

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

May 9, 2007

Volume I - Issue 13

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 27: Medical Assistance Eligibility in Senate Finance

Senator Bettye Davis' (D-K) bill regarding raising Alaska's federal poverty level (FPL) for Denali KidCare medical assistance eligibility to 200 percent has been heard in Senate Finance. This bill's intent is to help provide adequate medical health care for children under 19 years of age, pregnant women, as well as individuals in medical or intermediate health care facilities. Currently, Alaska's eligibility rates have been frozen at the 2003 175 percent federal poverty levels, which have declined to about 154 percent of the FPL in April 2007. Alaska has one of the lowest eligibility rates in the nation, providing

less children eligibility for health care and forcing those who are in the program and currently receiving health care coverage to be take off.

Private health care coverage has declined over the last ten years and an estimated 18,000 children in Alaska are uninsured. Senate Bill 27 would help to decrease the level of uninsured children and pregnant women in the State of Alaska and also allow others who qualify and can afford it to make contributions towards their coverage. This bill provides the needed medical health care coverage to Alaska's growing problem.

### Update on Senate Bill 27: Medical Assistance Eligibility for Denali KidCare Program

The Senate Finance Committee has amended to lower the FPL eligibility for Denali KidCare to **175 percent**. Senate Bill 27 has passed out of Senate Finance and is scheduled to be heard on the Senate floor  
**Wednesday, May 9th at 11:00am**

## Senate Bill 40: Longevity Bonus Reapplication

Sen. Bill Wielechowski's (D-J) Senate Bill 40 passed out of the Senate State Affairs committee and is now going into Senate Finance for its consideration.

In 2003, funding for the Alaska Longevity Bonus was eliminated by Governor Murkowski. This legislation limits the program to seniors and allows only those elderly Alaskans who originally qualified for the longevity bonus and filed no later than December 31, 1996 into the program

to reapply and receive the monthly check, as long as they remain residents of the State of Alaska.

Under this new section being provided by the bill, an individual must have a reapplication filed before January 2008. The Department of Administration will prepare a reapplication form for use under this section and may also require evidence of eligibility for a longevity bonus as part of the reapplication process.



### Held Committee Referrals and Bill Hearings:

## Passed in House: House Bill 29 Safe Haven for Infants

The "Safe Surrender" Bill was passed in the House on May 7th and sent over to the Senate for consideration. This bill, sponsored by Representative Gabrielle LeDoux (R-36), follows a national trend by allowing a mother to safely surrender an infant less than twenty-one days old to: a person who the parent believes to be a peace officer; a physician or hospital employee in a hospital or emergency room; or a volunteer

employee of a fire station or medical service, without the fear of prosecution, as long as there is no evidence that the infant has been physically injured. This bill also provides measures by allowing the employee or agency that receives a child to be able to properly determine the needs of the child and parent; Whether that means placing the child for adoption or providing counseling to the parent.

### Senate Bill 27:

**Medical Assistance Eligibility**  
May 8th held & heard in (S) Finance

### Senate Bill 40:

**Longevity Bonus Reapplication**  
May 8th referred to (S) Finance

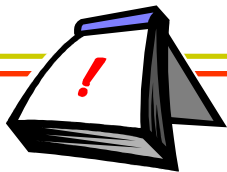
### Senate Bill 100:

**Substance Abuse/  
Mental Health Programs**  
May 4th referred to (H) Rules

### House Bills 29:

**Safe Haven for Infants**  
May 8th referred to (S) HES  
**House Joint Resolution 22:  
Denounce Sale of "Rapist" Doll**  
May 8th **passed House**

## TAKE ACTION NOW!



### Support Senate Bill 27 Denali KidCare

Please **act now** to send a strong message to legislators that Denali KidCare is important to all Alaskans! Take action now by sending an e-mail to legislators through the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority's legislative action website:  
<http://capwiz.com/mhtrust/issues/?style=D>

## 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** (S) HES > **04/23** (S) HES > **04/30** (S) Judiciary > **05/02** referred to (S) Finance; no scheduled hearing

**Info:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_complete\\_bill.asp?session=25&bill=SB8](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=SB8)

### **SB 27: Medical Assistance Eligibility**

Relating to eligibility requirements for medical assistance for certain children, pregnant women, and persons in medical or intermediate care facilities.

**01/16** introduced > **05/07 & 05/08** (S) Finance > **05/09** scheduled to be heard on Senate Floor

**Info:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_complete\\_bill.asp?session=25&bill=SB27](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=SB27)

### **SB 40: Longevity Bonus Reapplication**

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

**02/07 & 02/28** (S) HES > **04/12** (S) STA > **05/08** (S) STA & referred to (S) Finance; no scheduled committee hearing

**Info:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_complete\\_bill.asp?session=25&bill=sb+40](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.

**04/23** passed Senate > **04/26** referred to (H) Finance > **05/02** (H) Finance & referred to (H) Rules calendar for **05/09**

**Info:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_complete\\_bill.asp?session=25&bill=SB76](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 > **05/03** passed House & awaiting transmittal to Governor

**Info:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_complete\\_bill.asp?session=25&bill=SB93](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.

**04/25** passed Senate > **05/03** (H) HES > **05/04** referred to (H) Rules

**Info:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_complete\\_bill.asp?session=25&bill=sb+100](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=sb+100)

### **HB 29: Safe Haven for Infants**

An Act relating to infants who are safely surrendered by a parent shortly after birth.

**01/16** introduced > **02/20** (H) HES > **03/12** (H) JUD > **03/29** (H) Finance > **05/07** Passed House > **05/09** scheduled for (S) HES

**Info:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_complete\\_bill.asp?session=25&bill=HB29](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=HB29)

### **HB 95: Appropriations: Operating Budget/Loans/Funds**

**03/27** passed House > **04/18** passed Senate > **05/03** Conference Committee

**Info:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_complete\\_bill.asp?session=25&bill=HB95](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=HB95)

### **HB 96: Appropriations: Mental Health Budget**

**03/26** passed House > **04/18** passed Senate > **05/03** Conference Committee

**Info:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_complete\\_bill.asp?session=25&bill=HB96](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 > **04/23** (S) HES > **04/25** referred to (S) L&C > **05/01 & 05/03** (S) L&C & referred to (S) Finance

**Info:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_complete\\_bill.asp?session=25&bill=HB136](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=HB136)

### **HJR 22: Denounce Sale of "Rapist" Doll**

This Act denounces the National Entertainment Collectibles Association's production of the Rapist No. 1 collectible doll.

**04/26** introduced > **05/01** (H) STA & referred to (H) Rules > **05/07** (H) Rules > **05/08** passed House & transmitted to Senate

**Info:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_complete\\_bill.asp?session=25&bill=HJR22](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=25&bill=HJR22)



### **Upcoming Scheduled Committee Bill Hearings:**

#### **Wednesday, May 9th:**

**SB 27: Medical Assistance Eligibility**  
Senate Floor Session 11:00am

**SB 76: Tuition for Certain Children**  
House Floor Session 12:00pm

**HB 29: Safe Haven for Infants**  
Senate HES 1:30pm

To listen to live audio/video on Gavel-to-Gavel Alaska, please link to:  
<http://www.ktoo.org/gavel/stream.cfm>

#### **If you have any Questions or Comments, please contact:**

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