



BUDGET CONFERENCE NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY

Now that the House and Senate have officially appointed their respective budget conferees, conference negotiations are finally underway. Going into budget conference, the FDA has secured approximately \$500,000 in both budgets to continue the expansion of the foreign-trained dental program at Nova Southeastern University School of Dental Medicine and \$200,000 for the dental student loan repayment program in the Senate's budget. Neither budget included funding for a Medicaid dental fee increase. The FDA staff will be working diligently throughout the weekend to get the House to concur with the Senate's budget recommendation for the student loan repayment program and funding for higher Medicaid dental provider fees.

The following members will serve on the House and Senate Health and Human Services Appropriations Conference Committee: Reps. Aaron Bean (R-Fernandina Beach); Juan Zapata (R-Miami); Tom Anderson (R-Mount Vernon); Clay Ford (R-Pensacola); Bill Galvano (R-Bradenton); Rene Garcia (R-Hialeah); Hugh Gibson (R-The Villages); Gayle Harrell (R-Port Saint Lucie); Alan Hays (R-Umatilla); Ed Hooper (R-Clearwater); Jimmy Patronis (R-Panama City); Loranne Ausley (D-Tallahassee); Ari Porth (D-Coral Springs); Elaine Schwartz (D-Hollywood); Kelly Skidmore (D-Boca Raton) and Priscilla Taylor (D-Riviera Beach); Sens. Durell Peaden (R-Crestview); Nan Rich (D-Sunrise); Don Gaetz (R-Niceville); Burt Saunders (R-Naples) and Frederica Wilson (D-Miami Gardens).

DENTISTS' SAPRED THE NEED FOR CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION TO THE CLINIC LICENSURE LAW

As reported in previous *Capital Reports*, CS/SB 1882 required all health care providers in Miami-Dade, Palm Beach and Broward Counties to either seek an additional license as a health care clinic or pay a fee and subject their business to inspections of billing practices by AHCA in order to receive a certificate of exemption to the health care clinic act. CS/SB 1882 was further clarified in committee this week to not apply to Dentistry. Sen. Dennis Jones (R-Seminole) further convinced the committee to adopt an amendment removing any requirement for a certificate of exemption.

Meanwhile, Sen. Al Lawson (D-Tallahassee) agreed to amend all the provisions of CS/SB 1882 onto his bill, SB 2354. The main amendment adopted to SB 2354 contained the language exempting dentistry from the need to obtain a certificate of exemption. Sen. Jones once again stood up for all health care providers and removed the requirement for anyone to obtain a certificate of exemption. It is expected that SB 2354 will be the vehicle moving forward in the Senate.

A bill containing provisions requiring a certificate of exemption has not surfaced in the House.

FDA MEMBERS LOBBY LEGISLATORS ON DENTISTS' DAY



The 11th annual Dentists' Day on the Hill was held this past Tuesday and Wednesday in Tallahassee.

One hundred sixty-nine FDA member dentists and 24 Nova South East University and University of Florida dental students attended Dentists' Day events and met with their senators and representatives to discuss issues relative to organized dentistry.

The events began with a reception and briefing on Tuesday night at Paradigm, a local downtown restaurant. The reception was well attended by FDA members and was an excellent opportunity for members to visit with colleagues.

The breakfast briefing was held Wednesday morning at the FSU Center for Professional Development. The keynote speaker was House Minority Leader Dan Gelber (D-Miami Beach). Rep. Gelber spoke on the property insurance crisis, as well as proposed his amendment to the state constitution that would require all children to have access to health care, defined to include basic dental care. Reps. Alan Hays (R-Umatilla), Franklin Sands (D-Weston) and Martin Kiar (D-Parkland) also attended the breakfast briefing.

Following Rep. Gelber's address, FDA lobbyists gave tips for meeting with legislators and presented the key legislative issues for the current legislative session. The top three issues discussed were Medicaid dental fee increases, funding for the dental student loan

repayment program and opposition to the dental lab bill (HB 353).

After the briefing, dentists and students traveled to the Capitol to meet with legislators and legislative aides. Several dentists watched the Senate and House in session, while others participated in the Museum of Florida History tour.

The luncheon was held at the Capitol's Waller Park and was attended by dentists, students, dental spouses, legislators and legislative aides. Legislators in attendance included Sen. Carey Baker (R-Eustis), Rep. Thad Altman (R-Melbourne), Rep. Alan Hays (R-Umatilla) and Rep. Clay Ford (R-Pensacola).

The FDA would like to thank all of the Dentists' Day on the Hill attendees for taking the time out their practice to meet with legislators on behalf of organized dentistry. Your presence will make a difference!

We hope to see you next year at Dentists' Day on the Hill on Tuesday, April 1 and Wednesday April 2, 2008.

FDA LEADERSHIP MEETS WITH STATE LEADERS



During the 11th annual Dentists' Day on the Hill, FDA leadership met with some of the most powerful and influential Tallahassee officials. Between Tuesday and Wednesday, FDA members and staff met with the following power brokers:

- Governor Charlie Crist
- Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp
- President of the Senate, Sen. Ken Pruitt
- Secretary of the Department of Health, Dr. Ana Viamonte
- Secretary of Elder Affairs, Doug Beach
- House Minority Leader, Rep. Dan Gelber
- The Director of the Governor's appointment office, Melanie DiMuzio

This is just the tip of the iceberg in reference to other meetings scheduled with legislators. The abovementioned meetings were certainly some of the highlights of a very successful Dentists' Day on the Hill.

FLORIDA HEALTH INFORMATION NETWORK

The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) has been working with several different interested stakeholders, including dentists, to prepare the state for efforts involving electronic health records. In order to continue these efforts, the AHCA needs legislative authority to further develop and implement a system to make electronic health information records interoperable across the state. HB 1121 by Rep. Denise Grimsley (R-Sebring) was approved by the House on the floor this week. The bill includes the creation of the Florida Health Information Network (FHIN) Corporation that would include 15 members, with no specific health care providers identified. SBs 2348 & 2582 by Sens. Jeff Atwater (R-North Palm Beach) and Jeremy Ring (R-Margate) passed out of the Senate Governmental Operations committee with an FDA amendment that includes a dentist on the FHIN Advisory Council created by the bill. The AHCA wants one of these bills to pass this session and has not identified a preference for either bill. The FDA will continue to monitor this legislation to ensure dental representation.

AHCA TO ADMINISTER KIDCARE

The House and Senate both heard their versions of the Florida KidCare bill in committee this week. The House Healthcare Council adopted a strike-everything amendment to PCB HCC 07-04 that would require the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to manage the consolidation of all components of the KidCare program and eventually become the administrator of the program. The Senate Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee also adopted a strike-everything amendment to their bill, CS/SB 930 by Sen. Mandy Dawson (D-Fort Lauderdale). The bill also authorizes AHCA to administer the KidCare Program and creates a Deputy Secretary of Florida KidCare within AHCA to develop policies and strategies for issues related to children's lack of access to high-quality and affordable health care services and coverage. Discussion in the committee lead to the qualifications of the Deputy Secretary of Florida KidCare and the desire by some committee members to require this position to be filled by a pediatrician. It was suggested that there will be an amendment filed on the floor to outline these qualifications. Both bills eliminate the KidCare Coordinating Council, which served as an advisory board to the Governor and the Legislature on children's issues. The bills will now head to the House and Senate floor for debate. FDA will continue to monitor this legislation.

STATE SURGEON GENERAL BILL PASSES GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

CS/SB 2260 by Sen. Durell Peaden (R-Crestview) passed out of the Senate Governmental Operations Committee this week. The bill renames the Secretary of Health to the State Surgeon General and it requires this new position to promote healthy lifestyles, immunization practices, health literacy and the assessment and promotion of the physician and health care workforce in order to meet the health care needs of the state. The House companion bill, CS/HB 1343 by Rep. J.C. Planas (R-Miami), is available to be heard on the House floor.

BUSINESS GROUPS SCORE VICTORY OVER NRA

As reported in last week's *Capitol Report*, HB 1417 by Rep. Dennis Baxley (R-Ocala) puts the freedom to bear arms advocates against the rights of private property owners. The bill was defeated by the House Environment and Natural Resources Council with a vote of 4 yeas and 10 nays. The Senate version, CS/SB 2356 by Sen. Durell Peaden (R-Crestview), is ready to be heard on the floor. Defeat of the bill in the House Council seals the victory for business owners who would like to prohibit the storing of guns in vehicles on their premises.

FDAS BILL MOVES IN SENATE

SB 2198 by Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Niceville) was on Friday's special order calendar on the Senate floor. It was successfully rolled over for third reading. The House version, HB 837 by Rep. Michael Grant (R-Port Charlotte), is still waiting to be placed on the House floor calendar.

If the bills pass, Florida Dental Association Services, Inc. (FDAS) will be allowed to submit to the Office of Insurance Regulation their annual audited financial statement based on their fiscal year (July 1-June 30) rather than the calendar year.

LEGISLATOR SPOTLIGHT

Sen. Ken Pruitt (R-Port Saint Lucie) is the current Senate President and will continue to serve as president during the 2008 legislative session. He was elected to the Senate in 2000 and was reelected subsequently. Sen. Pruitt also served as a member in the House of Representatives from 1990 to 2000. His senate district includes parts of Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie counties. Sen. Pruitt will be termed out in 2010.



Sen. Pruitt's legislative contact dentists are Drs. Teri-Ross Icyda, Ryan Askeland, David Boden, Brian Jacobus, Keith Kilgallen, Stephen Shields, Craig Stranigan and James Strawn.

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