



Public Health

During the 2018 session, the General Assembly considered bills related to suicide prevention, requests to study public health effects, changes to certificates and databases overseen by the Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), and other public health-related legislation.

Suicide Prevention

The Violence and Injury Prevention Branch in the Division of Prevention in CDPHE is the state agency that works to prevent unintentional injury and promote mental health through policy, public awareness, training, and funding.

Three bills related to youth suicide prevention efforts were introduced during session. *Senate Bill 18-272* creates the Crisis and Suicide Prevention Training Grant Program in the Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). Public schools or school districts may apply for grant funding (up to \$400,000 annually) to provide comprehensive crisis and suicide prevention training to teachers and staff.

Senate Bill 18-114 would have encouraged school districts and public schools to develop and adopt a student suicide prevention policy and to designate a staff person to serve as a student suicide prevention coordinator for the school. This bill would also have created the

Student Suicide Prevention Grant Program in CDPHE to provide financial assistance to districts and schools to implement student suicide prevention policies and training. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee.

House Bill 18-1177 would have required CDPHE to contract with a nonprofit to offer access to a youth suicide prevention training program to people who regularly interact with youth (camp counselors, youth group leaders, coaches, clergy, parents, etc.). The bill also would have lowered the age of consent for a minor to seek outpatient psychotherapy from 15 to 12 years of age or older. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee.

Studies on Public Health Effects

Two bills requested that CDPHE study the health effects of autism and wind turbines, respectively.

House Bill 18-1223 would have required CDPHE to convene the Governor's Expert Emergency Epidemic Response Committee to determine if there is an autism epidemic in Colorado, and take appropriate measures to protect public health if an autism epidemic does exist. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the House

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Health, Insurance, and Environment Committee.

House Bill 18-1085 would have required that CDPHE study the health effects of noise and stray voltage from industrial wind turbines on humans and animals. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the House Transportation and Energy Committee.

Certificates Issued by CDPHE

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 obtain a court order to receive a legal name change.

House Bill 18-1046 would have required the state registrar to issue a new (rather than amended) birth certificate to a person upon written request of the person and after receiving a statement from a medical provider attesting to the person's gender transition. The new birth certificate would also have to reflect any legal name change. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee.

Patient Information

House Bill 18-1032 requires that CDPHE provide access to patient information in the Emergency Medical Services Agency Patient Care Database (known as the EMS database) to health information networks, in compliance with the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Health information networks facilitate the transfer of patient data among hospitals, health care providers, and health plans.

Other Public Health-Related Legislation

The General Assembly considered legislation related to newborn screenings, surgical smoke, access to dangerous substances, and architectural paint stewardship.

House Bill 18-1006 updates the current newborn screening program to add screening for new conditions and require that screening laboratories stay open six days per week. The bill also requires CDPHE to procure a new IT system for newborn hearing loss screening, requires CDPHE to report hearing screening results by birthing facilities, and allows CDPHE to charge a fee for newborn hearing loss screening.

House Bill 18-1399 would have required hospitals with surgical services and ambulatory surgical centers to adopt a policy to prevent human exposure to surgical smoke. CDPHE would have been required to create rules regarding surgical smoke evacuation policies. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the House Health, Insurance, and Environment Committee.

House Bill 18-1307 prohibits the sale or distribution of products containing dextromethorphan to persons less than 18 years of age. Dextromethorphan is a cough suppressant that is found in some over-the-counter cough and cold medicines.

Senate Bill 18-045 would have repealed the Architectural Paint Stewardship Program to recycle, reuse, and dispose of architectural paint. The bill would also have repealed a fee that architectural paint retailers and distributors are required to pay to fund the program. The bill was lost on second reading in the Senate.