

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

April 19, 2007

Volume 1 - Issue 10

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.

Moving in the Senate: **SB 8: Mental Health Patient's Rights: Staff Gender**

This bill was introduced in the beginning of the legislative session on January 16th and made its first move through a committee on April 18th in Senate HES.

This bill relates to patients who are 18 years of age or older, receiving mental health treatment and being provided intimate care at a hospital. This bill allows those patients to have the right to have care provided by a staff member (a person employed by the hospital to provide direct patient care) who is the gender that the patient requests.

The health patient would have rights to choose the gender of hospital staff unless, the treating psychiatrist for the patient at the hospital could determine that compliance would adversely affect patient treatment and there is documented determination by the psychiatrist in the patient's record.

Sponsor(s):

Senators DAVIS (D-K), Ellis (D-L), Elton (D-B)

Status:

01/16 introduced and read for the first time

04/18 held & heard in (S) HES;

For More Information:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=SB8

House Bills 95 & 96: Pass Senate Floor

These two bills are related to the operating and mental health budget appropriations. The Senate Finance Committee listened to public testimony last week as individuals voiced their opinions and concerns from all over the State of Alaska. Following days after the public hearings, budget amendments were made by members of the Senate Finance Committee. Unfortunately, the autism increment amendment that was presented by Senator Joe Thomas (D-D) did not pass in the budget amendments that were considered by the committee.

On Wednesday, April 18th, HB 95 & 96 were presented to members of the Senate, where both bills passed the floor. The bills will now go into Conference Committees to work out the differences between the House and Senate budget versions.

The Governor's Council would like to thank those individuals who participated in the public hearings and contacted members of Senate Finance to advocate and support the recommended autism increment.



Held Committee Referrals and Bill Hearings:

Senate Bill 8:

Mental Health Patient's Rights: Staff Gender

April 18th held & heard in (S) HES

Senate Bill 76:

Tuition for Certain Children

April 18th not heard in (S) Finance

Senate Bill 93:

Professional Counselors

April 18th held & heard in (H) L&C

Senate Bill 100:

Substance Abuse/Mental Health Programs

April 17th held & heard in (S) Finance

Senate Concurrent Resolution 4:

Public Health/Health Compact

April 17th held & heard in (H) HES

House Bill 79:

Longevity Bonus Reapplications

April 16th held & heard in (H) Judiciary

House Bills 95 & 96:

Operating & Mental Health Budget

April 12th & 13th committee budget amendments

April 18th held & heard in Senate Floor

Session: **Passed Senate**

House Bill 178:

Employment of People with Disabilities

April 11th held & heard in (H) Finance

Upcoming Referred Bill Hearings:

Senate Bill 76:

Tuition for Certain Children

04/18 referred to (S) Rules
(hearing not scheduled)

Senate Bill 100:

Substance Abuse/Mental Health Programs

04/18 referred to (S) Rules
(hearing not scheduled)

House Bill 79:

Longevity Bonus Reapplications

04/18 referred to (H) Finance
(hearing not scheduled)

House Bill 178:

Employment of People With Disabilities

04/13 referred to (H) Rules
(hearing not scheduled)

For more information on committee schedules, please link to:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/hearing_form.asp?session=25

Current Status of Moving Bills in the Legislature:

SB 8: Mental Health Patient's Rights: Staff Gender

Relates to a mental health patient's right to choose the gender of hospital staff providing intimate care to the mental health patient and to the duties of hospital staff in caring for patients receiving mental health treatment.

01/16 introduced > **04/18** held & heard in (S) HES

Info:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=SB8

SB 40: Longevity Bonus Reapplication

An Act relating to reapplications for the Alaska longevity bonus program.

02/28 (S) HES > **04/12** held & heard in (S) STA

Info:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=sb+40

SB 76: Tuition for Certain Children

Establishes a higher education savings program for eligible children who were placed in out-of-home care by the state; and providing for confidentiality of identifying information of a beneficiary under the program.

03/12 (S) HES > **04/17** scheduled for (S) Finance; not heard > **04/18** referred to (S) Rules

Info:

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

SB 93: Professional Counselors

Relates to licensed professional counselors; and relating to the unlicensed use of the title 'professional counselor.'

03/21 passed Senate > **04/18** held & heard (H) L&C

Info:

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

SB 100: Substance Abuse/Mental Health Programs

Relates to substance abuse and mental health disorder prevention and treatment programs; and relating to long-term secure treatment programs for persons with substance abuse or co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders.

03/19 (S) HES > **03/29** (S) STA > **04/17** (S) Finance > **04/18** referred to (S) Rules

Info:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=sb+100

SJR 3: Medicare Rates in Alaska

Relates to the effect of Medicare rates on senior citizens' access to healthcare and urging the United States Congress to increase Medicare rates for Alaska.

04/11 passed Senate > **04/13** referred to (H) HES

Info:

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

SCR 4: Public Health/Health Compact

Relates to public health and a health compact.

03/28 passed Senate > **04/17** held & heard (H) HES

Info:

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

HB 79: Longevity Bonus Reapplication

An Act relating to reapplications for the Alaska longevity bonus program.

02/08 (H) STA > **04/16** (H) Judiciary > **04/18** referred to (H) Finance

Info:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=hb+79

HB 95: Appropriations: Operating Budget/Loans/Funds

Making appropriations for the operating and loan program expenses of state government, for certain programs, and to capitalize funds; making appropriations under art. IX, sec. 17(c), Constitution of the State of Alaska.

03/27 passed House > **04/18** passed Senate

Info:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=HB95

HB 96: Appropriations: Mental Health Budget

Making appropriations for the operating and capital expenses of the state's integrated comprehensive mental health program.

03/26 passed House > **04/18** passed Senate

Info:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=HB96

HB 136: Dental Hygienists

Relates to the supervision of dental hygienists by dentists; establishes a restorative function license endorsement for dental hygienists and allowing collaborative agreements between licensed dentists and dental hygienists.

04/11 passed House > **04/13** referred to (S) HES

Info:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=HB136

HB 178: Employment of People with Disabilities

Relates to the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

03/20 (H) HES > **04/11** (H) Finance > **04/13** referred to (H) Rules

Info:

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

If you have any Questions or Comments, please contact:

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