

Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education *Legislative Update*

February 28, 2007
Volume 1 - Issue 4

Tuesday, January 16th began the 25th Alaska Legislative session in Juneau. During this session, the GCDSE is keeping you up-to-date by monitoring legislative action and tracking bills that relate to issues concerning health, education, disabilities, and services in the State of Alaska.

Senate Bill 87: Medical Assistance Eligibility

This is a companion bill to House Bill 140 and would be known as the *No Child Left Uninsured Act*. This bill raises the eligibility of single parents and children to 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) for the Denali KidCare Program. It also allows families with an income up to 350% FPL to buy into the program with a sliding-scale fee and requires 20% co-pay for those individuals at 250% FPL or greater.

Sponsor(s): Senator(s): Bill Wielechowski (D-J), Hollis French (D-M), Johnny Ellis (D-L), Kim Elton (D-B), Bettye Davis (D-K)
Status: 02/19 introduced and referred to Senate HES Committee

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=SB87



Senate Bill 90: Senior Care

This bill sets eligibility for the Senior Care Program as established by the Department of Health and Social Services at 135% of the federal poverty level (FPL) guidelines for 2007 and also raises income levels each year based on inflation indexing. This bill removes the prescription drug benefit, retains the cash benefit assistance at \$120 dollars per month and extends the program to 2012. This bill does not allow dual payments under the Alaska Longevity Bonus (ALB) and the Senior Care Program.

Sponsor(s): Senate Rules Committee

Status: 02/21 introduced and referred to Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=SB90

Held Committee Referrals and Bill Hearings:

Senate Joint Resolution 1:

Medical Assistance for Children
Monday, February 26th State Capitol
Held and heard in Senate Health, Education & Social Services Comm.

House Joint Resolution 10:

Medical Assistance for Children
Tuesday, February 27th State Capitol
Held and heard in House Health, Education & Social Services Comm.

House Concurrent Resolution 3:

Sexual Assault Awareness Month
Tuesday, February 27th State Capitol
Held and heard in House Health, Education & Social Services Comm.

Senate Bill 93: Professional Counselors

This bill outlines that a person who is not licensed, may not profess to be a professional counselor, which amends the current Alaska Statute under Title 8, Chapter 8, Section 08.29.100. This bill also requires health insurers to cover licensed professional counselors' fees if the fees are within the scope of the provider's occupational license and the services are covered under a group health insurance policy.

Sponsor(s): Senator(s): Bettye Davis (D-K), Gary Wilken (R-E)

Status: 02/22 introduced and referred to Senate Labor and Commerce Committee

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=SB93

Senate Concurrent Resolution 4: Public Health & Health Compact

This resolution focuses on the development of a health care strategy that will provide opportunities to advance and improve the quality and accessibility of health care. It proposes the State Legislature to invite all local governments, private and non-profit businesses, and individuals to join in forming the Alaska 2008 Health Compact to voluntarily craft and promote health preventative or curative initiative to be reported as voluntary presentations.

Sponsor(s): Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee

Status: 02/21 introduced and referred to Senate HES Committee

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=SCR4

House Bill 120: Extending Council on Domestic Violence

This bill reauthorizes the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) and extend the sunset date through 2014. The Council works in coordination with the Department of Safety, Law, Education, Health and Social Services, and the Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to prevent interpersonal violence, educate, and provide safety and response services to individuals who have been affected by domestic violence and sexual assault in Alaska. The reauthorization of this bill would ensure that Alaska receives federal funding for such services.

Sponsor(s): Rep. Anna Fairclough (R-17), for a list of co-sponsor's please follow text link

Status: 02/07 introduced, 02/22 passed House and transmitted to Senate, 02/26 referred to Senate Rules Committee

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=HB120



House Concurrent Resolution 3: Sexual Assault Awareness Month

This resolution proclaims the month of April 2007 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The first Sexual Assault Awareness Month was nationally observed in April 2001. That same year, the 22nd Alaska State Legislature declared April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Alaska has the highest per capita occurrence of sexual assault in the nation and the incidence of rape in Alaska is 2.5 times the national average. This resolution, by proclaiming April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, would increase public awareness and enhance educational efforts of the prevalence of sexual assault and how it can be combated in Alaska.

Sponsor(s): Rep(s): Kevin Meyer (R-30), Anna Fairclough (R-17), Bill Stoltze (R-16)

Status: 02/12 introduced and referred to House Health, Education & Social Services Committee; held and heard 02/27

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=HCR3

Upcoming Bill Hearing Schedule Details:

Date:

Wed. February 28th 1:30pm

- **SB 40: Longevity Bonus Reapplications**
- **Strengthening Families Initiative**

Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee
Room 205 State Capital

Date:

Fri. March 2nd 7:30am
DHSS Finance Budget Subcommittee

- **Presentation of Governor's FY08 Proposed Operating Budget Amendments**
 - **Alaska Longevity Programs**
- House Finance
Room 519 State Capitol

House Passes Bill to Extend Council on Domestic Violence

Thursday, February 22nd:

The House passed Bill 120 to extend the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA). Established in 1981 and housed in the Department of Public Safety, from resulting legislation AS 18.66, the Council is an administrative, policy making body whose purpose is to provide planning and coordination services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, to perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual assault, and to provide crisis intervention and prevention programs. The Council works in coordination with other State Departments to combat interpersonal violence and continue to educate on issues of domestic violence and sexual assault, while providing coordinating preven-

tion and response services. For the past ten years, Alaska has ranked in the top three in the nation per the Uniform Crime Reporting code for domestic violence and sexual assault and also has the highest rate per capita of men murdering women. The Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in FY01 funded twenty-one community-based victim services programs, eight community based batterers' intervention programs and three prison-based batterers' programs in working on its mission to reduce the causes and incidents and to alleviate the effects of domestic violence and sexual assault.

House Bill 120 has been referred to the Senate for its consideration

If you have any Questions or Comments, please contact:

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