorado required to share personal Medicaid data with federal government, which can be used by immigration authorities](#) from the Colorado Sun and Colorado Public Radio describes how "limited" personal data may be shared with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

[Freedom of speech and the viability of science — Dr. Jeremiah Stamler's fight against HUAC](#) from the New England Journal of Medicine brings a historical perspective to current ideological attacks on science and medicine.

Colorado State Policy

[If voters let the Colorado legislature tap into TABOR surplus, tax credits may become much more](#) complicated from the Colorado Sun explains ongoing debates over redirecting TABOR surplus toward targeted tax credits rather than broad taxpayer refunds.

[How Colorado's immigrant communities — and their health care providers — are bracing for impact under Trump's budget bill](#) from the Colorado Sun explores how federal budget proposals could significantly impact refugees and asylees access to healthcare in Colorado.

[Colorado bill would let schools and colleges seek gun confiscation under 'red flag' safety law](#)

from Chalkbeat Colorado explains how schools and healthcare facilities could play a more direct role in firearm-risk intervention.

[Colorado Democrats want to expand the state's red flag gun law, impose new restrictions on gun barrels](#) from the Colorado Sun outlines a proposal to broaden eligibility for filing extreme-risk protection petitions, including mental-health co-responders.

Child Health Research

[Interview with Ambar La Forgia on the drivers and effects of corporatization of outpatient medical services](#) from the New England Journal of Medicine Podcast provides updates on new pediatric research and clinical guidance shaping child health policy.

[Long COVID affects millions of children. The largest pediatric trial so far launches this year](#) from the Sick Times reports on a major study designed to understand and treat long COVID in children nationwide.

Behavioral Health & Social Determinants

[Healthcare in the Black community with Connect for Health CO](#) from 9 News featured Brandi Freeman, MD, in her role as National Medical Association President Elect and pediatrician at Children's Hospital.

[Are We Unintentionally Making the 'Anxious Generation' More Anxious?](#) from the University of Colorado Anschutz explores how well-meant school and caregiver accommodations may unintentionally worsen anxiety cycles in children.

[Opinion: Colorado's plan to cut sexual health education funding would erase real gains](#) from the Colorado Sun argues that proposed state budget cuts would undermine the mental health and well-being of young people.

[How 'gas station drugs' remain legal](#) from STAT News describes how loosely regulated psychoactive products sold in convenience stores persist due to gaps in federal oversight.

The Farley Center's February health policy journal club examined how longstanding underinvestment, administrative burden, and workforce pressures have weakened U.S. primary care. We discussed proposed state and federal policy strategies designed to rebuild a more accessible, sustainable, and high-quality primary care system. See all readings available [on 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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