



HMHB Legislative Update February 25, 2008

Legislators have completed 22 of 40 legislative days. A schedule for the next several days has been established. Legislators will be in session Tuesday through Friday of this week and take off Monday, March 3rd. Tuesday, March 4th will be Day 23 and the calendar has not been set beyond this date. When announcing the schedule, House Majority Leader Jerry Keen stated that the week of March 4th may be a short one, depending on progress made by the House-Senate conference committee on the Amended FY 2008 budget. The conferees will begin work this week.

Update on HMHB Legislative Agenda

Oppose legislation that threatens health insurance benefits such as mammograms, pap smears, and childhood immunizations. Many bills touting high deductible health plans and health savings accounts have been introduced. The following two bills are moving.

- **SB 383 (Sen. Judson Hill, 32nd)** encourages high deductible health plans and allows consumer rebates for consumers participating in wellness programs only under high deductible health plans. Shifts responsibility for designing health benefits under this type of health insurance plan out of public view and inside the Department of Insurance. Current Insurance Commissioner has not demonstrated concern for consumers. **Was passed by Senate Insurance & Labor on 2/22. On Senate floor for a vote 2/26.**
- **SB 404 (Sen. Tommie Williams, 19th)** would create a new agency attached to DCH to operate a health insurance comparison shopping website for consumers. The bill also authorizes state funds to promote the sale of individual high deductible health policies and unregulated, discount prepaid packages of medical services based solely on a contractual agreement between the insurer and the consumer. **Such plans would not cover mandates, such as 48- hour hospitalization after newborn delivery, contraceptives or well child visits.** Was passed by Senate Health & Human Services on 2/22. Assigned to Senate Rules.

Other Legislation

HB 1234 (Rep. Mickey Channell, 116th) would create the Medicaid Care Management Organizations Act, which places new requirements on CMOs and sets up an appeals process. Last week a joint House-Senate hearing on CMOs heard six hours of testimony from providers, patients and other interested parties about problems with the state funded Medicaid CMOs. Assigned to House Insurance.

HB 1043 (Rep. Sharon Cooper, 41st) redefines lead poisoning to be blood level concentration of 15 micrograms per deciliter, lowering the current legal standard of 20 micrograms per deciliter. It also applies abatement requirements to owners of residential units and landlords that accept compensation for the use of the residential property, deleting the exemption for complexes of fewer than 12 units. HB 1043 was passed by House Children & Youth this week and is in House Rules, which must schedule it for a vote on the House floor.

This update was prepared for HMHB by Mary Frances Williams. If you have questions, please email her at mfwilliams@speakeasy.net