



Legislative Update Week 4 of the 2010 Session

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The end of the fourth week of the 2010 Session, marks the approximate half way point of the session. Legislators will only be in Tallahassee on Wednesday and Thursday during week 5 due to the Passover and Easter holidays. The one thing the respective chambers are expected to do during the week is vote on their budgets. Then the differences between the two budgets will be hammered out during a conference process.

The House has continued to focus on the Department of Health in an effort to save costs. This bill was heard during Week 4 and was amended to include a provision which would move the health care licensing boards to the Department of Business and Professional Regulation. The proposed bill could also be interpreted to limit the public health functions of the Department, particularly with regard to the education for prevention of chronic diseases and general health education on seat belt safety, smoking cessation campaign, etc. We spoke in committee and urged the House to proceed with caution. The health education duties are key to public welfare.

**Regulation by Board of Nursing -HB 1337/ SB 2530 by
Representative Denise Grismsley, RN and Senator J.D. Alexander.**

This bill is moving quickly through its assigned committees with only a few technical amendments. The definition of appropriate accrediting bodies was amended when the bill was heard on Friday March 26 to insure that only NLN-AC and CCNE qualify. The bill does not require accreditation of RN level programs, but provides incentives for programs which do hold accreditation.

The Senate version of the bill has not yet been amended, but it is the House version which is more likely to pass, and Representative Grimsley has committed to this definition of accreditation.

Safe Staffing - SB 114/ HB 377 by Senator Dave Aronberg and Representative Ron Brisson .

This bill requires acute care centers to have collaborative councils with participation of direct patient care RNs. The councils will develop a staffing plan for each individual patient care unit based on the ANA principals on staffing. This bill has not been heard and is unlikely to be heard at this point in session.

Controlled Substance Prescribing by ARNPs - SB 188/ HB 677 by Senator Mike Bennett and Representative Juan Carlos Zapata . This bill would permit ARNPs to prescribe controlled substances to their patients who need them. This bill has not been heard and is unlikely to be heard at this point in session.

Care of Diabetic Children in Schools -SB 896/HB 747 by Senator Durrell Peaden and Representative Nick Thompson . The Senate version of the bill would require school nurses to train school employee volunteers to assess and treat diabetic children. The House version simply prohibits school districts from reassigning diabetic children to certain schools and permits diabetic children to check their own blood sugars and administer their own insulin in the classroom so that they do not miss instruction. The House version of the bill is certainly acceptable, but we have serious concerns with the Senate version and have expressed them to the Senate sponsor. We have reached out to the American Diabetes Association which is the driving force behind the bill. We are in conversation with Representative Thompson as well and it is our impression that he shares our concern with the Senate version of the bill.

State Employees

This week the Senate Ways and Means Committee approved a measure which will require all state employees donate one quarter of a percent of their salary into the Florida Retirement System. The proposed House budget currently contains a 3% pay cut for all state employees. The pay cut is not presently in the Senate budget and the two chambers must ultimately agree before the final budget passes. Due to the large number of line item cuts at all state agencies, it is likely that some positions will be eliminated. We continue to monitor these developments closely.

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