

IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Capitol Review**
 - Gone but Not Forgotten
 - Governor Announces Budget
 - Governor to Sign Recovery Bill
 - Health Care Reform (Part 2)
- **Health/Human Services Budget Subcommittee Meets for First Time**
 - Mental Health/Disability Work Group
 - State Resource Center Work Group
- **Mental Health Parity Moves Forward**
- **Lobbyist Apprentices Visit Capitol**
- **Advocacy Resources & News**
 - Mark Your Calendar!
 - Share Your Stories!
 - Upcoming Public Forums
 - Bill Tracker

CAPITOL REVIEW

The pace picked up at the Capitol this week, making up for lost time last week when work stopped to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for the Inauguration of President Obama, and for the dual funerals of former Senator Mary Lundby and former Representative Rosemary Thomsen.

Gone but Not Forgotten. Former Senate Minority Leader Mary Lundby retired from the Legislature last year, after having battled ovarian cancer for several years. Sen. Lundby was a firm believer in equality, hated injustice of any kind, was dedicated to the environment and conservation, and loved public service. When Lundby decided to run for Senate, she was replaced with a former educator and substance abuse counselor Rosemary Thomson. Former Rep. Thomson was known for her kindness and ability to see past political party lines. Thomson died after suffering a stroke on January 19, just days after her predecessor Lundby died of ovarian cancer.



Governor Announces Budget. The Governor came out with his 2010 budget on Wednesday. The budget makes a 6.5% across-the-board cut to all departments and state agencies, with a few exceptions including the Glenwood State Resource Center. This cut is on top of the current year (2009) 1.5% budget cut, so programs are down roughly 7.9% from where they were two years ago.

The Governor also began the process of making Iowa's budget more user-friendly. Right now, there are many separate pots of money that fund various programs and services. The Governor has begun to move those pots back into the state's general fund (the "main" pot of money) - so that it is easier for taxpayers to follow and know where the state spends its money. Sometimes, one program will be funded by two or three pots of money, making it really difficult to know how much money in total is spent on it.

One thing to remember when looking at the Governor's budget - these are just the Governor's *recommendations*. The Governor's budget becomes the starting point for legislative discussions. The Legislature still has the authority to change it - or scrap it and start from scratch. You still have lots of time to talk to your legislators about what you would like to see them do about the budget this year.

- You can read the Governor's budget documents online here: www.governor.iowa.gov/. You will need to click on: [Governor Culver FY2010 Budget](#).
- You can see the independent fiscal bureau analysis of the budget online here: staffweb.legis.state.ia.us/lfb/. You will need to look under the heading "Analysis of Budgets" and click on the ["LSA Preliminary Summary of Governor's Budget Recommendations"](#)



Governor to Sign Recovery Bill.

This week, the Legislature moved quickly on passing the Governor's request for disaster assistance. The Governor will sign into law the bill ([HF 64](#)) that allocates \$56 million to help communities impacted by last summer's storms

and floods.

[House File 64](#) takes money from the state's cash reserves (our state's savings account) to pay for disaster related services, such as:

- * Additional Jumpstart Housing assistance
- * Unmet Needs Grants
- * Community Disaster Grants

In addition, the bill makes the Rebuild Iowa Office a permanent state agency (by putting it into Iowa law). The Rebuild Iowa/Disaster Recovery Bill is the first bill of the 2009 session to be signed into law by Governor Culver. The bill signing is open to the public and will be held on Monday at 11:30 a.m. in the first floor rotunda.

If you are interested in keeping track of disaster recovery and rebuilding efforts, you can read the Rebuild Iowa Office's weekly legislative reports here: www.rio.iowa.gov/news/legislative_weekly_index.html.

Health Care Reform (Part 2). Seeing double? Sen. Jack Hatch, the principle author of the Health Care For All Act of 2008, has introduced a bill (SF 48) that continues his commitment to moving toward universal health care coverage. The 87-page bill allows small businesses, non-profit organizations and local governments/schools to buy into the state employee's health insurance plan. It also begins to address the health care worker shortage with a series of initiatives to address physician and nurse educator shortages, and moves forward on the expansion of health insurance to children in families up to 300% of the federal poverty level.

You can read details in the bill list at the end of this update. The subcommittee on this bill will meet Wednesday (Feb. 4) at 4 p.m. to begin discussions of this bill - watch our [Issues & Policy Briefs](#) section (www.infonetiowa.com/current_issue/issues_and_policy_briefs.php) on the website for updates and summaries of the bill as they are made available.

HHS BUDGET MEETS FOR FIRST TIME

The Health & Human Services (HHS) Budget Subcommittee met for the first time last week. Legislators went around the table and talked about their priorities. Mental health and disability services (MH/DS) was top among them. Here is what the legislators serving on the subcommittee said:

- **Sen. David Hartsuch of Bettendorf** - While new to the committee, Sen. Hartsuch (the Senate ranking member) said his top priority is utilization of Medicaid services. He wants to focus on how people use Medicaid, and if that use is appropriate. Sen. Hartsuch is an emergency room doctor in his "real life."
- **Rep. Dave Heaton of Mt. Pleasant** - As ranking member of the committee, he is worried about meeting the challenges of this budget and instead of stating his priorities asked state agencies to answer the following questions: 1) how many employees were added in the last two years; 2) how the 1.5% cuts in the current budget year are being handled; 3) how the Governor's additional cuts will be handled; and 4) what assets do you have that could be leased or sold, and what services could be privatized? He also asked each agency to supply a list of all positions, job titles, salaries, whether open or filled, and how long open. Rep. Heaton will also serve on the Resource Center Work Group (see next story).
- **Rep. Lisa Heddens of Ames** - Mental health and disability services, as well as child welfare, are her priorities, but as Chair she is very concerned about funding for the entire budget. She has seen things from the advocate's side, and continues to look at issues through that perspective. She will serve as co-chair of the Resource Center Work Group (see next story).
- **Rep. Linda Miller of Bettendorf** - Her husband is a family practice doctor and she is a registered nurse who managed her husband's practice for many years. Her main issue is reducing waiver waiting lists, and does not think it is fair to have people waiting for services they need to live independently.
- **Sen. Amanda Ragan of Mason City** - As a provider (meals on wheels), she has seen the impact of the economic crisis on the people she

serves and on the people of her community already. She said it was good to see all of the advocates attending the committee meeting and said it is important to hear all of the advocates' concerns. She indicated it will be a very difficult budget year. Sen. Ragan will co-chair the Mental Health/Disability Services Work Group (see next story).

- **Rep. Henry Rayhons of Garner** - Mental health and disability services is his interest, being new to the committee. His step-daughter is the Executive Director at Link Associates, a Des Moines service provider, so he said he has learned a lot from her.
- **Sen. Becky Schmitz of Fairfield** - Mental health is her priority this year, in particular she is concerned about the mental health worker shortages and meeting the real challenges of serving families. As a licensed social worker and having spent 27 years as a school social worker, she knows that kids cannot take advantage of educational services if they have unmet family needs. Sen. Schmitz will serve on the Resource Center Work Group (see next story).
- **Rep. Renee Schulte of Cedar Rapids** - New to the legislature (and this committee) she has a background as a foster parent and counseling foster children as a licensed mental health therapist. She is very concerned about mental health and how it impacts families and children, and mental health will be her priority. Rep. Schulte will serve on the Mental Health/Disability Services Work Group (see next story).
- **Rep. Paul Shomshor of Davenport** - Also new to the committee, he wants to understand how money is spent in this budget, one of the largest budgets in state government (second only to education).
- **Rep. Mark Smith of Marshalltown** - This is his 9th year on the committee, and he has spent more than 36 years as a social worker. His priorities are veterans health, mental health and alcohol and substance abuse.
- **Rep. Phyllis Thede of Davenport** - Mental health, in particular mental health as it affects the aging population. She mentioned her mother has dementia and she wants to make sure all older Iowans are honored as they get services. Rep. Thede is a new legislator.

- **Rep. Beth Wessel-Kroeschell of Ames** - Top priority is mental health - 90% of foster children have a mental health disorder but it is something that needs to be addressed from children to Iowa's aging population. While new to the committee this year, she served on it when she first came to the legislature several years ago. Rep. Wessel-Kroeschell will co-chair the Mental Health/Disability Services (MH/DS) Work Group.
- **Sen. Jack Hatch of Des Moines**, the Co-Chair of the HHS Budget Subcommittee, was not present at the meeting. He was in Washington DC testifying before Congress on Iowa's health care reform initiative, and the work being done to guarantee access to affordable health insurance and contain overall health care costs while maintaining and improving quality.

Mental Health/Disability Services Work Group. It is no secret - the state does not have enough money to go around, and the state-county Mental Health/Disability Services (MH/DS) System no longer has enough to get by without cutting or eliminating services in many counties (or instituting waiting lists like nine counties have already done). The Health & Human Services Budget Subcommittee has appointed a work group to look for ways to fund and reform this system, with the intent of improving quality and fairness, while containing costs. This charge is very challenging, and as one long-time advocate said, "You can have a system that is simple, and you can have a system that is fair. But you cannot have a system that is both simple and fair."

While this is true (because of how we fund the system), the group's challenge is to try to do just that. The work group meets every Wednesday morning (7:30 to 8:30 am) in Room 22 (behind the Senate on the Second Floor). The Work Group consists of Sen. Amanda Ragan of Mason City and Rep. Beth Wessel-Kroeschell of Ames as Co-Chairs, and Sen. David Johnson of Ocheyden and Rep. Renee Schulte of Cedar Rapids.

More than 30 advocates attended the first meeting, and five Senators who do not serve on the work group came to learn more about the system and show their support for an issue that is very important to them (Sen. Mary Jo Wilhelm, Sen. Joe Bolcom, Sen. Jack Hatch, Sen. Rich Olive, Sen. Becky Schmitz).

Legislative Service Bureau staffer John Pollak gave an exceptionally understandable overview of the system and its history. You can see the handouts from that meeting (and follow the progress of the group) at: www.infonetiowa.com/current_issue/issues_and_policy_briefs.php. Pollak said this is one of the most persistent issues legislators have had to deal with - it just never goes away, no matter how much they do to address it.

Some of the important information that came out of this meeting includes:

- The state allows all counties to raise \$125 million (\$119 million is now being raised, because some counties are not at their caps).
- The state kicks in \$165 million through allowed growth and property tax replacement dollars. (these funds received a 1.5% cut, and is slated for 6.5% cut in the Governor's budget)

It is an issue that comes back year after year. Year after year, advocates and legislators and providers and counties come together to figure out how to dole out too-few funds and make do with the money available. Some legislators are getting tired of the "persistence" of this issue and want to do something.

As Sen. Hatch said at the end of the meeting, "We have to do something. Something is going to happen this year. There *will* be a bill introduced that will restructure and redesign the system."

State Resource Center Work Group. Over the past three years, advocates and the media have discussed the need for two state resource centers and the quality of care. This public discussion was fueled by recent media stories pointing out problems at Glenwood State Resource Center. Since discussions about the resource centers are complicated, a work group has been assigned to discuss what should be done to make sure residents receive the best care possible (and whether placement at the resource centers is appropriate). This work group will include Rep. Lisa Heddens of Ames, Rep. Dave Heaton of Mt. Pleasant, Sen. Becky Schmitz of Fairfield, and a yet-to-be-named Republican Senator. They have not yet announced when they will meet. You can follow the progress of this group at: www.infonetiowa.com/current_issue/issues_and_policy_briefs.php.

PARITY MOVES FORWARD

Insurance plans would have to pay for mental health and substance abuse treatment the same way they pay for other illnesses if [HF 139](#) passes the Legislature this year. [HF 139](#) (which used to be [HSB 6](#)) passed out of the House Human Resources Committee this week on a party line vote. Democrats voted for the bill; Republicans voted against it. There was an error in a corrective amendment that ended up creating significant problems with the bill, so some Republicans said they voted against it for that reason.

[HF 139](#) requires insurance plans pay for all illnesses in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders, which includes eating disorders, substance abuse, and autism. Rep. Beth Wessel-Kroeschell will floor manage the bill when it comes up for debate. She plans to have the bill fixed before floor debate (so it will get a new bill number before it comes to debate on the floor). Here is how the legislators in committee voted on the bill:

Yes (12)

- Mark Smith
- Deborah Berry
- Ako Abdul-Samad
- Lisa Heddens
- Bruce Hunter
- Mary Mascher
- Tyler Olson
- Janet Petersen
- Sharon Steckman
- Phyllis Thede
- Roger Wendt
- Beth Wessel-Kroeschell

No (9)

- Linda Miller
- Dwayne Alons
- Clel Baudler
- Greg Forristall
- Dave Heaton
- Kevin Koester
- Renee Schulte
- Chuck Soderberg
- Linda Upmeyer

If you want all illnesses, whether physical or mental, to be treated the same, contact your legislators and attend their public forums:

• **Emails can be found at:** www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Legislators/LegislatorInfo.aspx

• **Call Representatives at:** 515-281-3221
Call Senators at: 515-281-3371

• **Write Senators and Representatives at:**
Senator _____ (Representative _____)
State Capitol
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

• **You can view talking points, statistics and other information online at:**
www.infonetiowa.com/current_issue/issues_and_policy_briefs.php

LOBBYIST APPRENTICES VISIT CAPITOL



ID Action and the Iowa Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council sponsor a

"Lobbyist Apprentice" program to give advocates hands-on experience advocating for issues at the Capitol. This year, we have four excellent lobbyist apprentices. You will hear from time to time what they are up to - and the issues they are working on.

• **Jessica Gertler of Urbandale** - Jessica made her first trip to the Capitol this week to meet her legislators, but everyone was in meetings. Instead, she got to watch the Governor present his 2010 budget in a press conference, listen to Representatives talk on the House floor during their morning remarks, and sit in on the first meeting of the mental health/disability services work group. A busy morning!

• **Diane Lane of Holstein** - Diane must love early mornings, because she was there bright and early for the Coalition for Mental Health and Aging's legislative breakfast at 7 a.m. She attended the breakfast to learn more about the coalition and its priorities, and watch how others advocated on their issues. She moved on to meeting with her legislators, meeting both her Senator (Sen. Jim Seymour) and her Representative (Rep. Jason Schultz). She had great (and I do mean GREAT) conversations with both, and made the connection that Rep. Schultz' mom used to work at Ida Services, where Diane received job training and other services. To round out the day, Diane attended the first Health & Human Services Budget Subcommittee meeting, and learned about each legislator's priorities for the year.

A very productive first visit!

• **Patricia Taylor of Minburn** - Patricia had the luck of coming on the most chaotic day of the session, the day the Governor announced his budget. Legislators were in meetings most of the day and difficult to find. It was too bad - because Patricia had spent loads of time researching her issue for the day (allowing the state's 529 college savings plans to be used by people who are over 30). She had data from other states, knew all about the 529 plans and their histories, and had prepared statements to her legislators. Unfortunately, the legislators weren't there this time (but we're excited to hear their reactions on her next visit). She did attend a House Human Resources Committee meeting where they debated requiring clergy to report any child abuse they witness. After the meeting, she talked to Rep. Lisa Heddens about her issue.

• **Sean Proctor of Urbandale** - Sean was scheduled to come to the Capitol on the day of President Obama's inauguration - and legislators had cancelled all meetings that day. Unfortunately, Sean wasn't able to come to the Capitol this month, but will be making up his day hopefully soon, as we know he has a lot to say!

infoNET ADVOCACY RESOURCES

Mark Your Calendars! Advocating Change Day 2009 will be held on Wednesday, April 1, 2009. We have moved it up a week to avoid the national tornado drill that always disrupts our activities - so don't worry about those alarms going off this year! Registration deadline is March 20, but space always fills up early, so don't wait. You can register online at: www.idaction.org/idaction/change_day_registration.htm.

Share Your Stories! There are a lot of you out there doing great things. A local group in Cedar Rapids is working together to advocate for fixing the state-county mental health and disability services system. Another group in Dubuque is working to bring attention to the need for mental health parity and addressing the needs of persons with mental illness. Yet another group is working on redirecting resources to fund home and community based services (rather than institutional services). Everyone is doing something different. We all learn from others - so share what you are doing, so others

can learn from you! E-mail or mail us your stories (and let us know if you want your name used): infoNET, c/o ID Action, P.O. Box 71369, Des Moines, Iowa 50325 info@idaction.org.

Upcoming Public Forums. Attending a Public Forum is the best way to advocate for an issue. Legislators really do listen - and they hold public forums on their own time (usually Saturday mornings) to give people who can't travel to Des Moines a chance to talk about what is important to them. Because in the end, what is important to you, is important to your legislators!

Tips on attending forums are available at: http://www.infonetiowa.com/advocate/local_forums.php. A full list of forums planned is also available there.

Friday, February 6

9:30 a.m.
Wellman - Chat & Chew at 243-8th Avenue
Senator Schmitz

10:45 a.m.
Kalona - Kalona Public Library, 510 Centre Avenue
Senator Schmitz

11:00 a.m.
Norwalk - Norwalk Public Library at 1051 North Ave
Senator Appel

12:00 noon
Riverside - Murphy's Bar and Grill at 71 East 1st Street
Senator Schmitz

1:15 p.m.
Lone Tree - Lone Tree Community Center
Senator Schmitz

2:30 p.m.
Hills - Iguanas Mexican Restaurant at 104 Main Street East
Senator Schmitz

4-6 p.m.
Cedar Falls - AEA 267, 3712 Cedar Heights Drive
Black Hawk County Area Legislators

Saturday, February 7

8:00 a.m.
Guthrie Center
Senator Boettger

8:00 a.m.
Red Oak - YMCA located at 101 E. Cherry Street
Senator Reynolds & Rep Dolecheck

8:00 a.m.
LeMars - LeMars Public School
Rep Soderberg & Sen Feenstra

8:30 a.m.
Westside - American Legion at 102 1st Street
Rep Roberts

9:00 a.m.
New Hampton - Farm Bureau at 506 W. Milwaukee Street
Senator Wilhelm & Rep Quirk

9:00 a.m.
Esterville - City Library at 613 Central Avenue
Senator Kibbie & Rep Frevert/Mertz

9:00-11:00 a.m.
Altoona - Altoona Public Library at 700 8th Street SW
Senator Black & Rep Geri Huser

9 a.m. to Noon
Council Bluffs - Council Bluffs Library at 400 Willow Ave
Pottawattamie County Area Legislators

9:15 a.m.
LeMars - LeMars Public Library
Rep Soderberg & Sen Feenstra

9:30 a.m.
Dubuque - Diamond Jo Casino, Riverview Room
Dubuque County Area Legislators

9:30-11:00 a.m.
Ottumwa - Bridge View Center at 102 Church Street
Rep Mary Gaskill

10:00 a.m.
Onawa - Onawa Library, 707 Iowa Ave
Rep Windschitl

10:00 a.m.
Greenfield - Greenfield Church on West Side of Square
Senator Boettger

10:00 a.m.
Breda - Breda Fire Station
Senator Kettering & Rep Roberts

11:00 a.m.
Williamsburg - Farm Bureau Office, 212 West State
Rep DeBoef

11:00 a.m.
Graettinger - Bank Plus Meeting Room
Senator Kibbie & Rep Frevert & Rep. Mertz

11:00 a.m.
Akron - Akron Public Library

Rep Soderberg & Sen Feenstra

11:30 a.m.

Cresco

Tell-U-What Grill at 104 N Elm Street

Senator Wilhelm & Rep Quirk

Saturday, February 14

7:30-8:30 a.m.

Elkhart - Fire Station

Senator Noble

8:30 a.m.

Ames - City Council Chambers

Story County Legislators including Sen Olive

9:00 a.m.

Leon - Decatur High School

Senator Reynolds & Rep Reasoner

9:00 a.m.

Clinton - Clinton Chamber of Commerce at 721 S. 2nd Street

Senator Stewart

9:00 a.m.

Maurice - Fire Station

Rep Soderberg & Sen Feenstra

9:00 a.m.

Des Moines - Northwest Community Center at 5110 Franklin Ave

Rep Petersen

9:00-10:00 a.m.

Polk City - Polk City Bank

Senator Noble

9:00-10:30 a.m.

Spencer - Spencer City Hall

Senators Kibbie & Johnson, Reps May, Frevert

9:30-11:00 a.m.

Adel - Public Library

Senator Behn

10:00 a.m.

Atlantic - Atlantic City Hall

Senator Boettger

10:30 a.m.

Orange City - City Hall

Rep Soderberg & Sen Feenstra

10:30-11:30 a.m.

Johnston - Johnston Public Library

Senator Noble

11:00 a.m.

Dewitt - Farm Bureau at 514 8th Street

Rep Schueller

11:00 a.m.

Lamoni - Decatur Community Center

Senator Reynolds & Rep Reasoner

11:30 a.m.

Arnolds Park - Maritime Museum

Senator Johnson

11:45-12:45

Grimes - Grimes Public Library

Senator Noble

BILL TRACKER

STATUS OF BILLS WRITTEN IN EARLIER ISSUES OF *infoNET*

Because of space and the huge number of bills introduced each year, our printed copies of *infoNET* include full descriptions of only those bills that were introduced in the last two weeks. This list gives you the status of all the bills written in Issue #1. You can always view a complete list with descriptions at:

www.infonetiowa.com/current_issue/active_bills.php.

SF 1 & HF 1 - Autism Insurance Coverage (Status: Senate Commerce Committee)

SSB 1019 & SSB 1122 - Prosthetic Device Insurance Coverage (Status: Senate Commerce Committee)

SSB 1037, SSB 1082 & HSB 80 - Private Cause of Action (Status: Senate Judiciary Committee)

SSB 1038 - Educational Grant for Children of Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities (Status: Senate Veterans Affairs Committee)

SSB 1043 & HSB 21 - Iowa Workforce Development Board Expansion (Status: Senate Economic Growth Committee)

BILL TRACKER - NEW BILLS

Bills Going to Governor

HF 64 - Rebuild Iowa Disaster Recovery (Status: Sent to Governor)

This bill contains disaster assistance through the rebuild Iowa office and makes appropriations. Division I of the bill requires the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) to establish and administer a jumpstart housing assistance program to provide grants to local government participants for eligible residents for eligible purposes relating to disaster-affected homes. The bill

includes eligibility requirements and appropriates \$24 million from the Iowa economic emergency fund for the program. Division II of the bill appropriates \$10 million from the Iowa economic emergency fund to the department of human services for providing disaster aid individual assistance grants. Division III of the bill appropriates from the Iowa economic emergency fund \$22 million for community disaster grants to cities and counties, awarded based on their pro rata share of the total statewide damage costs associated with natural disasters occurring after May 24, 2008, and before August 14, 2008, as calculated by the federal emergency management agency as of January 1, 2009. Division IV of the bill creates a Rebuild Iowa Office for purposes of coordinating the state activities associated with the rebuilding efforts. *Notes: Passed House, 98-0; Passed Senate 49-0*

Bills on Floor (Ready for Debate)

HF 139, SSB 1002 & SF 16 - Mental Health & Substance Abuse Parity (Status: House Floor) - Requires all health insurance plans include equal coverage for mental health and substance abuse treatment. Includes all conditions listed in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic & Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders. The only plans exempt from this requirement are businesses that are self-insured (ERISA plans) - only federal law impacts them. Effective 1/1/2010. SF 16 is sponsored by Sen. Jochum *Notes: Rep. Wessel-Kroeschell (Floor Manager) - HF 139 SSB 1002 & SF 16 are in the Senate Commerce Committee - Subcommittee: Schmitz (Chair), Quirnbach & Seymour*

HR 6 - Disability-Friendly Health Care Coverage (Status: House Floor) Urges the adoption of disability-friendly principles for Iowa's health care coverage system. States that a higher proportion of working adults with disabilities do not have health care coverage, and it is difficult for people with disabilities to take their health insurance from job to job. These principles include: 1) health insurance is not based on job and does not limit the ability of the person to save money or have assets; 2) health insurance is affordable; 3) individual cost sharing is based on the ability to pay; 4) health insurance is made both physically and cognitively accessible for all Iowans and the use of preexisting condition exclusions is limited; 5) health insurance covers a broad range of benefits including mental health treatment, medications, preventive services, personal health items and special equipment; 6) public health care programs no longer require a person to remain in poverty in order to keep their benefits (buy-in offered with sliding fee scale); and 7) transitions between health care for children with disabilities and adults with disabilities is coordinated to prevent gaps in care. Sponsored by Rep. Whitead, Smith, Whitaker, Bukta, Lykam, Ford, Frevert, Reichert,

Theide, Cohoon, Berry & Heddens *Notes: Rep. Whitead (Floor Manager)*

Bills in Committee

HF 11 - Minimum Wage COLA Increase (Status: House Labor Committee) - This bill increases the state minimum hourly wage, including the minimum hourly wage established for employees employed for less than 90 days, annually on July 1 by the same percentage as the cost-of-living increase in social security benefits authorized in the previous fiscal year by the federal social security administration. *Notes: Subcommittee: Hunter (Chair), Cownie & Mascher*

HF 18 - Vehicle Registration Fee Exemption/ Veterans with Disabilities (Status: House Transportation Committee) - Veterans with service-connected disabilities rate 50% or higher are no longer required to pay a registration fee for their vehicle. Sponsored by Rep. Hunter *Notes: Subcommittee: Quirk (Chair), Bell, and Wagner*

HF 39 - Precinct Polling Place Closing Hours (Status: House State Government Committee) - Closes the polls an hour earlier (at 8:00 p.m. instead of 9:00 p.m.). This means voters would have one hour less to vote on election day. Sponsored by Rep. Roberts & Drake *Notes: Subcommittee: Rep. Gaskill (Chair), Isenhardt & Roberts*

HF 45 - Medicaid Suspension During Confinement (Status: House Human Resources Committee) - DHS currently ends all Medicaid benefits for people committed to a correctional institution (county or city jail, detention center, prison, community-based corrections). When a person is released, they have to reapply and it can take some time to reinstate Medicaid. This bill requires DHS to suspend the Medicaid benefits of anyone confined for up to 12 months, allowing immediate reinstatement of benefits upon release. People confined more than a year will still have their Medicaid benefits terminated. Requires the facility where the person is confined to notify DHS about a person's release so eligibility can be redetermined prior to release. Sponsored by Rep. Heddens *Notes: Subcommittee: Heddens (Chair), Baudler, and Wendt*

HF 52 - HCBS Waiver/Specialized Medical Equipment (Status: House Human Resources Committee) - Adds "specialized medical equipment" to the list of covered expenses under all Medicaid Home & Community Based Services waivers. Currently, only the Brain Injury & Physical Disabilities waivers covers these costs. Sponsored by Rep. Struyk *Notes: Subcommittee: Not yet assigned*

HF 56 - Early Childhood Immunizations/Mercury (Status: House Human Resources Committee) - Currently, early childhood immunizations cannot contain

more than trace amounts of mercury, except for flu vaccines. This bill eliminates the flu vaccine exemption, requiring flu vaccines to have no more than trace amounts of mercury. Some parents have expressed concern that mercury may be linked to autism.

Sponsored by Rep. Whitaker *Notes: Subcommittee: Wendt (Chair), Koester & Steckman*

SF 21 - Cancer Clinical Trials Insurance Mandate (Status: Senate Commerce Committee) - Insurance plans are required to include coverage of approved cancer clinical trials if they pay for other cancer treatments. Effective 7/1/2009. Sponsored by Sen. Bolkcom *Notes: Subcommittee: Bolkcom, Hartsuch & Rielly*

SF 26 - Hospital Discounts to Uninsured (Status: Senate Human Resources Committee) - Requires hospitals to give uninsured patients from families with incomes up to 600% of the federal poverty level an "uninsured patient discount" on services exceeding \$300 per admission or outpatient encounter. (600% of the federal poverty level for a family of four is \$127,000/year) Critical access hospitals and rural hospitals would be required to provide the discount for families earning up to 300% of the federal poverty level. Creates a formula to determine the discount. Establishes a maximum collectible amount over a 12-month period. Allows the hospital to first require a person to apply for public programs or other third-party coverage available if there is a reasonable basis to believe that person is eligible for the program. Exempts hospitals that do not charge for their services. Allows a hospital's license to be revoked for failing to comply with this law. Applies only to Iowa residents (including persons that are not US citizens). *Notes: Subcommittee: Bolkcom (Chair), Hatch, and Seymour*

SSB 1066 - Disabled Veteran Homestead Property Tax Freeze (Status: Senate Veterans Affairs Committee) - Freezes the property taxes due on a disabled veteran's home. Effective upon enactment for tax years beginning on or after 7/1/2009. *Notes: Subcommittee: Sen. Black (Chair), Seymour & Warnstadt*

HF 68 - Veterans Mental Health Parity (Status: House Veterans Affairs Committee) - Requires insurance plans covering veterans to pay for the treatment of mental illnesses and substance abuse equal to the way it pays for the treatment of physical illnesses. Exempts individual plans and applies to small employer plans (under 50 employees) that already include mental health coverage. Defines "mental illness" as anything in the most recent version of the Diagnostic & Statistical Manual (DSM) for Mental Illness. Sponsored by Rep. Zirkelbach. *Notes: Subcommittee: Bukta (Chair), Alons, and Kearns*

HF 74 - Searchable Budget and Tax Information (Status: House State Government Committee) - This bill would require the department of management to develop and make available to the public by January 1, 2011, a single, searchable budget database website which would allow the public at no cost to search an aggregated database that would provide the names and principal location or residence of recipients of state funds, amount of funds expended, the agency that provided those funds, and several other details. The disclosure would not be required for individual recipients of state assistance. The bill would also require the department of management, in consultation with the department of revenue, by January 1, 2010, to develop and operate on an internet site a searchable database of all the tax rates in the state for each taxing district. Sponsored by Rep. Paulsen, Struyk, Helland & Upmeyer *Notes: Subcommittee: Frevert (Chair), Isenhart, and Pettengill*

HF 106 - Service Animals/HCBS Waiver Eligibility (Status: House Human Resources Committee) - Adds the purchase and maintenance of a service animal to the list of eligible services under the Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers. Sponsored by Rep. Heaton *Notes: Subcommittee: Not yet assigned*

HF 121 - MHI & Resource Center Resident Prosecution (Status: House Ways & Means Committee) - Does not allow residents of state mental health institutes and state resource centers (Glenwood/Woodward) to be charged with willful injury. Sponsored by Rep. Struyk *Notes: Subcommittee: Not yet assigned*

HF 145 - Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemption (Status: House Ways & Means Committee) - Exempts the first \$150,000 of a disabled veteran who has a disability rating of 70-99% from property taxes. Exempts the first \$300,000 of a disabled veteran who has a disability rating of 100% from property taxes. Allows this exemption to transfer to the surviving spouse as long as unmarried. Does not appropriate money and requires local governments to absorb the cost of this exemption. Effective upon enactment, for taxes due on or after 7/1/2010 (filing deadline is 10/1/2009). *Notes: Subcommittee: Not yet assigned*

HSB 116 - Iowa Railway Finance Authority Repeal (Status: House Transportation Committee) - This bill would repeal the Iowa Railway Finance Authority and transfers those duties and responsibilities to the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), including administration of the passenger rail service revolving fund. The bill also expands the authority of the Director of IDOT to enter into agreements for developing passenger rail service serving Iowa. *Notes: Subcommittee: Bell (Chair), Roberts and Wendt*

HSB 119 - Involuntary Hospitalization/Hospital Acceptance (Status: House Public Safety Committee) - Requires a hospital or facility to immediately accept a person taken into custody after an involuntary hospitalization hearing. The hospital/facility is required to take the person from the sheriff within the hour (if the person was evaluated by a physician within the last 12 hours). Failure to accept will make the hospital or facility in contempt of court. *Notes: Subcommittee: Kressig (Chair), S. Olson & Wenthe*

SF 48 - Health Care Reform (Status: Senate Human Resources Committee) - Expands on last year's health care reform initiative. Highlights include allowing small businesses, non-profit organizations, and local governments/schools to buy the state employees' health insurance plans for their employees, with the same premiums given to state employees. Requires a minimum of three years participation in the program and requires the insurance plans offered to meet minimum standards of quality and affordability established by the Iowa Choice Insurance Exchange. Allows parents whose insurance includes coverage of an adult child up to age 25 or enrolled in school to deduct the value of that coverage from their state taxes. Requires parents to declare on their taxes whether their children are insured (beginning 2010). Requires the Department of Revenue to send information about public programs if they find a person's income meets Medicaid/hawk-i guidelines and they have uninsured children. Requires the taxpayer who qualifies for these health care programs to enroll their child within 90 days of receiving the information. Allows Medicaid to average three years of income for self-employed families to establish eligibility. Allows private providers giving free care to be covered under the state's liability insurance, and establishes a health care workforce shortage initiative to support a medical residency training grant program, health care professional loan repayment program, and nurse educator forgivable loan and nursing faculty fellowship program (no money appropriated). Mandates all non-ERISA insurance plans cover medication therapy management. Prohibits drug manufacturers from giving health care providers gifts, with some exceptions. Protects the privacy of patients receiving prescription drugs (bans data mining by pharmaceutical companies). *Notes: Subcommittee: Hatch (Chair), Bolkcom & Seymour*

SF 57 - Total Smoking Ban (Status: Senate State Government Committee) - Makes casinos, gambling structures, riverboats, and racetracks all subject to the state's smoking ban. Sponsored by Sen. Bolkcom, Quirnbach, Beall, Heckroth, Dvorsky, Wilhelm, Hogg, Olive, Dearden, Fraise, Appel, Courtney, Jochum, Rielly, McCoy & Hatch *Notes: Subcommittee: Kibbie (Chair), Black & Hartsuch*

SF 58 - Long-Term Care Insurance Policy Standardization (Status: Senate Commerce Committee) - Requires the Insurance Commissioner to set standards for the terms and benefits required in long-term care insurance policies. Requires a standard format for policies (for easier comparison) and requires the development of a consumer guide available to people applying for long-term care insurance. Effective for plans offered, delivered or issued on or after 7/1/2009. Sponsored by Sen. Bolkcom & 26 Senate Democrats *Notes: Subcommittee: Heckroth (Chair), Dandekar, and Hartsuch*

SF 77 - MS Support Fund/Lottery (Status: Senate State Government Committee) - Adds a new scratch and pull-tab lottery game to benefit persons with multiple sclerosis (MS). Funds received from the games would be used to create an MS Support Fund to provide financial assistance to organizations in this state that support and assist persons with multiple sclerosis or fund MS research. Sponsored by Sen. Zaun. *Notes: Subcommittee: Not yet assigned*

SSB 1126 - Diabetes Insurance Coverage (Status: Senate Commerce Committee) - Requires insurance plans to cover outpatient diabetes self-management training (10 hours/year) for any individual diagnosed with any type of diabetes. Current law requires only 10 hours of initial training for certain types of diabetes. Applies to individual, group, and public employer plans. Effective upon enactment to plans started or renewed on or after 7/1/2009. *Notes: Subcommittee: Dandekar (Chair), Behn & Rielly*

infoNET
c/o ID Action
P.O. Box 71369
Des Moines, IA 50325

[First Name] [Last Name] OR CURRENT RESIDENT
[ADDRESS]
[Address2]
[City], [State] [Zip]-[Zip4]

Your State Representative is: *[Representative]*
Your State Senator is: *[Senator]*

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
DES MOINES IA
PERMIT NO. 5746