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IMPORTANT CORRECTION!

We have always tried to make contacting your legislators as easy as possible for you. To help, we have included the names of your State Senator and State Representative on the mailing label of each issue of *infoNET*.

Last week, our mailing contractor made a serious error in our last issue, and printed the name of your US REPRESENTATIVE (your Congressman) in the space that lists your STATE REPRESENTATIVE. Your US Representative works for you in Washington DC at the US Capitol; your State Representative works for you in Des Moines at the State Capitol.

Please disregard the name of your State Representative in your January 31 issue - **the correct name of your State Representative is printed on this issue's label.** Thanks for understanding, and sorry for the confusion!

PS - New subscribers and persons with PO addresses will not have their legislators listed. If you receive *infoNET* at your business address, the legislator may not be correct (it will list the legislator that represents the area where your business is located). New subscriber information will be added soon; if you receive *infoNET* at a PO or business address, you can send us your street address if you want your legislators listed.

CAPITOL REVIEW

People often ask what a day in the life of a legislator is like. No day at the Capitol can be called a "typical day," but one thing is certain. The life of a legislator is not easy, especially now that the legislative session is in full swing.

Legislators' days are packed full with floor debate, subcommittee meetings to discuss the details of bills with interested groups, committee meetings to hear testimony and vote on bills, and budget work groups to review the details of various program and services funding. And if that isn't enough to keep them busy, legislators have to find time to read and research bills, respond to emails, phone calls, and letters from people back home, listen to lobbyists pleading their cases, and attend the many breakfasts, lunches, dinners, Capitol day events, and receptions held by organizations and groups throughout session.

Legislators do all this with one clerk, whose job is usually just keeping all the papers legislators collect throughout the day in order, and making sure their schedules are updated. On weekends, legislators may have time to do laundry, but probably spend most of their time running from town to town, attending forums and meeting with constituents. In between, they try to find some time to see their kids and spouses, and catch up on their "real life" jobs.

As we mentioned, session is in full swing with five weeks down, and eleven weeks to go. With roughly one-third of session done, legislators have introduced more than 870 bills and are trying to get as many out of committee early before the first funnel deadline hits.

As you recall, legislators set deadlines to keep things moving. The first deadline (called a “funnel”) is in exactly one month - on the next Friday the 13th (Friday, March 13). By that time, a bill must have been voted out of a House or Senate committee in order to stay alive. Any bill that does not get voted out of a committee by that time is no longer eligible for debate (unless it spends money or includes a tax - the deadlines don't apply to them).

So, if you see a bill you like and want to see become law this year - tell your legislators now! You can let them know what you think about bills at local public forums, or by calling, emailing, or writing. You can find out how to contact your legislators at the end of this report. A list of public forums for the next two weeks is also listed at the end of this update. This information is also available (and is updated more frequently) online at: www.infonetia.org.

BUDGET NEWS. Not much progress on budgets - legislators are waiting to see the results of the national economic stimulus package and March revenue estimates to know if the economy is stabilizing or getting worse. They want to be sure they cut enough this session, so they do not have to come back in June or July for a special budget cutting session. Iowa looks pretty good with its 7.9% cut (the 1.5% 2009 cut and the 6.5% proposed 2010 cut) - 14 states have had to raise taxes this year to cover their budget gaps and the average budget gaps states are facing is 14% (almost twice Iowa's gap).

ATALISSA DISCUSSIONS ONGOING. There has been a lot of discussion at the Capitol this week about the treatment of 21 men with mental retardation working at a turkey factory in Atalissa. The Governor held a press conference this week about it, and legislators are researching the labor, housing, and civil rights issues involved. We expect to hear more about this in the coming weeks, and some of the findings from this research may very well drive changes in Iowa law. Keep posted for more information.

YOUR TWO CENTS WORTH. Have ideas to improve Iowa government? Submit your suggestions

at www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/SurveyForm/Improving_StGovt/.

INSURANCE MANDATES PROGRESS

This year, the Legislature is looking at several “insurance mandates,” or bills that require insurance plans to do something (pay for a treatment or service, pay for services of certain providers, or cover a certain illness). This year, legislators are reviewing several “mandate” bills. All but one of these mandates require insurance companies to recognize and pay for treatment of a mental or physical disability.

- **Autism Mandate (SF 1 & HF 1)** - Requires certain treatments for autism spectrum disorder be covered by private insurance plans. These bills are receiving a lot of attention this year, and several autism experts and parents of children with autism made their case to legislators this week in a packed Senate subcommittee meeting. SF 1 is in the Senate Commerce Committee; HF 1 is in the House Human Resources Committee.
- **Veteran's Mental Health Services (HF 68)** - Requires coverage for mental health services to veterans. Veterans currently have long waits for services at the VA Hospital (a federal issue), fear going to the VA hospital for mental health services (and having it on their records and potentially affect their military careers), and not being able to access services close to home (they often have to miss work to travel across the state). This bill is currently in the House Veterans Affairs Committee, and is sponsored by Iraq War veteran Rep. Ray Zirkelbach.
- **Prosthetic Coverage (HF 311, SSB 1019 & SSB 1122)** - Requires coverage for medically-necessary prosthetics. Most insurance plans do include some prosthetic coverage, but some do not. The House Commerce Committee passed this bill out this week - so it is ready for debate by the entire House.
- **Diabetes Self-Management (SSB 1126 & HSB 153)** - Requires coverage of 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. These bills are in the Commerce Committee.

• **Mental Health & Substance Abuse Parity** ([HF 234](#), [SF 16](#) & [SSB 1002](#)) - The House is getting ready to debate a bill that will require equal coverage for both mental and physical illnesses, and require coverage for substance abuse treatment. The bill (which used to be HF 139) is now called the “Equality in Health Care and Veterans Wellness Act.” It requires all health plans regulated by the state and public employee plans to include coverage for all recognized mental illnesses and the treatment of substance abuse. Studies have shown that the cost to premiums is less than 1%, commonly between 0-.5% since we already cover biologically-based mental illnesses. The bill also includes language directing state agencies to work together to find ways to improve mental health services to Iowa veterans and their families.

Veterans’ groups say this bill will help families of Iowa soldiers, as well as soldiers themselves, access mental health services when needed. Again, many veterans say they have difficulty accessing VA Hospital services in a timely manner and close to home, and their families have no access unless their private insurance includes such coverage or they can pay for it out of pocket. It is unclear when the House will debate this issue, but there are a number of legislators who have not yet made up their minds.

With all of these mandates requiring some type of disability coverage, you might think that insurance plans are treating persons with disabilities unfairly. Several legislators have introduced a resolution encouraging private insurance plans, health care reformers, and public health plans to enact “disability-friendly health care principles.” You can read more about this in [HR 6](#).

If you want your legislators to act on one or more of these mandates this year, contact them now. These bills are controversial, so the more contacts legislators receive, the better the chances of passage.

- **Emails can be found at:** www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Legislators/LegislatorInfo.aspx
- **Call can be made Monday-Friday:** 515.281.3221 (Rep.); 515.281.3371 (Sen.)
- **Write Senators and Representatives at:**
Senator _____ (Representative _____)
State Capitol, Des Moines, Iowa 50319

EPILEPSY DRUG BACK

Iowa law allows pharmacists to substitute generic epileptic drugs without a patient and doctor’s approval. Generic drugs often have inactive ingredients that can cause people with epilepsy to have a bad reaction. Last year, legislators filed a bill requiring pharmacists to get written approval from both the patient and the patient’s doctor before being able to give the person a generic of the epilepsy medication. The bill didn’t get very far, but this year a group of legislators have reintroduced the bill ([HF 236](#)). It is currently in the House Human Resources Committee, assigned to Rep. Tyler Olson of Cedar Rapids, Rep. Beth Wessel-Kroeschell of Ames, and Rep. Linda Miller of Bettendorf.

HEALTH/HUMAN SERVICES WORK GROUP REPORTS

State Resource Center Work Group. The work group that has been assigned to look into concerns about the quality of care in Iowa’s two state resource centers (Glenwood & Woodward) met for the first time last week. Sally Cunningham, the Deputy Director of the Iowa Department of Human Services, reviewed the history of the two centers. A copy of that historical background can be found at: http://www.infonetiowa.com/current_issue/issues_and_policy_briefs.php.

- Glenwood is an important archeological site and a national treasure, so the use of the land may be limited.
- The average stay of current residents at Glenwood is 26 years and 21 years at Woodward.
- 18-23% of the staff are “professionals” and 25% are administrative or support staff.
- All staff required to be licensed are licensed. Recruitment of professionals is difficult for a variety of reasons - pay, difficulty of population served, concerns for personal safety of staff, etc. Centers struggle to recruit and keep speech pathologists. There are shortages in nursing and occupational therapists.

The Iowa Attorney General’s Office reviewed the US Department of Justice’s process in monitoring progress toward addressing the problems cited at the resource centers (in what is called a “consent decree”). Both resource centers are required to be

in compliance by April 2007, then maintain that compliance for two years (until April 2009). In 2000, the Department of Justice (DOJ) decided that Glenwood State Resource Center was NOT in compliance, so its compliance deadline was extended by a year until April 2010.

- Woodward is in compliance with consent decree, although physical and nutritional management is one area in which the DOJ would like to see more progress. DOJ has agreed it is a very difficult area for any facility and does not see it as a serious enough problem to change their compliance timeframe.
- Glenwood is in compliance in some areas, but remains non-compliant in physical & nutritional management, medical, nursing, and psychological services (in the area of individual support plans).
- A “consent decree” which states the problems that need to be corrected is developed like a work plan, listing the problems and the plans for correcting those problems. The approach is focused on working with the facility to address problems in the best way possible.

Members of the work group include: Rep. Lisa Heddens of Ames, Rep. Dave Heaton of Mt. Pleasant, and Sen. Becky Schmitz of Fairfield. Sen. James Seymour of Woodbine, Sen. Jack Hatch of Des Moines, and Rep. Greg Forristall of also attended the meeting. The work group reports back to the Health & Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee (the budget subcommittee that provides funding for the resource centers).

The group will meet every Thursday morning (7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.) in Room 102, and meetings are open to the public. It is not appropriate to speak uninvited at these meetings - legislators will let the audience know when and if they may make comments. You can contact your State Senator & State Representative at:

If you have views about the state resource centers and wish to share them with your legislators, now is a great time to do that, while discussions are just beginning.

- **Emails can be found at:** www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Legislators/LegislatorInfo.aspx
- **Call your legislators at:** 515-281-3221 (Representatives); 515-281-3371 (Senators)

- **Write your legislators at:** _____
Senator _____ (Representative _____)
State Capitol, Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Mental Health/Disability Services County Funding Work Group. The work group looking for ways to stretch limited funds further met again this week and continued to hear testimony on the progress made in developing a single information system for the county and state, and learn the basics of how “allowed growth” state funding for disability services is distributed to counties. The room was again packed with advocates and legislators (including many that do not serve on the work group).

During the discussion, the work group talk about the impact of the 1.5% and 6.5% across the board cuts to a portion of the state funding for the system (called the county mental health property tax relief fund). Counties are legally allowed to raise their property taxes if the state does not fully fund this pot of money, but need to know what the Legislature intends to do before they certify their budgets in a couple weeks.

Sen. David Johnson of Ocheyden and Sen. Joe Bolkcom of Iowa City each called for the state to send a message to counties as soon as possible, to let them know if they should plan for the worst. County staff reminded legislators that if they did end up fully funding property tax relief after some counties had raised their levies, the levies would automatically be lowered.

RIVAL REDESIGN PLANS INTRODUCED

Two Senators have introduced their own plans for redesigning the decade-old state-county mental health and disability services (MH/DS) system.

- **Regionalization of the MH/DS System** ([SF 134](#)). Sen. Jack Hatch, a Des Moines Democrat, has proposed a bill to require counties organize themselves into mental health/disability services (MH/DS) service areas that can be no smaller than 100,000 population. Six counties would qualify as a service area on their own (Black Hawk, Linn, Johnson, Polk, Scott, & Woodbury). Other counties would need to form service areas that meet the 100,000 population minimum. The bill also sets a uniform state-wide levy and allows counties to levy additional funds (a supplemental levy) to be used to get rid of waiting lists (or avoid waiting lists) and fund a basic level of services that

will be defined by the MH/MR/DD/BI Commission. County supplemental levies are approved by the Risk Pool Board.

- **State Take-Over of MH/DS System (SF 144)**. Sen. Steve Kettering, a Lake View Republican, has proposed a bill to have the State take over the county portion of the mental health services system. Therefore, the state would pay for all services required by law. Since some counties still pay for “optional services” and services to “non-mandated populations,” the bill allows the county to continue to provide those services at its own cost. No money is included in this bill to fund the take over, the cost of which would be significant.

LOBBYIST APPRENTICES TALK SHOP



Three of our four ID Action lobbyist apprentices returned to the Capitol this week to continue to meet legislators and get a feel for how things work at the State Capitol.

- **Jessica Gertler of Urbandale** met her State Representative Scott Raecker and talked about funding for local disability services. She also met her State Senator Brad Zaun, who took her on a tour of the Senate Chamber, including taking her onto the Senate floor where members of the public are not allowed unless with a legislator. Jessica also went to a House Human Resources Committee meeting, where she watched a new legislator run her first bill. Jessica is looking forward to seeing her legislators again at their next public forum in Urbandale.
- **Diane Lane of Holstein** decided to mix things up this time and attended an Education Budget Subcommittee meeting. During her first visit she went to a Health and Human Services Budget Subcommittee meeting. After that, she caught up with her state legislators Sen. Jim Seymour and Rep. Jason Schultz to let them know she was back in town. Diane also got interested in a newly introduced bill that would eliminate a requirement that a judge dismiss a case against a child who has mental retardation or mental illness if they are instead committed to an institution for care (SF 100). She and **Patricia Taylor, our lobbyist apprentice from Minburn**, attended the subcommittee meeting on the bill and got to see first-hand how lobbyists present their cases to legislators and argue their positions. The three-

legislator subcommittee met for about 30 minutes to determine if there was a way to compromise on the bill, and then sent the two sides home to work out a deal. Advocates for the changes say parents of delinquent kids are using this law as a loophole to get criminal charges dismissed. Advocates for keeping the law as it is say judges should be forced to consider whether a child’s mental retardation or mental illness contributed to the delinquent or criminal act.

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.

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 20

8:30 a.m. - Dubuque - One Mean Bean at 2728 Asbury Rd #750 - Rep. Isenhardt

9:00 a.m. - Laurens - Laurens City Hall - Sen. Kibbie & Rep. Frevert/Mertz

9:30-10:30 a.m. - Sheldon - Community Services Center - Sen. Johnson

10:00 a.m. - Clear Lake - Clear Lake Bank and Trust at 322 Main - Rep. Steckman & Sen. Ragan

11:30 a.m. - Eldora - Ahoy Fountain at 1266 Edgington Ave - Sen. Sodders

Saturday, February 21

8:00 a.m. - Algona - Library at 210 N Phillips - Sen. Kibbie & Rep. Frevert/Mertz

8:00 a.m. - Audubon - Audubon Economic Development Office - Sen. Boettger

8:00 a.m. - Creston - Congregate Meal Site at Restored Depot - Sen. Reynolds, Rep.s Reasoner & Dolecheck

8:00 a.m. - Shenandoah - Sen. Houser

8:30 a.m. - Missouri Valley - Rand Community Center, 100 S. 4th - Rep. Windschitl & Sen. Seymour

9:00 a.m. - Brunsville - - Rep. Soderberg & Sen. Feenstra

9-noon - Council Bluffs - Council Bluffs Library at 400 Willow Ave - Pottawattamie County Area Legislators

9:00 a.m. - Lansing - Milty's at 200 Main Street - Sen. Wilhelm

9:00 a.m. - Mason City - Borealis Coffee Shop at 316 N. Federal Ave - Rep. Steckman & Sen. Ragan

9-11:00 a.m. - Newton - DMACC Campus in Newton - Sen. Black & Rep. Geri Huser

9:00 a.m. - Oelwein - Luigi's at 1020 S. Frederick Avenue - Heckroth, Schoenjahn, Ficken, Thomas , Wenthe

9:00 a.m. - Sherrill - Sherrill Fire Department at 5309 S Mound Rd - Sen. Hancock

9:00-noon - Sioux City - Wilbur Aalfs (Main) Library at 6th & Pierce - Woodbury County Legislators

9:00-11:30 - Urbandale - Urbandale Chamber Office at 2900 Justin Drive, Suite L - Rep.. Raecker & Sen. Zaun

9:15-11:15 a.m. - Burlington - Burlington Public Library, 210 Court Street - Rep. Cohoon

9:30 a.m. - Webster City - City Council Chambers at 400 2nd Street - Rep. Bailey & Sen. Olive

10:00 a.m. - Clarinda - - Sen. Houser

10:00 a.m. - Carroll - Swan Lake Education Center - Sen. Kettering & Rep. Roberts

10-noon - Cedar Falls - AEA 267, 3712 Cedar Heights Drive - Black Hawk County Area Legislators

10:00 a.m. - Corning - Community Center - Sen. Reynolds & Rep. Dolecheck

10:00 a.m. - Des Moines - Des Moines University: Academic Center Ruza Lecture Hall - Sen. McCoy & Rep. Oldson

10:00 a.m. - Harlan - Harlan Public Library - Sen. Boettger

10:00 a.m. - Humboldt - Humboldt City Hall at 29-5th Street South - Sen. Kibbie & Rep. Frevert/Mertz

10:00 a.m. - Logan - Logan Community Center, 108 W. 4th - Rep. Windschitl & Sen. Seymour

10:00-noon - Washington - Washington County Courthouse, 2nd Floor - Sen. Schmitz & Rep. Marek

10:30 a.m. - Cedar Rapids - Mercy Medical Center, Halligan Education Center - Linn County Area Legislators including Dvorsky

11:00 a.m. - Hawarden - Hawarden City Hall - Rep. Soderberg & Sen. Feenstra

11:00 a.m. - Marshalltown - Iowa Valley Continuing Ed Conference Center room 608 - Sen. Sodders & Rep. Smith

11:00 a.m. - Postville - Postville Public Library - Sen. Wilhelm

11:30 a.m. - Belmond - City Hall Community Meeting Room at 112 2nd Ave NE - Rep. Bailey & Sen. Olive

1:00 p.m. - Eldridge - Eldridge Public Library - Rep. Gayman

1:00 p.m. - Mt. Ayr - Extension Office - Sen. Reynolds & Rep. Dolecheck

1:00 p.m. - Ossian - Ossian Public Library - Sen. Wilhelm

Friday, February 27

8:30 a.m. - Dubuque - One Mean Bean at 2728 Asbury Rd #750 - Rep. Isenhardt

9:00 a.m. - Plainfield - Plainfield Public Library at 723 Main Street - Sen. Heckroth

9:30 a.m. - Emmetsburg - McNally Bake Shop at 1021 Broadway - Sen. Kibbie & Rep. Frevert

10:45 a.m. - Clarksville - Clarksville Public Library at 103 W. Greene Street - Sen. Heckroth

Noon-1:00 - Davenport - Clarion Hotel, 5202 Brady Street - Scott County Area Legislators

Noon - Osceola - Terrible's Casino - Sen. Reynolds & Rep. Reasoner

1:00 p.m. - Parkersburg - Civic Center at 502 3rd Street - Sen. Heckroth

2:45 p.m. - Shellrock - Boyd Community Building - Sen. Heckroth

Saturday, February 28

8:00 a.m. - Rock Rapids - Forster Community Building, 404 1st Ave - Rep. Alons

8:30-10:00 a.m. - Fort Dodge - Iowa Central Community College - Miller, Olive, Kibbie, Beall & others

8:30-10:00 a.m. - Mount Pleasant - Iowa Wesleyan College Chadwick Library - Mount Pleasant Area Legislators

8:30 a.m. - Oskaloosa - Smokey Row 109 S Market - Rep. Palmer

9:00 a.m. - Bellevue - Bellevue City Hall at 106 N 3rd - Sen. Stewart & Rep. Schueller

9:00 a.m. - Glenwood - - Sen. Houser

9:00 a.m. - Oxford Junction - Schakey's at 106 W. Broadway - Sen. Hancock

9:00-10:30 a.m. - Spencer - Spencer City Hall - Sen.s Kibbie & Johnson, Rep.s May, Frevert

9:00 a.m. - Winterset - Farmer's & Merchants State Bank (on the square) - Rep.. Tymeson

9:30 a.m. - Decorah - Decorah City Hall - Sen. Wilhelm

9:30-11:30 a.m. - Iowa City - Emma Harvat Hall in Iowa City City Hall - Johnson County Legislators & Sen. Schmidt

9:30-11:00 a.m. - Waukee - Waukee City Hall - Sen. Behn

9:30-11:30 a.m. - West Des Moines - West Des Moines City Council - Sen. Ward

10:00 a.m. - Davenport - St. Ambrose - Scott County Area Legislators

10:00 a.m. - Osage - 1st United Methodist Church 819 Main Street - Rep. Kuhn & Sen. Ragan

10:00 a.m. - Sac City - - Sen. Kettering

10:30 a.m. - Signourney - Keokuk County Courthouse, 101 S. Main - Rep.. DeBoef

11:30 a.m. - Arnolds Park - Maritime Museum - Sen. Johnson

11:30 a.m. - Waukon - Waukon Vets Club across from the court house - Sen. Wilhelm

12:00-1:30 - Jefferson - Pizza Ranch at 206 N. Wilson Street - Sen. Beall

BILL TRACKER

This week, *infoNET* has a brand new tool for our online readers and website users. *infoNET*'s new web-based [Bill Tracker](#). We have been working on this feature for the past two years, and with the help of our web programmers, we are excited to be able to launch it this week!

What is the [infoNET Bill Tracker](#)? We track a number of bills that might be of interest to persons with disabilities. Every two weeks, we send out a list of those bills with the status as of that moment. Things happen quickly in the Iowa Legislature, so these lists get old very fast. The lists are only really current as of the day they are written. Now, you will be able to visit our online Bill Tracker and see the current status of bills, review new bills added between issues, and find out if anything has changed on bills you care about. We will try to update bills on a daily basis, but naturally, events at the Capitol may delay us by a day or two.

- This is a work in progress, so we welcome your comments and suggestions (info@idaction.org).

- You can now view individual bills along with our description by clicking on the “Details” link below the bill title. You can also print individual bill descriptions, instead of the entire list.
- You can read the full bill (not just our description of it) by clicking on the bill’s number. It is linked to the Iowa Legislature’s website (the full text of the bill will appear).
- You are now able to organize bills as you want - by bill number, by bill title, by subject (a new feature entirely), and by status (signed, in committee, etc).
- Each bill description will include a time stamp, so you can see the last time it has been updated. This way, you will know if anything has changed since the last time you looked. Also, bills often are introduced and no further action is taken on them. If you see a date stamp that is really old, it doesn’t mean we are neglecting it. It simply means nothing has happened. If you think there is an error, you can always click on the bill number and look at the status of the bill on the website (the link will take you directly to all the information you need on the bill).
- You can read or print the entire list of bills in our Bill Tracker (or copy and paste it for your own use) by clicking on the “Print All” link at the beginning of the bill list.
- You can get to the **infoNET Bill Tracker** in two ways - through the website (www.infonetiowa.com/current_issue/active_bills.php) or going directly to it at www.ialobby.com/CPCBillTracker/tabid/59/Default.aspx?cid=INFONET#

Try it out - and let us know what we can do to make it work even better for you! And remember, if you do not have a computer or the Internet, many local libraries have public Internet access and computers available for patrons. Many also offer basic training on the Internet, just ask your local librarian about what is available.

BILL TRACKER - NEW BILLS

Bills on Floor (Ready for Debate)

HF 234, 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), Quirmbach & Seymour

HF 311, SSB 1019 & SSB 1122 - Prosthetic Device Insurance Coverage (Status: House Floor) -

Requires all health insurance plans to cover the costs of prosthetic devices prescribed by a doctor. In order for the device to be covered by the insurance, it must be "medically necessary" as defined by federal law for health insurance for Americans with disabilities. Effective 7/1/2009. *Notes: Rep. Kressig (Floor Manager); Senate Subcommittees: Rielly (Chair), Olive & Ward; Rielly (Chair), Hartsuch & Olive*

SF 82 & HF 267 - Iowa Workforce Development Board Expansion (Status: House Floor) -

Adds four non-voting members to the Iowa Workforce Development Board - a representative from the vocational rehabilitation community (appointed by the State Rehabilitation Council of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation), representatives from the Department of Education and the Department of Economic Development, and someone appointed by the US Department of Labor (Office of Apprenticeship). Requested by Iowa Workforce Development *Notes: Passed Senate 49-0; Rep. Ford (Floor Manager)*

SF 137 - Wage Discrimination (Status: Senate Floor)

- Makes it illegal to discriminate against employees (and pay them less) because of age, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion or disability. Allows the Civil Rights Commission to award damages to a person subject to wage discrimination. *Notes: Sen. Appel (Floor Manager)*

SR 9 - Health Care for All (Encouraging Federal/ State Collaboration) (Status: Senate Floor) -

Encourages federal-state collaboration to achieve quality, affordable health care for all. States principles to follow in reforming our health care system - stabilize financing through payment reform; implement patient-centered medical home; prioritize payments for primary and preventive care; support value-based purchasing efforts; restructure national financing for long-term care; improve cost-containment policies; establish national electronic medical record standards and provide financial and technical assistance for compliance; facilitate confidential sharing of patient data within and across state borders; increase access to affordable health insurance coverage; expand coverage to everyone using private market and publicly-financed plans; allow greater flexibility in state regulation of

federal ERISA plans; eliminate pre-existing condition exemptions and require guaranteed issuance of insurance; strengthen the health care safety net by increasing investments to programs like Medicaid, community health centers and children's health insurance program; support state innovation; invest in increasing the number of primary care providers, midlevel practitioners, direct care workers, and laboratory and community health workers; monitor specialty supply; increase quality by developing evidence-based standards; require the use of informed and shared decision-making between provider and patient; eliminate disparities and inequities; invest in proven prevention programs and health promotion activities; reduce unwarranted variation of care; and demand effective public quality reporting by all providers. Sponsored by Sen. Hatch and all Senate Democrats (32 sponsors)

Bills in Committee

HF 195 - Voters in Primaries (17-1/2 year olds) (Status: House State Government Committee) - Allows voters that are 17-1/2 to vote in a primary election, as long as they will be 18 years old by the time of the general election. Currently, a 17-1/2 year old may register to vote at the time of the primary, but cannot actually vote in the primary. Sponsored by Rep. Ford *Notes: Subcommittee: Isenhart (Chair), Gaskill & Pettengill*

HF 236 - Anti-Epileptic Drug Substitutions (Status: House Human Resources Committee) - Iowa law allows a pharmacist to substitute a generic drug for a name-brand drug without doctor approval. This bill no longer allows such substitutions for drugs that treat epilepsy, unless the patient and patient's doctor sign a consent form for the substitution. Persons with epilepsy can be more sensitive to additives in generic drugs (dyes, etc), and therefore react badly to a generic drug (but not the brand-name drug). Sponsored by Rep. T. Olson, Abdul-Samad, Kressig, Berry, Petersen, L. Miller, Heaton, Thede, Reichert, Wessel-Kroeschell & Mascher *Notes: Subcommittee: T. Olson (Chair), L. Miller, & Wessel-Kroeschell*

HF 239 - Absentee Ballot Delivery/Health Care Facility Residents (Status: House State Government Committee) - Iowa law currently requires a county election commissioner to send two special precinct election officials to deliver an absentee ballot requested by a resident of a nursing home, health care facility or hospital. This bill allows the commissioner of elections to deliver

the ballot by mail instead, if the resident agrees (contact must be made within four days of the request). If the commissioner is unable to make contact in that four-day period, the ballot is delivered as required by current law (by two election officials). Sponsored by Rep. Smith *Notes: Subcommittee: Willems (Chair), Gaskill & Roberts*

HF 247 - State Health Insurance Mandates Commission (Status: House Commerce Committee) - Creates a 14-member State Health Insurance Mandate Commission to review and make recommendations on all health insurance mandates proposed in legislation. Any bill that mandates (requires) health insurance plans cover a specific illness or service would be referred to the Commission for review and recommendation. Mandates being discussed by the Legislature this year include requiring mental health and substance abuse coverage, requiring certain treatments for autism be covered, and requiring coverage of prosthetics. Sponsored by Rep. Jacoby *Notes: Subcommittee: Not yet assigned*

HF 255 - Mandatory Infant Eye Exams (Status: House Human Resources Committee) - Iowa law requires all newborns be screened for hearing loss. This bill adds a required eye examination (using eye dilation). Eye examinations are required at or shortly after birth, and again at 8 weeks of age, and between 6-9 months. Requires results be reported to the parents and the Department of Public Health. *Notes: Subcommittee: Hunter (Chair), Mascher & L. Miller*

HF 274 - Absentee Ballot Delivery/Health Care Facilities (Status: House State Government Committee) - Clarifies that if a hospital or health care facility resident requests an absentee ballot before the ballots are printed, the county auditor is to deliver the ballot within five days of them being printed. *Notes: Subcommittee: Not yet assigned*

HF 286 - Public Transit Vehicle Fund (Status: House Transportation Committee) - Establishes a public transit vehicle fund to help public transit systems draw down additional federal dollars to purchase buses, vans and other public transit equipment. *Notes: Subcommittee: Not yet assigned*

HF 307 - Health Care Whistleblower Protection (Status: House Human Resources Committee) - Protects health care workers who disclose

information about patient safety to a state or federal board/agency against employer retaliation. Sponsored by Rep. Mascher *Notes: Subcommittee: Not yet assigned*

HSB 133 - Absentee Voting/Automatic Renewal (Status: House State Government Committee) - Allows voters who have voted by absentee to request that an absentee ballot automatically be sent to them in all of the following elections. If a voter does not vote in an election, the voter's status as an ongoing absentee voter is ended. *Notes: Subcommittee: Gaskill (Chair), Roberts & Mascher*

HSB 147 & SSB 1179 - Nursing Home Quality Assurance (Status: House Human Resources Committee) - Charges a "quality assurance assessment" fee to nursing homes that is used to draw down and match additional federal dollars. The fee is paid quarterly into a state fund, which is matched with federal dollars and used as a supplemental reimbursement to nursing homes. No less than 85% of the assessments must be used to reimburse nursing homes (the rest helps offset Medicaid shortfalls). Effective upon enactment (or upon approval by the federal government). *Notes: Subcommittees: Hunter (Chair), Abdul-Samad & Soderberg*

SF 100 - Juvenile Court/Children with MI and MR (Status: Senate Human Resources Committee)- No longer requires a juvenile court to dismiss a petition for a child that has committed a delinquent act if that child is mentally retarded or mentally ill and has been civilly committed for treatment. In other words, such children can also be sentenced by the juvenile court in addition to being committed for treatment. *Notes: Subcommittee: Quirmbach (Chair, Bartz & Schmitz*

SF 125 - Presidential Caucus/Time off Work (Status: Senate State Government Committee) - Requires businesses to give employees unpaid time off work to attend a Presidential Caucus for up to four hours, beginning one hour prior to the start of the precinct caucus. Sponsored by Sen. Quirmbach, Danielson, Gronstal, Fraise, Appel, Kibbie, Black, McCoy, Bolkcom, Stewart, Ragan, Schmitz, Beall, Dotzler, Wilhelm, Soddors, Schoenjahn, Heckroth, Dvorsky, Horn & Hatch *Notes: Subcommittee: Dearden (Chair), Black & Behn*

SF 132 - Medicaid Reimbursement/Interpreter Services (Status: Senate Human Resources Committee)- Directs the Department of Human Services (DHS) to request federal approval allow Medicaid coverage of interpreter services. Directs DHS to begin paying for the services as soon as the request is approved. Sponsored by Sen. Hatch *Notes: Subcommittee: Hatch (Chair), Johnson & Quirmbach*

SF 134 - MH/MR/DD Redesign (Status: Senate Human Resources Committee) - Begins the process of redesigning the state-county mental health/mental retardation/developmental disabilities (MH/MR/DD) services partnership by moving toward a more regional system and giving regions the ability to raise local taxes to generate funds to eliminate waiting lists and provide services. Requires the MH/MR/DD/BI Commission to identify and project the costs for each county to provide a basic level of services (and identify what that basic level of services shall be). Requires each county to enter into a service agreement for the county or a group of contiguous counties (but the minimum area of a region is 100,000 population). Right now, six counties have a population of more than 100,000 (Black Hawk, Johnson, Linn, Polk, Scott, & Woodbury). Requires the Commission to recommend a new financing structure based on the school aid formula. Proposals are to be completed and counties are to be ready to implement them beginning July 1, 2011. Allows a county to implement a supplemental levy (property tax) - but caps the combined MH/MR/DD services fund levy and supplemental levy at the levy rate set when SF 69 went into effect. Levy rates are to be approved by the Risk Pool Board. The supplemental levy may be used to eliminate or avoid waiting lists, and pay for base levels of services. Sponsored by Sen. Hatch *Notes: Subcommittee: Bolkcom (Chair), Bartz & Ragan*

SF 144 - MH/MR/DD Redesign II (Status: Senate Human Resources Committee)- Directs the state to takeover the MH/MR/DD adult services system currently administered and partially paid for by the counties, beginning July 1, 2010. Transfers county employees paid under the county MH/MR/DD services fund to the Department of Human Services effective July 1, 2010. Continues to allow counties to pay for services to persons that do not meet state eligibility criteria. Sponsored by Sen. Kettering *Notes: Subcommittee: Not yet assigned*

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