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Legislators Get Down to Business

With the opening weeks of welcome parties and speeches done, legislators put their heads down and got right to business last week. Legislators have been spending their days in meetings – working out the details of bills, holding subcommittee meetings to get input from interested groups, and hearing presentations in committees.

While the snow slowed down the number of groups coming to the Capitol last week, legislators were stuck in Des Moines and kept themselves busy by taking action on a couple big bills.

The House of Representatives passed the school aid bill, allowing school funding to grow next year by 4%. This gives schools \$112 million more for the school year starting in 2009.

In addition, the House Commerce Committee passed the controversial bill that bans smoking in all public

places by a 16-6 vote. There are several bills in the Legislature that address smoking in public places, some allowing cities and counties to ban smoking locally and others expanding Iowa's current smoking ban to include restaurants and bars. The bill moves to the House floor this week. It is the most comprehensive, requiring a statewide ban on smoking in all public places.

The next two weeks will see even more activity, as legislators ready themselves for the upcoming "funnel" deadline – the day bills must be voted out of committee to stay alive and eligible for debate this year. The deadline is just four weeks away now (March 7).

While budget subcommittees have been busy hearing testimony about programs and services funded by the state, the real work on the budget has been behind the scenes. Leaders in the House and Senate are busy trying to set a "budget target" for each budget subcommittee.

A budget target is the amount of money that a budget subcommittee is allowed to spend – it could be a little more than what they got last year, or a lot less, depending on how the leaders set their priorities.

Once budget targets are released, the budget subcommittees will start the difficult job of figuring out how they will spend the money (who gets cut, who gets more money). One thing is for sure – there is always more demand than there is money.

Universal Health Care Plan Unveiled

This summer, a bipartisan group of legislators and representatives of businesses, labor, insurance, health care consumers, and health care providers met to discuss how the state could make health care insurance more affordable and make sure all Iowans had health care coverage of some sort.

This group, the Affordable Health Care for Small Business, Families & Individuals Commission, met throughout the summer and fall and came up with a set of recommendations that would improve access to health care, contain costs while improving quality, make sure all children have health insurance by 2010 and work toward a system where all adults have health insurance.

The recommendations of this group will be rolled out in a series of bills, the first of which was announced this week. "We will cover all Iowa's children with a plan that focuses on choice, affordability, consumer information, cost containment, and preventive health care," said Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal.

The plan would cover an additional 25,000 children who are eligible for current state programs and 19,000 other children currently without health insurance would be covered by private health insurance plans through a cost-share program. "In the process of covering all of Iowa's children, we will begin the fundamental reform of Iowa's health care system focusing on expanded coverage, prevention and cost containment," said Representative Ro Foege, one of the principal sponsors of the legislation.

The legislation will include a requirement that all parents show proof that their children have health insurance, beginning 2011. The legislation also creates a new state agency, called the Health Care Exchange, to move the state forward in mandating adult coverage.

You can read more about these bills ([SSB 3140](#) & [HSB 636](#)) online: <http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&menu=false&ga=82&hbill=HSB636>. A comprehensive bill summary can also be found at this update's end.

When bill summaries and other information becomes available, we will post it on the *infoNET* website, http://www.infonetiowa.com/current_issue/issues_and_policy_briefs.php.

Disability Issues Get Attention

Legislators are looking a number of disability issues this year, and started discussions on them this week. Here are a few that might interest you.

Mental Health/Disability Services Funding

Over the summer, groups of consumers, family members, counties, providers, and advocates met to

hammer out ways to more equitably distribute dwindling MH/DS funds, and find ways to use the Community Mental Health Centers to equalize services across the state for persons needing mental health treatment.

The Health & Human Services Budget Subcommittee met last week and heard from providers, counties, and the Department of Human Services about the need for additional funding for the Mental Health/Disability Services (MH/DS) system, and problems encountered with the current system.

These groups issued a report that is available online at: http://www.infonetiowa.com/current_issue/issues_and_policy_briefs.php.

Father Advocates for Son with Autism

Sioux City parent Josh Cobbs became frustrated last year when it came to getting his 7-year-old son Noah a quality education. Noah was diagnosed with autism five years ago.

It wasn't that the teachers and administrators in his Sioux City school didn't want to help – they did. They simply did not know how to do it. The teachers did not have access to modern methods to help children with autism, and had limited resources with which to work.

Josh Cobbs took his concerns to the Capitol last week, where he urged a group of lawmakers to pass a bill he hopes would modernize how the state teaches autistic children. About 1 in 150 children have some form of autism, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Cobbs is advocating for a bill ([HF 2031](#)) would give \$200,000 for teacher training and classroom resources. "(Teachers) need the right tools to do the right thing. They just simply don't have some of the proper tools and resources."

The bill would also mandate students getting their teaching certificates to receive specific instruction on how to assist autistic children.

The bill's sponsor is House Minority Leader Christopher Rants (R-Sioux City). Rep. Rants said Cobbs' experience illustrates why the state should try to increase its special education services. "I think we see from parents, as well as teachers dealing with these special needs students, that they need more assistance, better training to make sure that they recognize the challenges," Rants said.

Officials with the Iowa Department of Education oppose the bill. You can read more here: <http://www.siouxcityjournal.com/articles/2008/02/08/news/iowa/7d1828a001cce998862573e9000b6f4c.txt>



If you want to take action on this bill, contact your legislator and the bill's subcommittee members at 515/281-3221 during the week:

- ★ Your State Representative
- ★ Rep. Dennis Cohoon (D-Burlington)
- ★ Rep. Linda Miller (R-Bettendorf)
- ★ Rep. Art Staed (D-Cedar Rapids)

State Building Accessibility

Lawmakers want to make sure state buildings are accessible to all persons, while making sure they preserve their historic looks. The State has made huge progress with the Capitol, with fully accessible (and working!) elevators, devices that help persons with hearing impairments listen to debate, and staff that are trained to help persons with disabilities that want to talk to their elected officials.

There is still room for improvement, and not all state owned buildings are accessible. That is why lawmakers are looking at funding a study to determine what needs to be done to make sure all state buildings are accessible ([HF 70](#)). The subcommittee met on this, but has not yet decided whether to move forward.



If you want to take action on this bill, contact your legislator and the bill's subcommittee members at 515/281-3221 during the week:

- ★ Your State Representative
- ★ Rep. Vicki Lensing (D-Iowa City)
- ★ Rep. Dawn Pettengill (R-Mount Auburn)
- ★ Rep. Beth Wessel-Kroeschell (D-Ames)

Mental Health

Six communities around Iowa have mobile mental health crisis teams ready to go at a moment's notice. They move in quickly to help a person with a mental illness get the help they need when they are in crisis, and they operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Iowa's Department of Human Services and many key legislators want to see this service taken statewide, either through expansion of existing programs, or through the creation of new ones in Iowa's 33 community mental health centers.

Two bills introduced this week do just that – [HSB 630](#) & [SSB 3136](#). The Senate Human Resources Committee plans to pass its bill ([SSB 3136](#)) next week. But one thing is lacking in these bills – the \$3 million in funding needed for ten pilot projects.

You can read more about this on our website: http://www.infonetiowa.com/current_issue/issues_and_policy_briefs.php. A description of the bills is included in the bill list at the end of this report.



If you want to take action on this bill, contact the following legislators and the bill's subcommittee members at 515/281-3221 (Representatives) & 515/281-3371 (Senators) during the week:

- ★ Your State Representative & State Senator
- ★ Sen. Joe Bolkcom (D-Iowa City)
- ★ Sen. David Johnson (R-Ocheyden)
- ★ Sen. Amanda Ragan (D-Mason City)
- ★ Rep. Polly Granzow (R-Eldora)
- ★ Rep. Mark Smith (D-Marshalltown)
- ★ Rep. Beth Wessel-Kroeschell (D-Ames)

Switching gears, bills introduced by Attorney General Tom Miller ([HSB 620](#) & [SSB 3093](#)) are making mental health advocates uneasy.

After a student with an untreated mental illness killed 32 people before committing suicide in the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history, Congress passed a law barring people who have been involuntarily committed to a mental institution from owning a gun. This is a permanent restriction, and states that do not comply could lose federal funds.

To comply, the state must provide the FBI with a list of persons who have been committed involuntarily to a mental institution. Anyone involuntarily committed for a mental illness or for substance abuse – regardless of whether they are at risk of committing a crime – will go on this registry and may never own a gun again. Congress did pass a new “gun rights restoration” process, but it is unclear how it will work.

Mental health advocates asked that legislation enacting this be narrowed, to only apply to people at risk of committing a crime. Representatives of the National Association for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) expressed concern over the apparent criminalizing of mental illness, and others called the bill “health profiling” (racial profiling is illegal).

“Do you mean a woman who was involuntarily committed for post-partum psychosis ten years ago cannot go hunting with her son?” asked one advocate.



If you want to take action on this bill, contact your legislators and the bills' subcommittee members during the week at 515/281-3221 (Representatives) or 515/281-3371 (Senators):

- ★ Your State Representative & State Senator
- ★ Sen. David Hartsuch (R-Bettendorf)
- ★ Sen. Wally Horn (D-Cedar Rapids)
- ★ Sen. Keith Kreiman (D-Bloomfield)
- ★ Sen. Brian Schoenjahn (D-Arlington)
- ★ Rep. Eric Palmer (D-Oskaloosa)
- ★ Rep. Kurt Swaim (D-Bloomfield)
- ★ Rep. Walt Tomenga (R-Johnston)
- ★ Rep. Beth Wessel-Kroeschell (D-Ames)

Mandates Commission May Impact You

What is a health care mandate? Health care mandates are bills that require your health insurance plan to pay for specific services or cover treatment of specific illnesses.

Mental health parity – the requirement the mental illnesses be treated the same as physical illnesses in health insurance – is a health care mandate. So is the bill to require insurance companies to pay for prosthetic arms or legs. There have been mandate bills in previous sessions to require insurance plans pay for the costs of diabetes supplies and PKU formula (for kids with phenylketonuria).

Legislators have passed very few mandate bills, with the state's large insurance industry opposing nearly all. This year, legislators want to come up with a process for addressing future mandate bills.

Rep. Walt Tomenga has introduced a bill with the insurance industry's backing ([HF 2128](#)). This bill creates a 14-member Health Mandates Commission to review any legislation mandating health insurance coverage. The Commission would be made up of employers, consumers, actuaries, and researchers who would review the societal and fiscal impacts of the mandate, and recommend action.

Legislators could override the Commission recommendations, but could not act until the Commission completes its work (90 days).

Supporters of the plan say it is a good compromise, and things like mental health parity should get a thumbs up because of the solid experience other states (showing costs did not go up and care was improved).

Opponents say the Commission will delay action – since Iowa's legislative sessions only last 100-110 days and the Commission could take up to 90 days to make a recommendation.



If you want to take action on this bill, contact your legislator and the bill's subcommittee members during the week at 515/281-3221:

- ★ Your State Representative
- ★ Rep. Bob Kressig (D-Cedar Falls)
- ★ Rep. Tyler Olson (D-Cedar Rapids)
- ★ Rep. Janet Petersen (D-Des Moines)
- ★ Rep. Doug Struyk (R-Council Bluffs)
- ★ Rep. Walt Tomenga (R-Johnston)
- ★ Rep. Linda Upmeyer (R-Garner)

Take Action! Advocating Change Day 2008

Advocating Change Day 2008 is Wednesday, April 9, 2008 at the State Capitol in Des Moines.

This annual rally sponsored by ID Action (Iowans with Disabilities in Action), the Governor's DD Council, the Secretary of State, and Polk County Health Services draws nearly 1,000 advocates with disabilities.

So plan to come for the rally, training, and opportunity to talk to your legislators and advocate for change! *For more information, call ID Action toll-free at 866/432-2846 (866/432-2847 TTY/TDD) and select option #2.*



Take Action! Public Forums List

Legislators attend legislative forums that are open to the public on weekends, when they are back in their hometowns. These forums are excellent times to talk to your legislators and ask questions. Legislators depend on input from the people they are elected to represent – and this is one way to get that valued input.

You do not have to talk at these meetings – you can go and listen.

Here is a list of the upcoming forums (next two weeks).
A complete list of these forums is online at:
www.infonetowa.com.

Friday, February 15, 2008

7:15 a.m. - URBANDALE

Site TBD (call sponsors at 515-331-6855)
Sen. Brad Zaun & Rep. Scott Raecker

9:30 a.m. – SHELDON

Sheldon Community Service Center
Sen. David Johnson

9:30 a.m. – CLEAR LAKE

Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce, 205 Main
Sen. Amanda Ragan

10:00 – 11:00 a.m. – NORWALK

Norwalk Easter Public Library, 1051 North Avenue
Sen. Staci Appel

4:00 p.m. – CEDAR FALLS

AEA 267 Building, 3712 Cedar Heights Drive
Black Hawk County Area Legislators

Saturday, February 16, 2008

8:00 a.m. - HUMBOLDT

Site TBA (call Sen. Kibbie at 515-281-3371)
Sen. Jack Kibbie

8:30-10:00 a.m. - AMES

Ames Public Library
Sen. Rich Olive & Ames area legislators

8:30-10:00 a.m. - BRUNSVILLE

Site TBA (Call Rep. Soderberg at 515-281-3221)
Rep. Chuck Soderberg

9:00 a.m. - BURLINGTON

Site TBA (call 515-281-3221)
Rep. Tom Sands

9:00-10:30 a.m. – COUNCIL BLUFFS

Council Bluffs Public Library, 400 Willow Avenue
Pottawattamie County Area Legislators

9:00 a.m. – MASON CITY

Chamber of Commerce, 25 W. State Street
Sen. Amanda Ragan

9:00 a.m. - NEWTON

HyVee Club Room, 1st Avenue East
Sen. Dennis Black

9:30 a.m. - CLERMONT

Clermont Public Library, 503 Larrabee
Sen. Bill Heckroth

9:30-11:30 a.m. - ELKADER

Keystone AEA Building Conference, Room D3,
1400 2nd St. NW
Sen. Brian Schoenjahrn

9:30 a.m. - OELWEIN

Luigi's Restaurant, 1020 S Frederick
Rep. Andrew Wenthe

9:45 a.m. - IRETON

Ireton Coffee Shop
Rep. Chuck Soderberg

10:00 a.m. - ALGONA

Algona High School Little Theatre
Sen. Jack Kibbie

10:00 a.m. - ANITA

Wellness Center
Sen. Nancy Boettger

10:00 a.m. - CARROLL

Time & Place TBD
Sen. Steve Kettering & Rep. Rod Roberts

10:00 a.m. - DENISON

Cronk's Café, 812 4th Avenue S.
Sen. Jim Seymour & Rep. Clarence Hoffman

10:00-11:30 a.m. - JOHNSTON

Johnston Public Library, 6700 Merle Hay Road
Rep. Walt Tomenga & Sen. Larry Noble

10:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m. - WASHINGTON

Washington County Court House, 222 W. Main
Sen. Becky Schmitz

10:30 a.m. – HAWARDEN

Hawarden City Hall, 1150 Central Avenue
Rep. Chuck Soderberg

Friday, February 22, 2008

Noon – FORT MADISON

Alpha's Annex, 709 Avenue H
Rep. Phil Wise

Time TBA – POCAHONTAS

Pizza Ranch, 211 North Main (call 712/335-4555)
Sen. Jack Kibbie

Saturday, February 23, 2008

8:00 a.m. - CRESTON

Congregate Meal Site, Restored Depot
Sen. Angelo, Rep. Reasoner & Rep. Dolecheck

8:00 a.m. – ROCK RAPIDS

Rock Rapids Civic Center
Sen. Dave Mulder

8:15 a.m. – ROCK RAPIDS

Forster Community Building, 404 1st Avenue
Rep. Dwayne Alons

8:30 a.m. – FORT DODGE

Iowa Central Community College, Career Education Bldg., Rooms 108 & 110, Highway 169 & Avenue O
Sen. Daryll Beall, Sen. Rich Olive, Sen. Jack Kibbie & Others

8:30 a.m. - OSKALOOSA

Smokey Row, 109 S. Market
Rep. Eric Palmer

9:00 a.m. – DALLAS CENTER

Raccoon Valley Bank, 590 Sugar Grove
Sen. Jerry Behn & Rep. Ralph Watts

9:00 a.m. - MERRILL

Merrill Coffee Shop
Rep. Chuck Soderberg

9:00 a.m. - SPENCER

"Eggs and Issues"
Spencer City Council Chambers, 418 Second Ave. West
Sen. David Johnson & Sen. Jack Kibbie

9:00 a.m. – WINTERSET

Farmers & Merchants State Bank, 101 West Jefferson (on the square)
Rep. Jodi Tymeson

9:30 a.m. – IOWA CITY

Emma Harvat Hall, 410 E. Washington St.
Sen. Bolkcom, Sen. Dvorsky, Rep. Lensing, Rep. Foege, Rep. Jacoby & Rep. Mascher

10:00 a.m. - LOGAN

Community Building, 108 W. 4th Street
Sen. Jim Seymour & Rep. Matt Windschitl

10:00 a.m. - OSAGE

United Methodist Church, 819 Main
Rep. Mark Kuhn

10:00 a.m. – SIOUX CITY

Siouxland Senior Center, 217 Pierce Street (712-255-1729)
Woodbury County Area Legislators

10:00 a.m. - DAVENPORT

St. Ambrose Rogalski Center, Corner of Ripley & West Lombard Streets
Scott County legislators

10:00 a.m. - HARLAN

Harlan Community Library, 718 Court Street
Sen. Nancy Boettger & others

10:00-11:30 – POLK CITY

Polk County Bank, 205 Broadway
Rep. Walt Tomenga & Sen. Larry Noble

10:30 a.m. – SIGOURNEY

Keokuk County Courthouse, 101 S. Main
Rep. Betty DeBoef

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. – URBANDALE

Urbandale Library, 3520 86th Street
Sen. Brad Zaun & Rep. Scott Raecker

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. – WEBSTER CITY

City Council Chambers, 400 Second Street
Sen. Rich Olive

1:00 p.m. – ARNOLD'S PARK

Great Lakes Maritime Museum, 243 W. Broadway St.
Sen. David Johnson

TIME TBA – JEFFERSON & IDA GROVE

Transportation Town Hall Meetings
Sites TBA
Sen. Tom Rielly, Sen. Larry Noble & Others

Important Bills

Bills Signed into Law

SF 2054 - MH/MR/DD Funding (Late-Filing Counties) - Counties are required by law to report on how they spent their MH/MR/DD funds by December 1 each year. This bill allows a county (Clayton County) that filed their reports by March 15, 2008 to still be eligible for MH/MR/DD allowed growth. Effective 2/4/2008. *Signed;*

House Bills Introduced This Week

There are two types of House bills – House Files (HF) and House Study Bills (HSB). Both are introduced in

the Iowa House of Representatives. The only difference is House Files are sponsored by legislators, and House Study Bills are sponsored by committees.

HF 2084 & SF 2086 Special Hunting Licenses/Persons with Disabilities & Terminally Ill - Allows the Natural Resources Commission to issue special nonresident turkey and deer hunting licenses to persons with a severe physical disability or a person who is terminally ill. Requires a physician to sign the application, and still requires the person to pay the license fee. *House Natural Resources Committee; Rep. Davitt (Chair), Mertz & Rasmussen; Not yet assigned*

HF 2110 - Accessible Parking Registration Fee - Currently, there is a \$60 annual registration fee for multi-purpose vehicles modified for persons with disabilities or used by persons in wheelchairs. This bill makes it apply to any vehicle or station wagon, not just multi-purpose vehicles (trucks, motor homes, ambulances, hearses, motorcycles, motorized bicycles are still not included). *House Transportation Committee; Rep. Dandekar (Chair), Mertz & Worthan*

HF 2128 - Health Mandates Commission - Creates a State Health Insurance Mandates Commission that will look at any bill that requires insurance plans to cover a service or illness, and evaluate its fiscal impact and its societal impact. A legislative committee is not allowed to pass any mandate bill until the commission finishes its work (which can take up to 90 days). Health insurance mandates before the legislature this year include mental health parity (requiring health insurance plans to pay for the costs of any mental illness or substance abuse treatment), prosthetic mandate (requiring insurance plans pay for prosthetics), and HPV (requiring insurance plans pay for HPV vaccinations which prevent cervical cancer). *House Commerce Committee; Rep. T. Olson (Chair), Kressig, Petersen, Struyk & Upmeyer*

HF 2155 - Medicaid Provider Rate Increase - Increases Medicaid provider rates by 3% (and appropriates \$19,934,259). Includes Magellan (mental health managed care contract). *House Appropriations Committee; Rep. Foege (Chair), Gayman & Heaton*

HF 2178 - Long Term Care Insurance Standards - Establishes standards and a uniform format for long-term care policies in the state, so that they may be easily compared. Effective 7/1/2008. *House Commerce Committee; Not yet assigned*

HSB 589 - Minority Impact Statements - Requires all applications for grants from the Iowa Departments of Public Health, Human Services or Human Rights to include a minority impact statement (written by the applicants) describing the proposal's unique impact on minority persons, reason for the proposal if there is an impact and evidence the applicant has consulted with representatives of the minority persons if there is an impact. Persons with disabilities are included in the

definition of "minority." *House Human Resources Committee; Rep. Ford (Chair), Forristall & Smith*

HSB 626 - Antiepileptic Drug Substitutions - Current law allows a pharmacist to select a drug product with the same generic name and demonstrated use as the drug prescribed for the patient. This bill limits that discretion in the case of an antiepileptic drug prescribed by brand or generic name. The pharmacist would first need to obtain consent both the doctor and the patient or the patient's representative. *House Veterans Affairs Committee; Rep. H. Miller (Chair), Staed & Worthan*

HSB 639 & SSB 3156 Family Support Subsidy - The family support subsidy program assists families with a family member who is younger than 18 and has an educational or developmental disability, or has special health care needs. Under this bill, families with one child receiving the family support subsidy will receive 50% of the subsidy for any additional children (so they receive 100% of the subsidy for the first child, but only 50% of the subsidy for each additional child). If the subsidy for the first child is ended, the second child's subsidy is bumped up to 100%. Allows DHS to withhold family support subsidy payments to a family who is appealing a decision to end the subsidy for a child turning 18, but the withholding must end when the appeal is resolved. *House Human Resources Committee; Not yet assigned*

Senate Bills

There are two types of Senate bills – Senate Files (SF) and Senate Study Bills (SSB). Both are introduced in the Iowa Senate. The only difference is Senate Files are sponsored by legislators, and Senate Study Bills are sponsored by committees.

SF 2047 & HF 2117 Personal Needs Allowance - Adds an annual cost of living increase to the personal needs allowance (the money that a care facility resident may keep each month, currently \$50). The COLA will be the same as allowed by the Social Security Administration. *Senate Human Resources Committee; Sen. Wood (Chair), Johnson & Ragan; Rep. Mascher (Chair), Heaton & Smith*

SF 2056 - Automatic Absentee Ballot - Allows an absentee voter to receive absentee ballots for all future general elections without having to request one each time. *Senate State Government Committee; Sen. Appel (Chair), Kibbie & Zieman*

SF 2080 - Healthy Kids Act - Requires school meals and food/drinks sold at school be healthy, requires every physically able child be physically active for 30 minutes every school day, and requires all students complete a course in CPR before graduating. Requires licensed dietitians in the schools to support the inclusion of these guidelines in the individual education plans for children requiring special education. *Senate Education Committee; Sen. Appel (Chair), Mulder & Schmitz*

SF 2089 - Absentee Ballot Applications - If this bill passes, people will be able to request an absentee ballot on any sheet of paper or on any form (right now you must use the "official" form). *House Floor; Sen. Quirmbach (Floor Manager)*

SF 2111 - Lead Blood Testing/Dental Screening Requirements - Last year, the Legislature required all parents have their children screened for lead poisoning and been seen by a dentist before enrolling in school. Lead poisoning can result in mental retardation and developmental delays and poor dental care can lead to serious health problems. This bill cleans up this requirement and allows children to be enrolled in school even if requirements are not met. *Senate Floor; Sen. Schmitz (Floor Manager)*

SF 2128 - Therapeutic Recreation Board - Requires therapeutic recreation specialists to be licensed. Therapeutic recreation specialists provide rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities to restore functioning and independence. *Senate Human Resources Committee; Not yet assigned*

SSB 3093 & HSB 620 FBI Gun Checks/Persons Adjudicated Mentally III - After the Virginia Tech killings, the Federal government passed a law prohibiting persons who have been involuntarily committed to a mental institution from having a gun (it is a permanent restriction). States that do not comply could lose federal funds. In order to comply, the state must provide the FBI with a list of persons who have been committed involuntarily to a mental institution. The information will be entered into the National Instant Criminal Background System maintained by the FBI. This bill complies with that requirement. Effective 1/1/2009. *Senate Judiciary Committee; Sen. Schoenjahn (Chair), Horn & Hartsuch; Rep. Wessel-Kroeschell (Chair), Palmer & Tomenga*

SSB 3099 - Transportation Budget (Governor's Proposal) - Funds various transportation programs in the upcoming fiscal year (FY 2009) - beginning July 1, 2008 and going through June 30, 2009. Includes \$100,000 to make ADA improvements to various state buildings. *Senate Appropriations Committee; Sen. McCoy (Chair), Dvorsky & Putney*

SSB 3100 - Federal Block Grant Bill - Spends federal funds coming to the state for various purposes. Includes \$3,631,173 to community mental health centers and \$7,609,836 for MH/MR/DD/BI community service (local purchase of service). *Senate Appropriations Committee; Sen. Hatch (Chair), Dvorsky, Bolkcom, Johnson & Seymour*

SSB 3122 - Children Adjudicated Mentally III - If a child commits a delinquent act and is mentally ill or mentally retarded, the courts right now commit the child for treatment and dismiss the delinquency charge. This bill no longer requires that delinquency charge to be dismissed. This allows the court to both treat the child

and still have that child face the consequences of his/her delinquent act. *Senate Judiciary Committee; Sen. Kreiman (Chair), Fraise & Hartsuch*

SSB 3136 & HSB 630 Emergency Mental Health Crisis Services System - The intent of this bill is to create a statewide system to respond to persons with mental illness that are in crisis 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The program will start off as a pilot project, with ten sites (depending on funds available, \$3 million needed to fund the ten sites). Community mental health centers (or providers identified by the county as providing services instead of a community mental health center), a county or city, or any other public/private provider who is approved by the Department of Human Services may apply for grants. The services system must at a minimum: be regional (serve more than one county); coordinate with other providers in the area, the county central point of coordination (CPC), community-based corrections, the courts, and law enforcement; include basic services such as face-to-face crisis intervention, stabilization, support, counseling, preadmission screening for persons requiring psychiatric hospitalization, transportation, and follow-up services; and include telephone hotlines, mobile crisis staff, collaboration protocols, follow-up with community services, information systems, and competency-based training. *Senate Human Resources Committee; Sen. Bolkcom (Chair), Ragan & Johnson; Rep. Wessel-Kroeschell (Chair), Smith & Granzow*

SSB 3140 & HSB 636 Health Care for All (Universal Health Care) - Implements many of the recommendations of the Affordable Health Care for Small Businesses, Families & Individuals Commission that met this summer. Creates a Health Care Coverage Exchange to continue the work of the commission to ensure all Iowans have health insurance that is affordable, and recommend steps to make progress as funding becomes available. The Exchange is a new state agency, governed by an independent board of directors headed up by former Governors Branstad and Vilsack. The Exchange is to find a way to mandate children's health insurance by the end of 2009 (including enrolling all kids eligible for Medicaid and hawk-i, and through a new sliding fee scale assistance program). Beginning 2010, all parents will need to show proof of insurance for their kids. The Exchange is also to work on a mandate for individual health insurance coverage (requiring everyone have proof of coverage). Also sets up the structure to create a "medical home" for anyone who wants one to encourage more collaboration of health care providers, expand the use of telemedicine and electronic health records, and creates a new division in the Department of Public Health to expand access to information and improve consumer education. **PREVENTION & CHRONIC CARE MANAGEMENT:** Establishes a statewide initiative for prevention and chronic care management to help people manage chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease more effectively. **LONG-TERM CARE PLANNING & ADVANCED MEDICAL DIRECTIVES:** Requires hospitals and health care providers establish

nonjudicial (outside the courts) means to resolve disputes over "Do Not Resuscitate" orders and durable power of attorney. Promotes the use of palliative care (easing pain and suffering in a dying person, care that makes a person comfortable). Mandates hospice coverage in insurance plans. Requires all Department of Elder Affairs programs (and those in other appropriate agencies) help recommend a public education strategy for long-term living. Directs the Department of Elder Affairs to work with others to identify resources to help continue the work of the Aging & Disability Resource Center. *Senate Human Resources Committee; Sen. Hatch (Chair), Bolkcom, Ragan, Seymour & Johnson; Rep. Foege (Chair), Gayman & Heaton*

SSB 3142 & HSB 627 Elections/Voter Registration - Requires all polling places be accessible to persons with disabilities and requires all polling places have voting equipment for use by voters with disabilities in counties where paper ballots are not used. Prohibits the use of cell phones, cameras, pagers, and other electronic communications while voting. *Senate State Government Committee; Sen. Appel (Chair), Danielson & Zieman; Rep. Gaskill (Chair), Abdul-Samad & Jacobs*

SSB 3153 & HSB 637 Background Checks/Employees of Care Facilities - Requires child and dependent adult abuse and criminal record checks for the employees of all hospitals and care facilities (nursing homes, residential care facilities, intermediate care facilities). Currently hospitals are not included in the requirement and child abuse registry checks are not required for any facility. Requires these checks be done prior to any ownership transfer. Prohibits any of these facilities from hiring a felon or founded abuse record for five years following the application. After that five-year period, DHS may evaluate that person and determine whether or not the person may be employed. Requires the employee to notify their employer within 48 hours of being convicted of a crime or a founded abuse record is made. *Senate Human Resources Committee; Not yet assigned*

Bills Already Reported

Because space is limited, we will print the full descriptions of bills only once. Below is a list of all the bills previously reported with their current status. You can view the entire list of bills online at: www.infonetowa.com/current_issue/active_bills.php.

HF 791 - Prosthetic Device Insurance Coverage - House Commerce Committee; Rep. Petersen (Chair), Jacoby & Soderberg

HF 2014 - Psychiatry Shortage - House Human Resources Committee; Rep. Wessel-Kroeschell (Chair), Heaton & Hunter

HF 2031 - Teacher Training/Autism - House Education Committee; Rep. Cohoon (Chair), Staed & Linda Miller

HF 2033 - Mental Health Parity/Veterans - House Veterans Affairs Committee; Rep. Bukta (Chair), Chambers & Helen Miller

HF 2056 - Personal Needs Allowance - House Human Resources Committee; Rep. Hunter (Chair), Heaton & Mascher

HF 2157 & SSB 3028 Civil Rights Filing Deadline - House Floor; Rep. Smith (Floor Manager)

HSB 564 - Mental Health & Substance Abuse Parity - House Human Resources Committee; Rep. Wessel-Kroeschell (Chair), Abdul-Samad & Soderberg

SF 2023 - Utility Replacement Tax/Mental Health Risk Pool - House Appropriations Committee; Rep. Foege (Chair), Gayman & Watts

SF 2030 - Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Study - Senate Veterans Affairs Committee; Not yet assigned to a subcommittee

SF 2092 & HF 2152 Dependent Adult Abuse Clean-Up - Senate Floor; Sen. Seymour (Floor Manager); Rep. Abdul-Samad (Floor Manager)

SF 2101 & HSB 583 Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program Transfer - Senate Floor; Sen. Schmitz (Floor Manager); Rep. Staed (Floor Manager)

SSB 3009 - Lead Blood Testing/Dental Screening Requirements - Senate Education Committee; Sen. Schmitz (Chair), Connolly & Boettger

SSB 3027 - Public Accommodations/Jail & Prison - Senate State Government Committee; Sen. Connolly (Chair), Hatch & Behn

SSB 3043 - Vertical Wheelchair Lift Definition - Senate Labor & Business Relations Committee; Sen. Horn (Chair), Seng & Hahn

SSB 3070 - Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program Transfer - Senate Education Committee; Sen. Schmitz (Chair), Beall & Zaun

SSB 3071 & HSB 578 - Education Technical Changes/Special Education - Senate & House Education Committees; Sen. Appel (Chair), Connolly & McKinley; Rep. Kelley (Chair), Boal & Wendt

SR 101 - Employment of Persons with Disabilities - Senate Rules & Administration Committee; Not yet assigned to a subcommittee

infoNET is a publication of the Iowa Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council, and is a part of the ID Action initiative. infoNET is written through a contract with Campbell/Patterson Consulting (info@campbell-patterson.com).

Find more resources online at www.infonetiowa.org.

Contacting Your Legislators

Write: Sen. (insert name) or Rep. (insert name)
State Capitol
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Call: 515-281-3221 (Representatives)
515-281-3371 (Senators)

Legislators are at these numbers Monday-Thursday; be prepared to leave a message.

E-Mail: Legislative email addresses are all the same – the legislator's first name, followed by a dot (.), followed by their last name, @legis.state.ia.us. For instance, Jane Doe would be: jane.doe@legis.state.ia.us.

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