

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

March 15, 2007
Volume 1 - Issue 5

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 76: Tuition For Certain Children

This bill establishes the ASPIRE program within the AK Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives allowing churches, community organizations, non-profits, businesses and individuals to establish savings accounts for foster children who have been in out of home care for more than two years. Accounts could be used for college tuition, vocational training and other expenses related to education.

Sponsor(s): Senator(s): Johnny Ellis (D-L), Lesil McGuire (R-N), Bettye Davis (D-K), Fred Dyson (R-I)

Status: 02/07 introduced and referred to Senate HES, 03/05 held and heard

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=SB76



Senate Bill 100: Substance Abuse/Mental Health Programs

This bill proposes several changes to Alaska's statutes regarding drug and alcohol abuse. It mandates priority substance abuse treatment for pregnant women. Creates a pilot program in a secure setting for involuntary commitment cases. Gives priority to state grantees who utilize evidence-based programming and programs that address substance abuse prevention and addiction. Encourages DHSS to develop a process in identifying people with co-occurring mental and substance abuse, and ensures that

funding is not denied to a program that relies on faith-based strategies.

Sponsor(s): Senator Johnny Ellis (D-L)

Status: 02/28 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=SB100

Senate Bill 106: Appropriations: Community Health Centers

This bill appropriates \$2.3 million dollars to the Department of Health and Social Services for payment as a grant to the Alaska Primary Care Association for a community health centers program. The APCA was established in 1995 as a non-profit membership organization to promote, expand, and optimize access to basic primary health care in the State of Alaska and works with the private and public sectors to support and connect organizations and people who provide that care.

Sponsor(s): Senator Bettye Davis (D-K)

Status: 03/07 introduced and referred to Senate Finance Committee

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=SB106

Senate Joint Resolution 3: Medicare Rates in Alaska

This resolution urges that the US Congress and the US Department of Health and Human Services to rewrite formulas used to develop reimbursement rates for Alaska to improve senior citizens' access to health care and medical doctors in the State. The current Medicare reimbursement formula has resulted in payments to medical doctors in 2007 at the same rates as in 2001 and fails to adequately reflect the cost of practicing medicine in the State.

Sponsor(s): Senator(s): Wielechowski (D-J), Davis (D-K), Cowdery (R-O), Wilken (R-E), Ellis (D-L), Elton (D-B), Thomas (D-D), French (D-M), Bunde (R-P), Kookesh (D-C), Stevens (R-R), Green (R-G)

Status: 03/07 introduced and referred to Senate HES

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=SJR3

Held Committee Referrals and Bill Hearings:

Senate Bill 76:

Tuition for Certain Children
Monday, March 5th State Capitol
Held, heard and moved out of Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee

Senate Bill 90:

Senior Care

Friday, March 9th State Capitol
Held, heard and moved out of Senate HES Committee, referred to Senate Finance Committee

Senate Bills 27 and 87:

Medical Assistance Eligibility Denali KidCare

Monday, March 12th State Capitol
Held, heard and moved out of Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee

House Bill 178: Employment of People with Disabilities Committee

This bill relates to adding *rehabilitation* to the Governor's Committee on Employment of People title and requires the appointment of people to the committee be consistent with the requirements of federal law 29U.S.C. 725. This bill changes the selection and term of the chair, which to be selected by the members of the committee from among the voting members of the committee and subject to disapproval of the governor. The number of committee meetings is increased to quarterly meeting, in which all members must attend one face-to-face meeting each year.

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

Status: 03/05 introduced and referred to House Health, Education & Social Services Committee

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=HB178



House Finance Committee Schedules: March 16th-19th

Public Testimony Schedule for Operating Budget, Loans, Funds & Mental Health Budget Hearings

Friday, March 16th:

1:30-4:00pm

Juneau

Saturday, March 17th:

10:00-11:30am

Kenai, Valdez, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Seward, Mat-Su, Glennallen, Tok

11:45-1:00pm

Sitka, Wrangell, Petersburg, Homer, Dillingham, Cordova

2:00-3:15pm

Bethel, Kotzebue, Barrow, Nome, Delta Junction, Offnets

3:30-5:30pm

Fairbanks

Monday, March 19th:

4:00-6:00pm

Anchorage

Please note when public testimony in your local area is scheduled so that you may be able to participate and be involved.

The Governor's Council *encourages* you, as a constituent of a member of the House Finance Committee or a concerned citizen on issues regarding health, education, or services in the State of Alaska to be involved in the public testimony in the following days ahead.

Many issues will be discussed at the public testimony and the Governor's Council *urges* your support and advocacy for two legislative priorities that Council has been working on during this legislative session:

- **Autism Spectrum Disorder \$500,000 Increment Recommendation**
- **Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program \$1,000,000 Increment Recommendation**

For more information on how you can participate in the public testimony, please contact your Legislative Information Offices:

<http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/legaff/liolist.htm>

For more information on the Autism or Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program increments, please contact the Governor's Council.

Thank you for your Support!!

Upcoming Bill Hearing Schedule Details:

Date:

Thu. March 15th 3:00pm

HB 140: Medical Assistance Eligibility For Denali KidCare

House Health, Education & Social Services Committee
Room 106 State Capital

Date:

Sat. March 17th 10:00am

Anchorage Caucus to Hear Public Testimony
Anchorage School District Building
5530 E Northern Lights Blvd.

Co-Chairs Rep. Holmes & Rep. Fairclough will lead the meeting

Public testimony from 10:15-Noon

For more information, visit the House Majority Website:

<http://www.housemajority.org/>

If you have any Questions or Comments, please contact:

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