



April 21, 2023

House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services Committee
Colorado General Assembly
200 E. Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of the Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials (CALPHO), we respectfully submit this letter of support for SB23-260: Individual Access to Publicly Funded Vaccines.

CALPHO is the professional association representing the leadership, staff, and partners of Colorado's 55 local public health agencies (LPHAs). CALPHO is an essential, non-profit partner coordinating LPHAs and other public health partners to create a constructive and collegial environment that fosters an effective and efficient public health system.

The Association is in strong support of SB23-260, understanding the importance of ensuring access to vaccines not only to prevent the spread of diseases but also as a key health equity tool that will reduce disparities in care and service for traditionally underserved Coloradans. Inequitable access to vaccines and the negative downstream implications for communities has been a long-standing concern within public health. LPHAs throughout the state, in recognition of this concern, have participated in the federal Vaccine For Children Program and the Section 317 Immunization Program for years along with implementing their own community-based outreach and engagement strategies.

While the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing vaccine access issues within communities, it also presented the state with the opportunity to take direct action through Public Health Order 21-01 to help ensure vaccines were within reach for all Coloradans regardless of their ability to pay, provide proof of health insurance or identification. This public health order coupled with the dedication and perseverance of staff at LPHAs undoubtedly saved lives during the pandemic. Right now is the perfect time for the legislature to codify the best practices learned over these past few years before the next public health crisis emerges or even our next Flu season begins.

In addition to supporting legislation like SB23-260, LPHAs look forward to continuing to partner with the Department of Public Health & Environment's Immunization branch and other stakeholders on the development of programmatic strategies to increase access to vaccines.

On behalf of CALPHO's membership, we would like to thank Representative Lindsay for introducing this critical legislation and urge the committee to support SB23-260.

Sincerely,

Michael Crews
CALPHO Policy Director

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SB23-260 - House Public and Behavioral Health & Human Services

Hearing Testimony

April 25, 2023

Good afternoon, Madame Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Emily Clancy. I am the communications director for Immunize Colorado, a statewide nonprofit whose mission is to protect Colorado families, schools, and communities from vaccine-preventable diseases. I come to you today representing Immunization Colorado in support Senate Bill 23-260.

Vaccines are a critical public health tool used to protect and promote health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw how vital it was on an individual and community level to ensure access to COVID-19 vaccines for *everyone*. This same urgency should be applied to all life-saving vaccines.

We support this legislation because it codifies best practices and lessons learned during the COVID pandemic to promote equitable vaccine access; specifically, it aims to increase access to *all* publicly funded vaccines by removing some of the barriers that have traditionally made it difficult for people to receive them. These barriers include being required to provide a government issued ID, social security information, and proof of health insurance, or to pay a vaccine administration fee. This bill prohibits requiring these, and by doing so will make it easier for people – especially those who are uninsured or medically underserved – to get vaccinated against harmful diseases.

Further, the bill requires providers who *do* ask for any of this documentation or payment from a patient to notify the patient that the vaccine will be given to them *even if* they do not provide it; the bill requires this notice be provided in a language understood by that patient, which is a health equity best practice to reduce language barriers.

Finally, I'd like to note that the coalition in support of this bill represents stakeholders and experts in health equity, early childhood, public health, and healthcare. These include the Immunize Colorado, the Colorado Vaccine Equity Taskforce, Colorado Access, Colorado Children's Campaign, American Academy of Pediatrics Colorado Chapter, Colorado Nurses Association, Children's Hospital Colorado, Wezesha Dada Center, the Colorado PTA, and the Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials.

Please support equitable vaccine access, public health systems, and our Colorado community by voting YES on Senate Bill 23-260. Thank you.

House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services
04/25/2023 Upon Adjournment
SB23-260 Individual Access To Publicly Funded Vaccines
Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Dawn Fritz For Colorado Parent Teacher Association	<p>Colorado PTA supports Senate Bill 260.</p> <p>PTA has an extensive history of advocacy related to the health of our children, youth, and families. Since 1908, PTA has devoted great energy to halting the spread of diseases and improving other health conditions that have affected children. Beginning in 1925, PTA was a driving force behind providing check-ups to identify health problems in 5- and 6-year-olds entering school for the first time, which became the main vehicle for immunizing children against diseases.</p> <p>PTA knows that widespread immunizations are necessary to prevent the proliferation of communicable diseases. All students—including students from historically marginalized communities—have the right to a quality, equitable education in a safe, supportive, and inclusive school.</p> <p>Therefore, PTA supports laws providing the necessary services, policies, and requirements for the general good health and well-being of all Colorado children, youth, and families.</p> <p>One of our top priorities for this year is to promote vaccinations recommended by the CDC and local public health agencies. Senate Bill 260 is vital to achieve this.</p>