



## B 2020 005

### EXECUTIVE ORDER

#### **Amending Executive Order B 2019 006 Concerning Immediate Support for Programs and Policies to Increase State Immunization Rates**

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 of the Colorado Constitution, I, Jared Polis, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order amending Executive Order B 2019 006, supporting programs and policies that will increase the State's immunization rates and honor the rights of parents.

#### **I. Background and Purpose**

Vaccines are considered one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20th century, and they play a very important role in keeping us healthy. We are also a state that supports the right of our residents to make their own healthcare decisions. Diseases that used to be common and sometimes fatal in the United States and around the world, such as polio, measles, whooping cough, influenza, hepatitis, and rotavirus, can now be prevented by vaccination. In addition to keeping citizens healthy, when parents choose to vaccinate it saves people money on healthcare. One study showed that the cost of childhood vaccinations is far offset by medical cost savings from avoided disease, with an annual net savings of \$267 per person per year. In 2017, 9,424 Colorado children were treated for vaccine-preventable illnesses through hospitalization or emergency department (ED) visits; one of those children died. Hospital and Emergency Room charges to treat vaccine-preventable disease in Colorado children totaled more than \$55 million.

While the United States has made significant progress toward eliminating vaccine-preventable diseases among children, the level of non-medically indicated reluctance or refusal to vaccinate, including for reasons of lack of convenient access - despite general availability of vaccines - threatens to reverse progress made in tackling vaccine-preventable diseases. This is why the World Health Organization listed "vaccine hesitancy" as one of the ten greatest threats to global health in 2019.<sup>1</sup> Nationally, vaccine hesitancy has resulted in significant outbreaks of preventable diseases. As of June 6, 2019, 1022 cases of measles have been confirmed in 28 states. This is the greatest number of cases reported in the United States since 1992 and since measles was declared eliminated in 2000.<sup>2</sup> Because diseases such as measles can spread rapidly,

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<sup>1</sup> Ten threats to global health in 2019. World Health Organization.  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/ten-threats-to-global-health-in-2019>.

<sup>2</sup> CDC. Measles Cases and Outbreaks. <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html>. Accessed June 3, 2019.

adequate immunization coverage in schools helps to protect the health of students, staff, and others in the community, including people who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons or because they are too young to have received all recommended vaccines.

Colorado continues to rank at the bottom of immunization coverage rates in the United States. For the 2018-19 school year, Colorado's kindergarten coverage rate for measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) was 87.4%, well below the 92 - 94% community immunity threshold needed for protection against measles.<sup>3</sup> This kindergarten coverage rate reflects a 1.3% decrease from the 2017-18 school year where Colorado ranked as the last state in the nation. In 2018-19, 4.5% of kindergarteners claimed an exemption for the MMR vaccine.

Addressing low vaccination rates and high exemption rates requires a multifaceted approach, including utilizing data better in the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS) with consistent exemption policies, outreach to vaccine-hesitant parents and guardians, more effective conversations between healthcare providers and parents, and increased access to vaccines, especially in rural areas and communities with limited access to health care providers. These steps are consistent with the goals of Colorado's Health Care Road Map and can improve immunization rates, keep people healthy, and save people money on healthcare.

This Executive Order amends Executive Order B 2019 006, changing the date that the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) is required to report progress made on the implementation of Executive Order B 2019 006 from June 18, 2020, to September 1, 2020. This amendment is necessary due to CDPHE's role in responding to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Colorado.

## **II. Amendment**

Section II.I of Executive Order B 2019 006 is amended to read as follows:

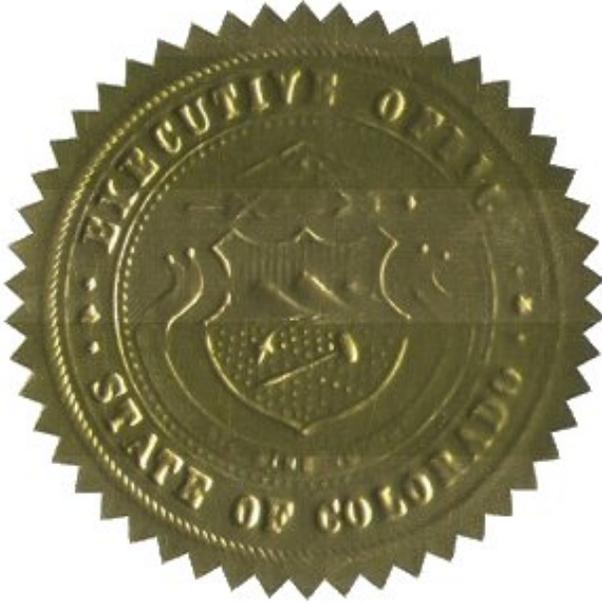
- I. Report to me on progress made on implementation of this Executive Order no later than September 1, 2020, and every 6 months thereafter.

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<sup>3</sup> Orenstein, W., Seib, K. Mounting a Good Offense against Measles.  
<https://www.nejm.org/doi/10.1056/NEJMp1408696>

**III. Duration**

This Executive Order shall remain in effect unless modified or rescinded by future Executive Order of the Governor. In all other respects, Executive Order B 2019 006 shall remain in full force and effect as originally promulgated.



GIVEN under my hand and the Executive Seal of the State of Colorado, this seventh day of August, 2020.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jared Polis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jared Polis  
Governor