

**Written testimony as prepared for delivery in support of HB19-1312 School Immunization Requirements [K. Mullica / J. Gonzales | K. Priola]
by Erin Miller, Vice President of Health Initiatives at the Colorado Children's Campaign**

April 15, 2019

House Health and Human Services Committee

1:30 p.m. Room 271

- Chair Lontine and members of the Committee, my name is Erin Miller and I serve as Vice President of Health Initiatives at the Colorado Children's Campaign.
- Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 1312 and thank you to Representative Mullica for bringing this bill forward and being such a leader on this issue.
- We know that easy exemption policies lead to more exemptions¹ and that exemptions make communities vulnerable to outbreaks and individuals who cannot be vaccinated vulnerable to infection.
- Immunizations are important tools for protecting a child from serious, once-common illnesses that can lead to life-threatening complications. Further, immunizations have significant impacts on that child's community: they protect the health of community members who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons, including newborn babies and those with compromised immune systems.
- However, data show that Colorado's childhood immunization rates for some diseases sit below the 95 percent threshold required to protect the health of the general population.²
- In fact, some school districts have exemption rates ranging from 14-25 percent.³
- The improvements in this bill make it more fair and equitable for all parents making decisions about vaccinations.
- The current exemption process in Colorado makes it easier for a small group of parents to practice their beliefs than the majority of parents who follow the recommended vaccination schedule. And we know that higher

¹ September 20, 2012, N Engl J Med 2012; 367:1170-1171, DOI: 10.1056/NEJMc1209037

² Centers for Disease Control. Vaccination coverage among children aged 19–35 months, 2016

³ Kids Count 2018

income and being of white race increases the likelihood that parents will exempt their children from vaccine requirements.⁴

- This bill simply ensures a more equitable effort by all parents.
- Thank you again to Representative Mullica. We urge your support of this critical bill.

⁴ Am J Public Health. 2016 January; 106(1): 172–177. Published online 2016 January. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2015.302926