



## Farley's Features: February 28

# 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,

One of the features of getting older is the opportunity to experience patterns that emerge over time and how they sometimes recur, perhaps in slightly different forms. This surely includes policy issues, such as the push for universal health insurance in the U.S. with its every-two-decades-or-so rhythm across a century.

A recent tour of Western Mediterranean countries afforded me a chance to learn more about their histories, captured in written records traversing more than 5000 years with cycles recurring over centuries, cycles of invasion, struggle, conquest, exploitation, overreach, decline, collapse—repeated by numerous empires from the Egyptians to the Ottomans. These recurring patterns traversed centuries and seemed to be quests for land, power, wealth, and prestige—a pattern expressed in the establishment of the United States from “sea to shining sea” and perhaps in our ongoing American project that has entered its next crisis.

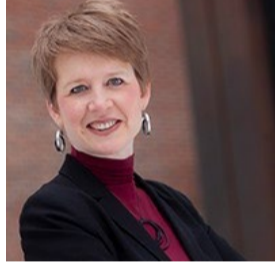
The beginning of 2025 in the United States has been filled with very short-cycle policy shifts that have disrupted enterprises in multiple sectors, including education and health care delivery and research, affecting the oldest and youngest, the richest and poorest among us. This situation is riddled with pain for many and is deeply important to the Farley Health Policy Center and our mission. We share with many others a sense of anxiety and can sometimes slip into despair when we consider the implications of some of the policy changes and the dissociation of influence from expertise. Yet, in the grand scheme of things, we know that disruptions recur, requiring adjustments and adaptations, which we can do and have done before. We know that such periods are also accompanied by opportunities and that we still have each other and the many friends of Farley to spot such opportunities and to respond to them. We are still here, with the same mission, the same enthusiasm, and the same promises to keep; and know that there will be even more important policy development and assessments to do that really matter. This period will evolve and pass. We will still be here, continuing our quest for policies that help people be healthier.

Sincerely,

Larry

Larry Green, MD  
Senior Scholar, Farley Health Policy Center

### Faculty Spotlight



#### Dr. Lauren Hughes Named Primary Care Champion by the Primary Care Collaborative

The Primary Care Collaborative (PCC) recognized Dr. Lauren Hughes, MD, MPH, MSc, MHCD, FAAFP, State Policy Director of the Farley Health Policy Center, as its latest Primary Care Champion. Their article on her selection says, in part:

“As a longtime advocate for policies to enhance quality of care in rural communities, Hughes emphasized the need for robust 24/7 on-demand support for rural primary care clinicians. She noted the challenges they face, including higher burdens of chronic disease, social determinants like transportation and broadband access and the stress of managing unpredictable, sometimes urgent cases without a large team.”

[Read the PCC article](#) or [watch her interview](#).

Dr. Lauren Hughes is also a member of Colorado's Primary Care Payment Reform Collaborative (PCPRC). This year, the Collaborative has chosen to focus on three topics: marketplace dynamics that affect primary care practices, new technology such as artificial intelligence (AI), and health equity. [Read the Sixth Annual Recommendations Report](#).

### What We're Reading

#### Colorado General Assembly

[Colorado ban on manufacture, sale of certain semiautomatic guns now on glidepath to governor's desk](#) from the Colorado Sun describes state Senate changes to semiautomatic weapons ban bill.

[Bill restricting ammunition sales passes committee](#) from Colorado Politics covers H.B. 1133, which would prohibit the retail sale of ammunition to a person who is younger than 21.

[Colorado hospital reimbursement rates face new limits under lawmakers' proposal to cut costs](#) from the Denver Post describes new legislation from the Colorado General Assembly meant to tackle health care affordability.

#### Social Determinants of Health

A recent study in *Pediatrics* from CU Anschutz researchers found that [25% of youth experienced homelessness in Denver in 2021](#). A recent opinion column in the Colorado Sun argues that [Despite Colorado's failed ballot measures, we can still address affordable housing crisis in 2025](#).

[160 immigrant children in Colorado separated from their parents could lose attorneys with Trump order](#) from the Colorado Sun describes the end of funding for legal services in the Office of Refugee Resettlement, and the impact of recent federal stop work order on Colorado immigrant advocacy organizations.

In a new [Millbank Quarterly Opinion, David Rosner of Columbia University discusses RFK Jr.'s confirmation](#) in the context of the rise of corporate influence over government and Trump's executive actions to dismantle federal agencies. Rosner is a co-author of a new book, *Building the Worlds that Kill Us: Disease, Death and Inequality in American History*.

#### Health Care System and Financing

[High-Cost Cancer Drug Use in Medicare Advantage and Traditional Medicare](#)'s lead author, Cathy Bradley, is the Dean of the Colorado School of Public Health and member of the Farley Center's steering committee. This JAMA study showed that patients “insured by Medicare Advantage were less likely to receive a cancer drug, and of those patients, were less likely to receive a high-cost cancer drug than similar patients who were insured by Traditional Medicare.”

From the Colorado Sun, [two Colorado hospitals to resume gender-affirming care for youth](#) after Colorado joined a federal lawsuit challenging a Trump administration order seeking to punish hospitals that provide gender-affirming care.

[The feds promised Colorado \\$339 million for health insurance. The money hasn't arrived yet](#) from the Colorado Sun describes an unusual delay in federal payment for a program to make health insurance more affordable.

#### Behavioral Health

[Changing Our Mental and Emotional Trajectory \(COMET\): The Feasibility and Acceptability of a Rural Community-Based Strategy to Prevent Mental and Emotional Health Problems](#) in the Journal of Primary Care and Community Health features our Department of Family Medicine colleagues' study on their rural behavioral health intervention.

[Improving teen mental health with Lisa Damour](#) from Adam Grant's podcast, ReThinking, goes beyond describing current problems with teen mental health in the United States to positing policy solutions, including reduced use of technology in schools and later starts to the school day for teens.

[RFK Jr. says he'll fix the overdose crisis. Critics say his plan is risky](#) from NPR describes the current HHS Secretary nominee's approach to treating addiction, which emphasized 12-step programs but does not prioritize evidence-based approaches such as MOUD.

[The new way to get naloxone in Denver? A free vending machine](#) from Denverite discusses the free naloxone vending machines at Denver Health.

[Why a promising treatment for alcohol abuse is barely used](#), from PBS News Hour, discusses Naltrexone, an evidence-based medication to reduce alcohol abuse that is prescribed to less than 2% of alcoholics.

[Mental health treatment center opens in the Vail Valley, where suicide is a leading cause of death](#) in the Colorado Sun goes in-depth on Vail Health's new Precourt Healing Center.

**The Farley Center's most recent health policy journal club focused on insurance coverage and payment as part of an ongoing conversation about health policy in the new federal administration: threats, opportunities, and recommendations. 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](mailto:FarleyHealthPolicyCenter@cuanschutz.edu) with any questions or comments about *Farley's Features* and our work in general.



[Farley Center Website](#) | [Contact Us](#)