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## Public Health

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During the 2017 legislative session, the General Assembly considered measures on environmental matters, public health care issues, and certificates and licenses. The bills and resolutions described below passed and became law, unless otherwise noted.

### Environmental Issues

In August 2015, a contractor of the EPA caused a toxic wastewater spill at the Gold King Mine near Silverton, Colorado that contaminated river water. The General Assembly adopted *Senate Joint Resolution 17-043*, which requests that the Colorado Attorney General's Office sue the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for natural resources damages caused by the Gold King Mine spill.

*House Bill 17-1306* authorizes the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to establish a grant program to test for lead in drinking water in public schools that receive drinking water from public systems, giving priority to the oldest elementary schools in the state. CDPHE may specify testing protocols and guidelines and provide technical assistance to schools. Additionally, CDPHE is required to report to the public health committees of the General Assembly and work to complete all testing and analysis by June 30, 2020. A public school that receives a grant is required to enter into a contract that requires compliance with CDPHE's testing protocols and provide the test samples to CDPHE's laboratory. The public school is also required to provide the test results to its local public

health agency, its water supplier, its school board, and CDPHE.

### Public Health Care Issues

*House Bill 17-1246* implements some of the recommendations made by the STEMI Task Force in CDPHE. STEMI is an acronym for 'ST-elevation myocardial infarction,' which is a severe type of heart attack. The recommendations that were implemented in the bill include:

- requiring certain Colorado hospitals to report data on individuals with confirmed heart attacks to a national heart attack database and to CDPHE (reports must be privileged and strictly confidential); and
- requiring CDPHE to sign a letter of commitment with the American College of Cardiology to ensure confidentiality of reports and to request national benchmarking metrics.

Children in Colorado are required to receive certain vaccinations in order to attend school, although certain exemptions to the requirement are allowed for medical reasons or religious or personal belief. *Senate Bill 17-250* would have clarified that a person submitting an exemption to vaccination requirements is not required to use a specified form. The bill was lost on second reading in the Senate.

### Certificates and Licenses

The General Assembly discussed legislation regarding birth and death certificates during the 2017 session. Under current law, a person born in Colorado who requests a new birth certificate to reflect a change in gender must obtain a court order to receive an amended birth certificate, and that person must obtain a court order to receive a legal name change. *House Bill 17-1122* would have required the state registrar to issue a new (rather than amended) birth certificate to a person upon written request of the person, or their legal representative, and after receiving a statement from a medical provider attesting to the person's gender transition. The new birth certificate would have also had to reflect any legal name change associated with the change in gender designation. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee.

Under current law, an attending physician or hospice medical director is required to sign the death certificate for a person who obtains and administers aid-in-dying medication. *House Bill 17-1368* would have made it voluntary for a physician or hospice medical director to sign a death certificate. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the House Health, Insurance, and Environment Committee.

*Senate Bill 17-244* authorizes a county or local board of health to establish retail food establishment license fees that are lower than the fees set in statute. Retail food establishments include restaurants, catering operations, grocery stores, convenience stores, and food trucks.