



Colorado Chapter

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New poll shows Coloradoans believe children's health care should be top priority for Legislature

The physicians of the Colorado Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Colorado AAP) and the Colorado Medical Society (CMS) join with Colorado voters to urge candidates and incumbents to make health care for children their top priority in this upcoming legislative session.

To determine public opinion on children's health care in Colorado the CMS and the Colorado AAP commissioned Mason-Dixon Polling and Research to undertake a telephone survey in Colorado among 500 general election voters. Respondents were selected at random. Mason-Dixon conducted the survey from September 23-25 2006. The survey has an overall margin of error of ± 4.0 percent. The survey findings were shared publicly in a press event at The Children's Hospital today.

Colorado AAP and CMS advocated that the findings of this survey indicate the need for candidates running for office at local and state levels to provide voters with a comprehensive agenda describing what they would do to meet the needs of children, youth, and families. "We believe that children's health and well being is very important to the people of Colorado and the findings of this poll strongly support the importance of this issue in the state's elections," said Dr. Martha Middlemist, Colorado AAP President.

Key highlights from the survey include:

Voters choose improving the health, education, and well-being of children and youth as the most important issue facing the federal and state government, ahead of improving the economy and creating jobs, immigration, homeland security, senior issues, taxes, and transportation. When given a choice of issues, 50% of all voters choose improving the health, education, and well being of children and youth as either the most, or second most important issue facing Colorado.

Most Colorado voters do not believe things have improved for children in the past five years. 25% say conditions have deteriorated and 46% think conditions have stayed the same. Only 16% say they have improved. 87% of voters believe that the problem of uninsured Colorado children who either go without treatment or seek treatment in emergency rooms is a serious problem that should be addressed and solved.

Eight out of ten Colorado voters feel that guaranteeing health insurance to every child in Colorado should be a top or important governmental priority in the coming year. 73% of voters agreed with the statement "If parents become unable to afford or provide health care, every child in Colorado should be covered under a government-supported health care program that would provide prevention and treatment." 62% of voters favor requiring that parents have insurance for their children with the government subsidizing some or all of the cost for families most in need. 63% of voters feel that the state either alone or in partnership with the federal government has a responsibility to deal with the issue of uninsured children.

Colorado voters recognize that too many Colorado children are uninsured and are not receiving the medical care they need in a timely cost efficient way. According to the most recent report from the US Census Bureau, there were 161,000 Colorado children and youth under 18 without health care insurance last year. Recent published studies also show that children enrolled in the Colorado Medicaid program often can not find a primary care physician and do not receive needed preventive care and immunizations. These children are more often hospitalized and are almost twice as likely to die in the hospital if they require admission.

“There is a clear consensus among those of us who provide medical care, and those whose children need that care, that it is time for all of us to come together and take care of our kids. Such action needs to be a collaborative effort between the private and public sectors, including federal and state policy makers. Colorado’s future depends on it,” said Dr. Lynn Parry, CMS President.

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About the Colorado Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and its member pediatricians dedicate their efforts and resources to the health, safety and well being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. The AAP has approximately 55,000 members in the United States, Canada and Latin America with approximately 500 of those individuals actively involved in the Colorado Chapter. The Colorado chapter can be reached on the Web at www.coapp.org and the national organization at www.aap.org.

About the Colorado Medical Society

The Colorado Medical Society (CMS) is the largest organization of physicians in the state of Colorado with over 6,700 members. The membership organization, comprised of physicians, residents and medical students, was founded in 1871 to promote the art and science of medicine and to improve the public health. The Colorado Medical Society can be reached on the Web at www.cms.org.

About The Children’s Hospital

Founded in 1908, The Children’s Hospital is a private, not-for-profit pediatric health-care network dedicated 100 percent to caring for kids. It has been ranked one of the best children’s hospitals in America by U.S. News & World Report and Child Magazine. With more than 1000 experienced experts representing pediatric specialties, and more than 2,900 full-time employees, Children’s is home to a number of nationally and internationally recognized medical programs. From medical breakthroughs to late-night fevers, Children’s provides complete pediatric care at its main campus and through a network that includes ten Children’s Care Centers and more than 400 outreach clinics held in three states each year. For more information, visit the Web site at www.thechildrenshospital.org