



ALL SIGNS POINT TO SIGNIFICANT ISSUES ARISING DURING THE 08' SESSION

The projected workload for the 2008 legislative session appears challenging at this juncture. The Agency for Health Care Administration submitted to Governor Crist a proposal to increase dental Medicaid fees by \$21.8 million. House and Senate Health Care Appropriations staff indicated a willingness to consider funding for the Dental Student Loan Program vetoed by the Governor last year. The FDA, Rep. Anitere Flores (R-Miami), Nova Southeastern University and the Governor's office have engaged in significant conversations regarding funding to expand Nova's foreign-trained dental program.

Dental hygienists around the nation are touting their proposal for the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP). The Florida Dental Laboratory Association (FDLA) is once again seeking sponsors for their proposal requiring all dental labs to employ a certified dental lab technician. The Florida Medical Association (FMA) made overtures about reducing the scope of a dentists' practice. A group representing themselves as "denturists" has surfaced. Some bureaucrats mumbled the "c" word, licensure by credentials. Session is only two months away with plenty of time for even more issues to arise.

The 2008 session will be challenging. As a legislative contact dentist, please stay tuned for alerts and read *Capital Report* to stay up to date on pending issues.

FDA EXEMPTS DENTISTRY FROM ADDITIONAL HIV AND AIDS EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Rep. Joyce Cusack (D-Deland) filed HB 153, designed to exempt new employees of hospitals, ambulatory surgical facilities, mental health facilities and others from having to comply with certain HIV and AIDS educational requirements if the specified employee had completed HIV and AIDS education during the licensure or re-licensure process.

The listing of exempted new employees was drafted so narrowly that dentists were not included in the exempt category. If left as drafted, the legislation would have required all newly employed dentists with a hospital, ambulatory surgical facility, mental health facility, and others to complete HIV and AIDS education beyond the required instruction for licensure.

After a brief discussion with Rep. Cusack, she agreed to not only add dentistry to the exempted list, but to include a reference for all licensed health care practitioners who complete HIV and AIDS instruction.

POSSIBLE DENTAL FEE INCREASE WITH FEWER REVENUES, NOT LIKELY

AHCA released its legislative budget request (LBR) for fiscal year 2008-2009 with a \$21.8 million budget increase for Medicaid dental fees. LBRs are submitted to the Governor's office to be used as a guideline for the Governor's budget recommendations. This is the first time in years that AHCA has presented its budget to the Governor's office with a direct increase for Medicaid dental fees. FDA sent a support letter to the Governor's office encouraging him to place the \$21.8 million Medicaid dental fee increase in his budget recommendations. The Governor's budget is expected to be released to the public either late January or early February 2008.

As we move into the new budget year, the Legislature is facing significantly low general revenues due to the slow sales in the housing market and other contributing factors. The latest general revenue estimating conference forecasts has the current 2007-2008 budget \$1 billion short, even after the Legislature had to come back and cut \$1 billion earlier this year. Additionally, the revenues for 2008-2009 are expected to be \$1.5 billion less. With fewer dollars available for the 2008 legislative session, the respective chairs of the Senate and House Appropriations Committee has given legislators a heads up on community budget issues requests (CBIRs), which is to not expect funding for them next year.

Funding during the 2008 legislative session will be scarce, but the FDA will continue its efforts to secure an increase in Medicaid dental fees.

BOARD OF DENTISTRY APPOINTMENTS APPROVED BY SENATE COMMITTEE

The Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections approved of the appointments of Drs. Wade Winker and Dan Gesek to the Board of Dentistry (BOD). Gubernatorial appointments to the BOD must be confirmed by the full Senate. A preliminary step in the Senate confirmation process is approval by the Committee on Ethics and Elections. The full Senate typically withholds its approval until the final week of

the legislative session. The appointment of Ms. Elmira Gainey was also approved by the Senate Committee.

The Governor still has two appointments pending. Those appointments are also required to receive Senate confirmation. They are expected to be made in ample time for Senate approval.

LEGISLATOR SPOTLIGHT: REP. ELLYN BOGDANOFF

Rep. Elyn Bogdanoff (R-Ft. Lauderdale) was first elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 2004 and was reelected in 2006. She represents District 91 which covers parts of Broward and Palm Beach counties. She is currently serving in a distinguished leadership position as Majority Whip. Rep. Bogdanoff has strong ties to organized dentistry as wife of FDA member Dr. Steven Bogdanoff.



Rep. Bogdanoff has always been supportive of the FDA legislative issues. During this October's special session to address the PIP issue, Rep. Bogdanoff made sure that access to dental care remained a part of the trauma care treatment for individuals receiving services in the emergency room after an accident.

Rep. Bogdanoff's legislative contact dentists are Dr. Howell Goldberg and Dr. Steven Bogdanoff.

DENTISTS' DAY ON THE HILL: YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Dentists' Day on the Hill will be held on Tuesday, April 1 and Wednesday, April 2, 2008 in Tallahassee. Dentists' Day on the Hill is your opportunity to meet with your elected senator and representative to discuss the issues important to organized dentistry. Why is it important to meet with legislators in Tallahassee during session? Legislators govern your profession. Decisions are made during the legislative session that could greatly impact dentistry and your patients. You are the best advocate for your profession! Some of the key issues that will be discussed on Dentists' Day are:



- Support of increasing Florida's Medicaid reimbursement fees
- Opposition to requiring dental labs to employ a certified dental technician
- Opposition to alternative licensure pathways for foreign-trained dentists
- Opposition to dental hygienists performing restorative procedures

For more information on Dentists' Day on the Hill or to register online, go to <http://floridadental.org/pro/members/governmental/hill.html>.

SENATOR ATWATER SELECTED AS PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE



On Tuesday, December 11, Sen. Jeff Atwater (R-North Palm Beach) was officially selected as the Senate Speaker-designate for the 2008-2010 term. He was appointed by the Republican Caucus. Assuming Sen. Atwater is re-elected and Republicans maintain their majority in the 2008 election, Sen. Atwater will serve as Senate President during legislative session 2009 and 2010.

Sen. Atwater was first elected to the Florida Senate in 2002 and has been reelected subsequently. He served in the Florida House of Representatives from 2000 to 2002. Sen. Atwater represents District 25 which covers parts of Broward and Palm Beach counties.

Sen. Atwater's legislative contact dentists are Drs. Stephen Bradford, Tom Floyd, Chuck Hoffman, Russell Rainey, Richard Ricci and Doug Starkey.

PEDIATRIC DENTISTS HONOR REP. BUCHER

On October 30, The Florida Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (FAPD) immediate past President Dr. Paul Werner, and past president Dr. Tom Floyd presented the FAPD "Hero to Kids Award" to Rep. Susan Bucher, (D-West Palm Beach) during the regular monthly meeting of the South Palm Beach County Dental Association. This award was to be presented to Rep. Bucher during the annual general membership meeting during FNDC, but had to be rescheduled since she was called into special legislative session at that time. She was selected for this award because of her support of our legislative initiatives and her leadership in efforts to improve the health of children in Florida. When she terms out next year, we will definitely lose a strong advocate in Tallahassee.

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