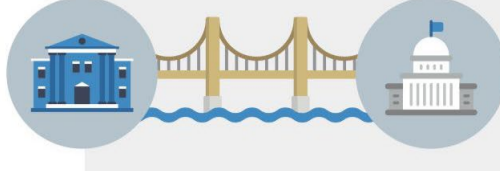




Farley's Features: January 24

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,

Happy New Year! The 2025 Colorado General Assembly convened on January 8 and is already hard at work. In just a few short weeks, more than 160 bills have been introduced, 17 of which are classified as health care and insurance related bills as of this writing.

Our legislative strategy team continues to track relevant bills this session, sharing findings with the Farley Center and our partners. This year, we're already tracking some legislation that is sure to generate interest. Some issues not resolved in years past are resurfacing, including [a bill limiting high-powered firearm sales](#) and [coverage for medications that prevent diabetes and treat obesity](#) such as Ozempic, Mounjaro, and/or Trulicity. Bills addressing Colorado's behavioral health needs include a bill [to study behavioral health crisis responder models](#) such as those currently in use in Denver and [a bill that would advance insurance coverage parity](#) for mental health services in Colorado. Additional firearms bills include [a voluntary "do-not-sell firearms waiver"](#) for which anyone could register.

But the biggest story will be how the legislature solves the problem of the state's more than \$750 billion budget shortfall during what [the Colorado Sun has dubbed "the year of the budget cut."](#)

We will continue monitoring and sharing the most recent information with you during our legislative updates as the session unfolds. Stay tuned.

Sincerely,

Lauren

Lauren S. Hughes, MD, MPH, MSc, MHCDS, FAAFP
State Policy Director, Farley Health Policy Center

Our Recent Work: Vitality Signs

Recently, Farley Center researchers Stephanie Gold, MD, Allison Costello, MD, Maura Gissen, MA, Selin Odman, PsyD, MPH, and Larry Green, MD saw their new publication, "How Are You Doing... Really? A Review of Whole Person Health Assessments" go live in Milbank Quarterly.

This publication is the result of partnered work with The Larry Green Center at Virginia Commonwealth University and Case Western Reserve University funded by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, which seeks to understand and improve the measurement of whole person health. Additional authors from those institutions were Becca Etz, PhD, Kurt Stange, MD, PhD, and Réna Swann, PharmD. The first in a series of questions this research seeks to answer is: how is whole health measured now? The answer: despite hundreds of instruments and thousands of questions, there is little agreement on how to measure health in a way that matters to real people.

"Frustration with the burden of proliferating measures in health care focused on diseases and care processes has added to the growing desire to measure what matters to people, including understanding how people are doing in terms of their whole health. There is no consensus in the literature on an ideal whole person health instrument for use in practice."

If you are interested in the academic foundations of this work, you may appreciate the linked online supplemental information, which includes a helpful listing of relevant theories that have framed others' approach to this topic.

[Read the full, open access article](#) to learn more.

What We're Reading

Colorado: Behavioral Health

[Reducing death by suicide by addressing well-being and firearm access: A both/and policy approach](#) by our own researchers Sarah Kassabian, PhD, Maura Gissen, MA, and Jessica Kenny, PhD, in Families, Systems, & Health provides a policy brief focused on solutions to firearm suicide.

[Researchers are learning more about the risks of cannabis. A former Denver Bronco is helping them share what they know](#) from CPR describe the Colorado School of Public Health's new "the Tea on THC" campaign, which aims to inform people — like the young, those who are pregnant and parents — about those risks.

[Why one Colorado county—alone among large communities—has seen a steady drop in its suicide rate over five years](#) from the Denver Post describes efforts in Larimer County to reduce deaths by suicide.

[Colorado must be a trailblazer on youth mental health services and solve the commercial insurance problem](#) offers an opinion piece from former Farley Center steering committee member Heidi Baskfield in the Colorado Sun on potential solutions to Colorado's youth mental health crisis.

The Colorado Provider's Association published [a response](#) to a recent CPR piece criticizing Denver's mental health system.

Federal Medicaid Threats

[House GOP Eyeing Cuts of Nearly One-Third in Projected Medicaid Spending](#) is a KFF quick take on potentially devastating cuts to Medicaid.

[What Administrative Changes Can Trump Make to Medicaid?](#) From KFF describes potential executive federal changes to Medicaid.

[9 States Poised To End Coverage for Millions if Trump Cuts Medicaid Funding](#) in KFF articulates knock on Medicaid reductions in several states.

Health Equity

In [The Hidden Health Care Crisis Behind Bars: A Randomized Trial to Accredit U.S. Jails](#), a working paper through the National Bureau of Economic Research, researchers investigated the difference between accredited and unaccredited health care among incarcerated people, finding that accreditation improves quality standards and reduces mortality among the incarcerated.

[Making Sense of Medicaid Work Requirements](#) from KFF News describes potential policy changes that could affect Medicaid in 2025.

[How Are States Spending Opioid Settlement Cash? We Built a Database of Answers](#) from KFF Health News state and local governments across the U.S. spending of billions in opioid settlements paid by companies accused of fueling the overdose crisis.

Health Insurance and Payment

[Inside STAT's investigations of UnitedHealth Group](#) offers a video overview of a two-year investigative deep dive into how UnitedHealthcare's parent company, UnitedHealth Group, operates and its impact on the health of Americans.

[Doctors Seethe Over Insurance Companies' "Out of Control" Tactics](#) from Vanity Fair chronicles reactions to the shooting of United CEO Brian Thompson from American physicians, many of whom work on health policy issues.

[A Strange Alliance: Oxygen Companies and Their Medicare Patients Want Congress to Pay the Companies More](#), from ProPublica, describes political pressure from patients and industry to pass the Supplemental Oxygen Access Reform (SOAR) act.

First Legislative Update Monday

This coming Monday, the 27th, will be the Farley Center's first legislative update for the 2025 session. Updates will take place from 12-1 p.m. on the fourth Monday of each month, January through April, and the third Monday in May. These sessions are educational updates about relevant health legislation debated in the 2025 Colorado General Assembly for University and partner institution professionals or students. If you plan to attend, please hold this time on your calendar. If you attended last year, there is no need to register again, you will receive the details when they are available. If you would like to attend for the first time, or a friend or colleague would like to attend, please [register using this form](#).

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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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