

We Get Letters & E-Mail

How Colorado Won Against Big Pharma

Dear Editor:

If I may, I would like to clarify the story that ran in the Aug. 15, 2014 issue ["Immunizations by Colorado DCs: Really?" by Dr. James Edwards] with some background. While I am not on the board of the Colorado Chiropractic Association, I was made aware of the discussion by the CCA to pursue vaccination rights for chiropractors in the state of Colorado while attending a Mesa County Chiropractic Association meeting in February 2014. At the same time, the people of Colorado were issued a legislative alert for HB 14-1288 from the National Vaccine Information Center.

[HB 14-1288](#) had in its initial wording the requirement for any parent seeking a personal belief exemption (PBE) for vaccinations for their school-age children to either view a state-mandated video on the benefits and risks of vaccination, and upon completion receive a certificate; or obtain a signature from a health care provider licensed to administer vaccinations indicating that the parent had been educated on the benefits and risks of vaccinations. The parent then had to provide either the certificate or the signature in order to be allowed to take the PBE for their child.

When I asked why the CCA was considering vaccination privileges for Colorado chiropractors, our local liaison with the CCA informed us at the meeting that if HB 14-1288 passed as worded, chiropractors would be in a position to sign off for the PBE. There were several concerns that the information provided would be biased for vaccinations and would not discuss the actual risks of vaccinating; and that the health care provider would not be mandated to provide the signature if the parent still chose to not vaccinate. As [similar legislation](#) had passed recently in California, the concern and widely held belief was, "As California falls, so does Colorado."

I was the only chiropractor on the Western Slope to travel to Denver to testify against this bill at both House and Senate hearings, joining a handful of other chiropractors from across the state. We were part of a grassroots coalition that included other health care providers, as well as some very articulate and passionate parents of vaccine-injured children. We had nine days' notice before the House hearing to come together as a group.

The bill passed out of the House and headed to the Senate, where we had the best chance of defeating it. By the time the Senate hearing came, we had a solid strategy for testifying against this bill as a group. We were so effective that the Senate sponsor, Senator Aguilar (an MD), had no choice but to change the wording and delete the certificate / signature requirement in order to get the legislation passed out of committee.

We had done the impossible and taken all the teeth out of the bill. Although we would have liked to have killed the bill entirely, a watered-down version was still a victory since we preserved PBE.

As we have preserved the PBE, there is no need for Colorado chiropractors to have vaccination privileges. I am confused as to why chiropractors outside of our state are still questioning this issue. From my viewpoint, all this is doing is increasing drama within our profession and distracting us from the bigger issue at hand.

Make no mistake, my fellow DCs: Big Pharma is going state to state legislatively attacking vaccination exemptions. [Our coalition](#) [the Colorado Coalition for Vaccine Choice] organized through Facebook, and moles infiltrated our group - not only to spy on our strategy, but also to create infighting and doubt. They would love nothing more than to see the same in our profession.

If you really want to help your patients, educate and preserve their right to choice. If your state is under attack, contact the NVIC for guidance on how to fight back. You are also welcome to contact me for more specifics of how Colorado won against Big Pharma.

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