

Farley's Features: March 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,

As the 2026 General Assembly starts running at full steam, we're seeing some themes that are all too familiar, and some that are new.

Ongoing budget woes intensified by the 2025 passage of Federal H.R. 1 are coming to a head in the Joint Budget Committee, with recent [debates on funding for graduate medical education](#) causing consternation across large hospital systems in the state.

After [HCPF proposed](#) deep cuts to Indirect Medical Education (IME) funds, JBC staff responded with [a recommendation](#) to eliminate state IME funding completely (the justification can be found on page 36). During that hearing, [the JBC requested additional information](#) on graduate medical education funding and did not advance either cut. Despite this reprieve, this example is informative for those who are interested in health policy: legislators facing budget crises seek clarity in what expenditures pay for, and funding models that are more general are at risk. In an effort to support legislators in making these difficult decisions, we are sharing briefs on the HCPF budget and oral health equity tailored to their needs.

We're also tracking nine bills introduced so far that would have an impact on the regulation of firearms. Some, like [H.B. 26-1021](#), Second Amendment Protection Act, have already been postponed indefinitely. Other, like [S.B. 26-004](#), Expand List of Petitioners for Protection Order, are making their way through the policymaking process. This year, we had the added benefit of [learning more from Dr. Andrew Morral](#) on the current evidence base for firearm prevention policy in the United States.

We look forward to seeing you at [our next legislative update](#) on Monday!

Best,

Alison Reidmohr, MA
Communications Officer
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, March 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.

Our Recent Publications

Primary Care in a Public Health Emergency: Lessons from the Front Lines of the COVID-19 Pandemic, published by Springer Nature, has been released and is co-edited by Anthony Cheng, MD; Jennifer E. DeVoe, MD, DPhil; and Farley State Policy Director, Lauren S. Hughes, MD, MPH, MSc, MHCDS, FAAFP. This new volume chronicles the powerful and often under-documented experiences of primary care teams during COVID-19, offering practical insights and a forward-looking playbook for strengthening primary care preparedness in future public health emergencies. [Access the e-book](#).

Family physicians as key agents in integrating mental health services into primary care, published as a public comment in The Lancet Primary Care, co-authored by Farley Deputy Director, Emma Gilchrist, MPH, and Senior Scholar, Larry Green, MD. This piece underscores the essential role of family physicians in embedding mental health care into everyday primary care practice, and highlights that successful integration requires clinical expertise, combating stigma, and redesigning workflows. [Read the Comment to learn more](#).

What We're Reading

Federal Policy & Research

[It's time for a new era of advocacy for physicians](#) from STAT argues that family physicians must shift from quiet individual advocacy to coordinated, vocal engagement on Capitol Hill to strengthen primary care, preserve vaccine access, and advance evidence-based federal health policy.

[New documents reveal a controversial vaccine study's path to CDC approval](#) from Rolling Stone outlines how a hepatitis B vaccine trial in Guinea-Bissau bypassed standard CDC review, raising serious ethical and scientific concerns that stopped the study.

[From the US to China and India: the power shift in clinical trials](#) from The BMJ reports that political pressure and reduced federal research funding in the U.S. have accelerated a major shift in clinical trial activity toward China and India, which now outpace the U.S. in trial registrations due to faster recruitment, lower costs, and expanding research infrastructure.

Colorado State Policy

[State Lawmakers Seek Restraints on Wage Garnishment for Medical Debt](#) from KFF News that multiple states, including Colorado, are pushing bills to curb or ban wage garnishment for unpaid medical bills after investigations showed thousands of patients lose portions of their paychecks each year, often due to aggressive or erroneous billing.

[Why Colorado joined a global network to learn about infectious disease outbreaks in other countries](#) from The Colorado Sun details the state's decision to seek membership in WHO's GOARN to maintain access to global outbreak intelligence following U.S. withdrawal.

[Approved but unfunded study on universal health care in Colorado finds financial support](#) from CPR News explains how grassroots fundraising secured the full budget for a statewide analysis of single-payer feasibility and its potential tradeoffs.

[Colorado bill would create new fees on alcohol sales to fund treatment, prevention](#) from the Denver Post reports that Colorado lawmakers are proposing new alcohol-industry fees to generate funding for addiction treatment and prevention programs amid rising alcohol-related harms.

Healthcare Workforce

[Colorado lawmakers reject cuts to program that helps hospitals train new doctors](#) from the Colorado Sun describes a recent Joint Budget Committee hearing that did not advance indirect medical education cuts proposed by JBC staff and HCPF.

[Exploring Opportunities to Improve Patient Access to Care through Strategic Changes to Graduate Medical Education: A Workshop](#) from the National Academies describes a national GME workshop focused on aligning financing, outcomes measurement, and workforce planning with primary care needs. Farley Center staff will be in attendance.

[A Look at CU's Pipeline for Rural Doctors](#) from the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel highlights CU Anschutz's Rural Program, which has successfully guided nearly 40% of its graduates into rural practice through longitudinal training and community-based clinical experiences.

Child & Youth Health

["More Kids Are in ERs for Tooth Pain. Trump Cuts and RFK Jr.'s Anti-Fluoride Fight Aren't Helping."](#) from KFF Health News highlights the intersection between child health and oral health policy change.

["The Anxious Generation" author on landmark social media addiction trial](#) from CBS News explores work of social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, whose book tried to help parents and kids break free from screens.

[Adults locked up as kids share their stories with state lawmakers](#) from Colorado Public Radio elevates testimony from adults formerly incarcerated as youth, who urge lawmakers to reform sentencing practices and expand trauma-informed supports.

[How parents are being held responsible after school shootings](#) from 60 Minutes examines the Oxford, Michigan case in which prosecutors charged not only the teen gunman but also his parents. Some victims' families believe this precedent could help break cycles of negligence and prevent future school violence.

The Farley Center's March health policy journal club explored how artificial intelligence is reshaping clinical work, diagnostic reasoning, and patient experience, alongside emerging policy questions around oversight, environmental impact, and equity. See all readings available at the [health policy journal club web page](#).

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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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