Interim Session Report – November 26-28

The following is an interim session report, compiled by Walker & Stevens, for the West Virginia Primary Care Association and its members. This report covers the November 26-28 interim session. Please feel free to contact us by phone or email.

Select Committee D – Health (Certificate of Need)

- Brenda Nichols Harper is general counsel and VP of the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce. She served as Executive Director and Vice President of the Chemical Industry Committee of the West Virginia Manufacturers Association for ten years. Brenda also worked in the West Virginia state government representing the executive branch for over 20 years. She spoke in favor of continuing the CON process in WV.

- Fred Early, senior VP, general counsel for Mountain State Blue Cross Blue Shield, spoke in favor of continuing the CON process.

Select Committee D – Oral Health Subcommittee

- Dr. Bridgett Boggs Stevens, DDS presented an overview of family dentistry and dental health concerns.
  - Warned that preventative care by school age is too late, and emphasized the importance of educating children and parents early on.
  - Claimed that she sees Medicaid children three or four days per week and sees private pay one day per week.
- Claimed to be present on behalf of the children of WV, and not on behalf of any special interest group.

- **Dr. Byron H. Black, DDS and Dr. Lee Allen, DDS**, presented an overview of oral surgeons’ dental health concerns.
  - Claimed that Medicaid patients are not being seen by oral surgeons in WV at an acceptable rate (especially adult patients).
    - Martinsburg, Morgantown, and Charleston are the only locations in WV where dental groups are seeing Medicaid patients with regularity. The problem is reimbursement.
    - Patients sometimes drive three to four hours to be seen.

- **Jennifer Blaskovich** (Legislative Chair, Dental Hygienist Association and licensed dental hygienist) presented an overview of dental hygienist dental health concerns.
  - Spoke about the “Direct Supervision” law in WV, which requires that a dentist actually be present for a dental hygienist to treat patients.
    - WV’s law is one of, if not the most restrictive in the nation.
    - Only WV and Alabama do not allow “General Supervision” practice by dental hygienists.
  - The Dental Hygienists Association is seeking a “Direct Access” bill, which would broaden the scope of dental hygienist practice, while being cost-effective and improve the quality of oral health care.
    - **NOTE:** under a “General Supervision” law, a dentist is closely involved, but dental hygienists are allowed to provide certain services not allowed under the current WV law.
  - Suggested the idea of civil immunity for retired dentists who offer to provide pro bono dentistry services, increased soft drink tax, with the funds going to dentistry services, and increased Medicaid reimbursement and extended coverage.

- **Dr. Carol Buffington, DDS** (also a licensed dental hygienist) spoke in support of **Senate Bill 427**, which would allow dental hygienists to treat patients and provide preventative care without a dentist present.
Select Committee D was updated on the oral health and CON issues.

Thanks again for giving Walker & Stevens the opportunity to represent the West Virginia Primary Care Association as legislative liaison.

Walker & Stevens

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