



CNAP 09 Legislative Update #14 – SB 532 Take Action
Lynda Woolbert, Executive Director
Coalition for Nurses in Advanced Practice
May 17, 2009

SB 532 Set for House Floor Vote – Please Take Action

There will be lots of action NOW for APNs on the House Floor Monday afternoon. SB 532, the retail clinic bill, is on Monday's General House Calendar. Since it is about the 20th bill listed, we anticipate SB 532 will be considered that day.

As you know from last week's update, we need to get amendments to improve this bill. While not all of the amendments that are offered will be exactly as described, they will be similar. **All of you will receive an action alert later today requesting that you email, phone or fax your state representative by Monday at noon.** An explanation of the bill and amendments will be included with that alert. Please take action in response to that alert.

Also, remember that you do not have to be an APN to support these amendments. Please also ask family, friends or colleagues to contact their state representative asking the representative to support these amendments. Remember that you can help them find their state representative by entering their home address at <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us> and then be sure to **scroll down the list of elected officials to the one listed under "Texas State Representative"** (not U.S.).

Do not procrastinate. If we do not get these amendments put on the bill on the House Floor, we will not have any other opportunity to amend this bill. You can make a difference. Act Now.

Through the House in 8 Days

Two weeks ago in Update #12, I wrote about the importance of passing [SB 1415](#) by Senator Glenn Hegar (R – Katy, SD #18). This is the bill that would permit the Board of Nursing to take corrective action and establish a deferred disciplinary process for minor or administrative infractions. I am delighted to say that SB 1415 was voted favorably from the House on May 14th and was reported enrolled on Friday. This bill will now go to the Governor.

As you may remember, I reported that this bill had no companion and might need our support to get through the House before the end of the session. As it happened, the rapid passage of this bill through the House is a good lesson in the legislative process and how quickly things change.

While SB 1415 had no companion bill when I wrote Update #12, there was a bill filed in the House by Rep. Jim McReynolds (D-Lufkin, HD #12) that was very similar. That bill, HB 1128, had already been voted favorably from the Public Health Committee and was placed on the House Calendar for May 8th. Rep. McReynolds allowed HB 1128 to become a companion for SB 1415, and he postponed the House Floor vote until SB 1415 could catch up and be considered on the House Floor in lieu of his bill.

Although SB 1415 had to move through each step of the process through the House, just like any other bill, because the companion bill had already been voted from the Public Health and Calendars

Committees, those steps were expedited. On May 7th, SB 1415 was read the first time on the House Floor and referred to the Public Health Committee. On May 11th, SB 1415 was considered by the Public Health Committee and reported from the Committee and sent to the Calendars Committee on May 14th. Meanwhile, on May 13th, House rules permitted SB 1415 to be considered on the House Floor in lieu of its companion bill, HB 1128. It was passed on 2nd Reading that day and the following day, May 14th, was passed on third reading to enrollment.

Congratulations to Jim Willmann, General Counsel for TNA, who did a masterful job of shepherding this bill through the legislative process. Those of you in Sen. Hegar's district should thank him and his staff member, Melissa Hamilton, for their successful efforts to pass SB 1415. Those of you in Rep. McReynold's district should thank him and his chief of staff, Heather Fleming, for all their work in filing HB 1128 and sponsoring SB 1415. He and his staff did a great job to get SB 1415 through the process in only 8 days!

Hectic Days, Long Nights and Dead Bills

Last week I wrote about deadlines in the House of Representatives. Those deadlines kept the House working late into the night, causing committee chairs to scramble for times when committees could hear the bills on their agendas.

The work of the House ended around 10:30 on Tuesday night, after the collapse of one of its favorite members. Rep. Edmund Kuempel (R-Sequin, HD #44). He was found, not breathing, in a Capitol elevator. Rep. John Zerwas, an anesthesiologist representing HD #28 just west of Houston, with the assistance of DPS officers, is credited with saving his life. Rep. Kuempel is stable but still in intensive care while being brought out of a medically induced coma. Those of you in Rep. Kuempel's district can send a get well card, while those in Rep. Zerwas's district should send a note recognizing his role in saving Rep. Kuempel.

The House worked until after midnight on both Wednesday and Thursday. On Thursday, when the Speaker's gavel finally fell adjourning the House, roughly 4,000 House bills officially died. Of course two of those bills were our APN prescriptive authority bills, HB 1107 and HB 696. There were also about 12 pages of bills on Thursday's House Calendar that had not yet been considered when the gavel fell. At least one of those was a bill we were happy to see go away. However, nothing really goes away for sure until sine die (final adjournment of the 81st Regular Session), because there is always the chance of a bill being added as an amendment to another bill making its way through the process. However, once the session ends, bills that came close, but fail to pass in 2009 will have to start the process from the beginning in 2011.