

Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education Legislative Update



Tuesday, January 20th began the 26th 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.

Volume 3, Issue 2

Tuesday, February 11, 2009

Senate Bill No. 28

This bill proposes to continue the public education of homeless students and to review certain laws as they relate to children.

Sponsor(s): Senator Davis
Status: 1/21 read and referred to Senate Education Committee

Link to Bill Text:
<http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/>



SB No. 38

This bill proposes to remove references, definitions, and confidentiality of information provisions relating to managed care entities; substitute health care insurers in the former role of managed care entities; and amend the definitions of 'covered person,' 'managed care plan,' and 'utilization review,' as those terms relate to the administration of managed care insurance plans; authorize persons to act as pharmacy benefits managers subject to oversight by the division of insurance; and amend the definition

Sponsor(s): Senator Elton
Status: 1/21 read and referred to Senate Health & Social Services Committee

Link to Bill Text:
<http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/>

SB No. 44

This bill proposes amendments to Alaska's statutes regarding the safe abandonment of infants. It changes the definition of infant from less than 21 days of age to less than 60 days of age, and mandates that a parent may not be criminally prosecuted for properly surrendering their infant.

Sponsor(s): Senator Linda Menard
Status: 1/21 introduced and referred to Senate Health & Social Services Committee

Link to Bill Text:
<http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/>

Council Priorities

The GCDSE's top priorities for this legislative session are:

- **Autism 5-part Initiative:** This will increase early identification and intervention, leading to improved lifelong outcomes and productivity, and a considerable reduction in overall costs (included in the Governor's budget).
- **Alaska's Kids Can't Wait: Early Learning Program Initiative:** Increased funding will help the Infant Learning Programs to improve quality of service to Alaska's children, and to offer a competitive wage to their staff (included in the Governor's budget).
- **Crisis Response Consultation Team:** This team will provide a better, cost-effective alternative to institutionalization for individuals whose behaviors are non-responsive to current interventions (*not* included in the Governor's budget).

Senate Bill No. 83

This bill is a companion bill to HB 89, and proposes to repeal the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and create the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee.

Sponsor(s): Governor Palin
Status: 1/26 read and referred to Senate Labor & Commerce Committee; 2/06 referred to Senate Finance Committee

Link to Bill Text:

House Bill No. 59

This bill proposes to provide for the establishment of a statewide early childhood education plan and guidelines.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Kawasaki, Gara, Tuck, and Petersen
Status: 1/20 read and referred to House Education Committee

Link to Bill Text:
<http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/>

House Bill No. 62

This bill proposes to change eligibility requirements and premium requirements for medical assistance coverage for children.

Sponsor(s): Representative Hawker
Status: 1/20 read and referred to House Health & Social Services Committee

Link to Bill Text:

House Bill No. 69

This bill proposes to establish a voluntary parent education home visiting program for pre-elementary aged children in the Department of Education and Early Development. It will also establish a rating system for early childhood education.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Tuck, Petersen, Kawasaki, and Gara
Status: 1/20 read and referred to House Education Committee

Link to Bill Text:
<http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/>

House Bill No. 89

This bill is a companion bill to SB 83, and proposes to repeal the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and create the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee.

Sponsor(s): Governor Palin
Status: 1/28 read and referred to House Labor & Commerce Committee

Link to Bill Text:

Joint Priorities

We have also collaborated with our fellow boards and commissions to identify the following joint legislative priorities:

- **Home and Community-Based Services Rate Reviews:** Regular and periodic rate reviews, for both Medicaid and grant-funded services, are imperative to maintaining the systems of care that serve Alaska's most vulnerable populations (supported by SB 32).
- **Adult Dental Services:** Reauthorizing the adult dental Medicaid services would avoid costly and potentially catastrophic dental emergencies late in life (supported by SB 82).
- **Homeless Housing Initiative:** Affordable housing with adequate support services is key to continued and sustained recovery for many Mental Health Trust beneficiaries (included in the Governor's budget).
- **Public Transportation:** With the establishment of the Governor's Coordinated Transportation Task Force in October 2008, the boards support taking the next step and establishing an Alaska Public Transportation Trust to fund the operations of community-coordinated public transportation systems (included in the Governor's budget).

If you have any Questions or Comments, please contact:

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