

Understanding the Politics of Public Health Through an Analysis of Governors' 2007 State of the State Addresses

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Goals

Describe the most politically
feasible public health
policies across the country

Special Thanks

Thad R. Nodine, Ph.D

Vice President of the Institute for the Study of Knowledge
Management in Education (ISKME)

<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/GOVSPEAK0704.PDF>

New Goal

Identify areas of opportunity for
state-level public health advocacy

Why State of the States?

- States are policy laboratories
- Governors are important players
- Governors establish legislative, budget and, indirectly, media agendas

Major Trends

- According to Nodine,
 - Education (51/51)
 - Health care (48/51)
 - Environment (47/51)
 - Initiatives to Develop a Knowledge-Based Economy (46/51)
 - Initiatives to Foster Development of Traditional Business (42/51)
 - Homeland Security, Disaster Prep/Information Infrastructure (27/51)

Health Care Trends

- According to Nodine:
 - 21/51 discussed health care proposals for the elderly
 - 20/51 described efforts to reform Medicaid
 - 18/51 described wellness, prevention, and early intervention programs
 - 12/51 described Health IT

Health Care, cont'd

- 16 described initiatives related to health care quality and consumer choice
- 15 described either mental health or mental health and substance abuse treatment
- 12 mentioned prescription drug costs
- 10 described initiatives to help health care workforce

Health Care, cont'd

- 4 described smoking cessation programs
- 3 described childhood obesity
- 2 described family planning
- 2 described a smoking ban
- 1 described autism

So What?

When a governor takes a stand on an issue in a state-of-the state addresses, will significant action follow?

Domestic Violence

When domestic violence casts its shadow over a home, the first thing we must do is offer its victims somewhere safe to go.

-Gov Janet Napolitano

Early Autism Screening

- Early diagnosis of autism dramatically improves the development of children who have the disorder. Fortunately, these autistic disorders can be reliably diagnosed very early in a child's life—sometimes as early as six months.

-Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt

Colorado: MH/SA Treatment

More than half of DOC inmates wind up back in prison within three years. That's simply an unacceptable number. The costs are spiraling out of control and eating into our ability to fund education and health care. We can do better here in Colorado, and we're going to.

-Gov. Bill Ritter

Childhood Obesity

- We've got to make preventing childhood obesity a major priority. Accordingly, I have tasked my Secretary of Health and Human Resources and my Secretary of Education to work together to improve health education in our schools and improve the food that is available to our students every day.

-VA Gov. Tim Kaine

Violence Prevention

Any serious effort to improve the health and safety of our fellow citizens must also include a comprehensive effort to address the epidemic of gun violence that is occurring throughout the Commonwealth.

-PA Governor Edward Rendell

Governor Support =
Potential Opportunity

It's the Message

Vulnerable Populations

- Low Income (15)
- Working Families (12)
- People with disabilities (10)
- Poor (8)
- Racial/ethnic minorities (7)
 - African-American/black (4)
 - Native American (2)
 - Latino/Hispanic (1)
- Homeless (1)

Populations

- Children (49)
- Parents (42)
- Teachers (37)
- Homeowners (33)
- Taxpayers (29)
- Seniors (25)

Themes

- Talk about policy in terms of
 - Savings to the state
 - Benefits of this investment
 - E.g. more homeowners, fewer prisoners, more kids who graduate from high school

Themes

What's good for kids is good for taxpayers and premium payers, too. Every dollar spent to immunize a child saves seventeen dollars later when they don't get measles, or whooping cough, or hepatitis and spread it to other children.

-IN Governor Mitch Daniels

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