



## 2017 IDAHO LEGISLATURE

### UPDATE

February 6, 2017 through February 10, 2017

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For ANA Idaho and Nurse Leaders of Idaho*

### Week 5

This week has been one of mixed messages. The House Majority Leader indicated that there was work being done as outcome from the interim workgroup on healthcare legislation to cover the Gap population that would be introduced soon. In a meeting this week with journalists, Governor Otter dodged the question by suggesting that Congress needs to act to address coverage and took the opportunity to highlight the success of the Idaho Healthcare Exchange. Senator Thayn of District 8 introduced one of several bills he is working on to address healthcare. As for eliminating the religious exemption to the child welfare law, the Governor commented that the legislature convened an interim committee to address the religious exemption at his request, however the committee did not make any recommendations, and he knew of no bills coming forward. Friday, Senator Dan Johnson of Lewiston, co-chair of the interim committee sent a letter to Senate Leadership outlining several options including full repeal of the religious exemption and compromise language. The religious exemption is a topic circulating in the hall. Rumors are that there are several draft bills circulating behind the scenes in the hope of addressing this issue this session. As the legislative season progresses, it is still early where bills are being introduced daily.

### **SUICIDE PREVENTION ADVOCACY DAY, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15**

Much has been done over this past year, including funding for suicide prevention and the Suicide Prevention Hotline. Advocacy Day is an opportunity to tell legislators why suicide prevention is important to you and to your community. In conjunction with the event, Dr. Linda Hatzenbuehler of the Governor's Council on Suicide Prevention and Kim Kane of the Office of Suicide Prevention will present to the Senate Health and Welfare Committee at 3:00 PM in Room WW54.

### **REPORT OF THE CATASTROPHIC HEALTHCARE COST PROGRAM**

In Idaho, the payor of last resort for non-covered healthcare claims is the County Indigent Program, where Counties pay the first \$11,000 of each claim, and the State Catastrophic Fund that covers the



remaining cost. Costs are paid at Medicaid rates. Katheryn Mooney, Administrator of the program, reported that during 2016, 634 cases paid by the CAT fund consumed \$16,588,000, an average of \$28,000 per case. That amount is approximately 50% of what the fund paid (\$38M) in 2011. The dramatic decrease in claims has been due to the increase in private healthcare insurance coverage obtained through the Idaho Healthcare Exchange which provides subsidized coverage who qualify under the Affordable Care Act. With initial coverage through the county program, 99% of mental health claims are covered by the counties where mental health accounts for 20% of all claims. Reallocating costs spent through the CAT fund, the county programs and Medicaid, along with enhanced primary care availability are key to providing access and broad coverage for those in the poverty GAP.

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELFARE BUDGET REPORT**

Highlights of Director Dick Armstrong budget presentation to the Health and Welfare Committees:

\$2.88 B annual budget. 67% federal funds; \$721M State General Fund

\$44M increase for Medicaid and Behavioral Health

Medicaid is 80% of the budget

300,000 on Medicaid, 200,000 are children

\$580/patient, down 9% from 2012 with implementation of Patient Centered Medical Home, has decreased hospitalizations, decreased emergency visits and decreased cost

352,000 receive public assistance, 21% of Idaho's population

Budget Priorities

- 1) Children's Mental Health – leverage general fund to access additional federal funding
- 2) Child Welfare – Foster Care Program
  - a. Added support for Foster Families
  - b. Increase stipend for Foster Families. 20% increase in payment
  - c. Additional Social Workers
- 3) Child Care Modernization
- 4) Idaho Childcare Program funding
- 5) State Psychiatric Facility Plan
  - a. New adolescent secure psychiatric facility in Nampa
  - b. Repurpose Blackfoot facility for incarcerated, high risk, dangerous mentally ill
  - c. Developmentally disabled secure facility
- 6) \$11.2M for Prisoner Behavioral Health
- 7) Continue to address H&W Employee Compensation to reduce turnover

**IMMUNIZATIONS – S 1050**



At the Joint House and Senate Health and Welfare Hearing two weeks ago, parents who elect not to immunize their children were very vocal about being required to sign a Department of Health and Welfare declination form and in some cases their children being denied admission to public schools because of their beliefs. This week at the Senate Health and Welfare Committee, Health Freedom Idaho, a group of parents, voice their objection to being forced to sign the Department form that includes acknowledgement of the risks of not immunizing their children, but does not address the risks of the vaccines. Their request was to separate the signed declination from any parent education on risk, and to educate school districts on the right of parents to decline immunization said without repercussions that is already in statute. **S 1050** was introduced for clarification and allow parents to decline without acknowledging the risks or using the DH&W form, allowing any signed declination. Another bill, **H 0091**, addresses the immunization information database, IRIS, operated by the Department of Health & Welfare.

### **RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION TO CHILD WELFARE**

As mentioned above, last year Governor Otter asked the legislature to convene an interim committee to address the religious exemption. Representative John Gannon of Boise had proposed a bill last session, but it did not get a hearing. The interim committee met during the summer led by Representative Joe Palmer of Meridian and Senator Dan Johnson of Lewiston. The Children At-Risk/Faith Healing Work Group heard testimony from both sides including members and former members of the Followers of Christ who reject medical care. Following their hearings, the work group did not make legislative recommendations. Friday, Senator Johnson wrote to the Senate Pro-Tem, Senator Brent Hill, outlining options to address the faith healing exemption including do nothing, full repeal, or compromises including judicial case-by-case determination, and/or mandatory reporting by healthcare providers. While no bills have been introduced on this topic, there is much discussion in the halls and backroom work being done.

### **COMMUNITY PRIMARY CARE PROGRAM – S 1082**

This is the first of several bills, Senator Steven Thayn of District 8 (Gem, Boise, Valley, Custer and Lemhi Counties) is working on to address coverage for the Gap population, those in the gap not qualifying for Medicaid nor subsidy for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. Senator Thayn was a member of the interim workgroup “Healthcare Alternatives for Citizens below 100% of Poverty Level.” The bill introduced Thursday covers 15,000 adults with chronic illness including asthma, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and obesity with direct primary care including physician visits, diagnostic tests and drugs. Coverage is limited to the initial \$600 per patient. The estimated cost is \$9.9M the first year and \$15.6M the second year.

House Majority Leader, Mike Moyle, mentioned that Representative Fred Wood, who is also House Health and Welfare Committee Chair, and Senator Marv Hagedorn are working on healthcare bills utilizing funds from the Tobacco Settlement Millennium fund to cover those in the healthcare coverage gap.

**BILLS OF INTEREST TO NURSING**

- H0003**      **PHARMACISTS** – Allows pharmacists to prescribe and administer a tuberculin purified derivative product for screening purposes under certain circumstances. Passed House, Passed Senate.
- H0004**      **PHARMACISTS** – Allows pharmacists to prescribe tobacco cessation products. Passed House, Passed Senate.
- H0091**      **IMMUNIZATION REGISTRY** – Idaho Immunization Reminder Information System (IRIS) reporting. IRIS is maintained by the Department of Health & Welfare and is a centralized database to track and notify providers and patients of recommended vaccinations, immunization information, and recall notifications. There is an opt-out provision for those who do not wish to be tracked. House H&W.
- S1050**      **IMMUNIZATION FORM** – Allows parents to use any written communication to decline having their children immunized rather than using the Department of H&W form that includes acknowledgement of the risk of not immunizing but does not include information on the risks associated with immunizations. Senate H&W.
- S1003**      **NURSES LICENSES, EMERITUS/REINSTATE** - Eliminates the necessity for a nurse to renew a license on emeritus status. The bill has been assigned to the Senate Commerce and Human Resources Committee. Senate Third Reading.
- S1004**      **NURSING BOARD COMPENSATION REVISED** – Increase compensation for Board of Nursing members from \$50/day to \$75/day. Passed Senate. Sent to House H&W.
- S1050**      **TELEHEALTH ACCESS** – Requires insurers to cover telehealth in an “equivocal” manner as face-to-face healthcare services. Senate H&W.
- S1060**      **CYTOMEGALOVIRUS INFORMATION** – Would require the Department of Health and Welfare to provide information on the risks of cytomegalovirus to the public, pregnant women and healthcare providers. Senate H&W.
- S1082**      **COMMUNITY PRIMARY CARE PROGRAM** – Would cover the initial \$600 for primary care physician visits, lab, drugs, and health coaching for specified chronic illness management for 15,000 adults in the coverage gap. Sent to Print.



## **CALL TO ACTION**

**Idaho Suicide Prevention Advocacy Day**

**Wednesday, February 15, 2017**

**11:30 – 1:00**

**Nurses Day at the Idaho State Capitol**

**Wednesday, February 22, 2017**

**11:00 – 12:00 Preparation, Message Points**

**12:00 – 1:00 Visit with Senators and Representatives – First Floor Rotunda**

**Individual appointments with Senators and Representatives throughout the day**

Nurses Day at the Capitol is an opportunity to build awareness for nursing and advocate for better healthcare. To make an appointment with your legislator call, **208-332-1000** or go on-line [www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislators](http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislators) and enter your address, select your Senator or Representative and select their e-mail address.

As you hear of issues or have question about the legislature, please e-mail [mcgraneconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:mcgraneconsulting@gmail.com).