Interim Session Report – December 9-11

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 December 9-11 interim session. Please feel free to contact us by phone or email if you have any comments or questions.

Select Committee D – Health (Subcommittee Certificate of Need)

Present: Senator Foster (chair), Senator Jenkins, Delegate Michael (chair), Delegate Moore

- Sonia Chambers (President of the Health Care Authority Board) spoke about the certificate of need system and its effectiveness.
  
  - Acknowledged the complexity of the issue, as well as a divergence of opinions in WV on this issue.

  - Expressed belief that CON serves a vital role in WV, and is an effective tool in stemming the rise in health care cost increases.

  - Claimed that the WV legislature set up the CON process with goals of responding to changes in technology through quicker implementation of that technology.

  - Presented data that various other states have conducted studies on the CON process, but often in urban areas, instead of rural areas, such as WV.

    ▪ There seems to be a lack of reliable, WV-specific data available.
In addition to CON, she also spoke briefly on the issue of rate review; WV has non-governmental rate review.

- Senator Evan Jenkins spoke, and has presented data in the past, opposing the CON process, citing little or no improvements in the quality of care and increased costs.

- Senator Jenkins requested more evidence than the three auto makers’ reports (GM, Daimler/Chrysler, Ford), which are very brief (1-3 pages + charts) defending the CON process.

- He insisted that he is not in favor of getting rid of the CON process, but would like to study more reliable, comprehensive information on the issue, in order to make a more informed choice on the effectiveness of CON.

- There was discussion of potential recommendations from this Subcommittee to the Select Committee on Health “D.”

Select Committee D – Health (Subcommittee Oral Health)

Present: Senator Stollings (chair), Delegate Hatfield (chair), Delegate Border

- The Subcommittee on Oral Health made the following legislative recommendations to Select Committee D.

- Renate Pore, Co-Chair of the Healthy Kids Coalition presented the following recommendations from an oral health task force:

1. Develop a comprehensive state plan for oral health based on the framework of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and similar to what many other states have developed.

2. Promote preventative oral health care for all West Virginians with all health care payers.

3. Support legislation that will increase the number of oral health providers and the services they can provide. The West Virginia Dental Association and the West Virginia Dental Hygienists Association are drafting a proposal that should receive full consideration by the State Legislature in 2008.

4. Support the Department of Education recommendation in requiring every child entering kindergarten, second, and sixth grades to have a dental exam by a dentist.
5. Prohibit the use and sale of sugary snacks and beverages in schools in all 55 WV counties.

6. Create equity between WVCHIP and PEIA children by providing oral health coverage for PEIA children below 300 percent of the federal poverty level.

7. Address the benefits of early childhood dental care by promoting the integration of preventative oral care into primary care practice.

8. Study the denial of coverage of several insurance companies in West Virginia for medical costs associated with required dental care in the operating room under general anesthesia for the very young or disabled child.

- **Pat White**, Director of the WV Free Clinic, provided additional oral health recommendations for adults. These were also approved for recommendation by the Oral Health Subcommittee to Select Committee D. They were:
  
  o Increasing tax credits from $2 million to $3 million.
  
  o Setting up a special, new committee to report to the Public Health Committee, along with an advisory board with specific goals.
    
    ▪ With funding to be moved to the new office.
    
    ▪ Reimbursement for dentists through Medicaid to be examined by this committee.
  
  o Creation of a volunteer dentist license to allow retired dentists to provide services when available.
  
  o Accepting the recommendations of Renate Pore.
  
  o That these recommendations be made to Select Committee D, but no introduction of bills at the present time.

- **Senator Stollings** ensured that there will be a continuing Oral Health Committee that will run throughout 2008, and that other recommendations will also be acceptable, just not made to Select Committee D by the Oral Health Subcommittee.

- **Senator Stollings** also recommended promoting preventative health and primary care by physicians and their staffs (both pediatricians and family practice physicians) through training programs to prevent disease in children before they reach kindergarten. He also supported fluoride varnishes for children and indicated that Medicaid and WVCHIP should provide reimbursement.
These recommendations will be made to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance in January 2008.

### Legislative Oversight Commission on Health and Human Resources Accountability (LOCHHRA)

Present: Senator Prezioso (chair), Senator Hunter, Senator Boley, Senator Stollings, Delegate Perdue (chair), Delegate Hatfield, Delegate Moore, Delegate Long, Delegate Staggers, Delegate Border

- **Sonia Chambers** (President of the Health Care Authority) presented her progress report of the Pre-Paid Insurance Project.
  - Intends to determine a price point that people in WV can afford.
  - Intends to develop a pilot program where primary and preventative care benefits are provided for a fee (anywhere from $30-$80 per person).
  - Currently under the project, there have been three applications approved, covering approximately 450 people in WV.
  - The project will be evaluated further as applications come in and as data becomes available.

- **Rebecca King** (School Health Services, WV Dept. of Education) presented her progress report of the Diabetes Care Plan Act.

- The Commission made plans to discuss final recommendations to submit to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance.

### Select Committee D – Health

Present: Senator Prezioso (chair), Senator Stollings, Senator Jenkins, Senator Foster, Delegate Perdue (chair) Delegate Moore, Delegate Hatfield, Delegate Border

The Committee reviewed recommendations from the Subcommittees on Oral Health and Certificate of Need.

- **Senator Ron Stollings** presented the oral health recommendations, listed above, which were sent to the joint committee government/finance for approval.

- **Senator Foster** presented the certificate of need recommendations, acknowledging that access, quality, and cost are the main issues underlying the CON process, and that various groups and experts took the opportunity to make their views known at different interim sessions.
o Senator Foster made no specific legislative recommendation, but said that the CON issue will be revisited again later, since everyone present now has a broad overview and understanding of the CON process.

o He also said that further study of the CON process is needed, especially on the overall effects on health care in WV. Specific areas of further study include:

  ▪ A focus on more specific areas covered by CON to aid the broad overview that the Subcommittee gained this year.
  ▪ Focus on problems specific to border areas.
  ▪ Encourage collaborations in geographic areas of WV.

- Delegate Perdue expressed his approval of the Oral Health Subcommittee’s work and recommendations. Also, he expressed an interest in examining a $.01 tax on bottled water in the future.

- Delegate Moore questioned whether the Oral Health Subcommittee talked about whether some smaller WV counties have adequate drinking water, so that people don’t have to drink so much soda. Senator Stollings replied that this grander idea was not discussed, but that they were aware of this issue.

- Senator Foster questioned whether fluorinated water was discussed, and if any plans were made to improve its availability. Senator Stollings and Delegate Hatfield responded in the negative.

- As was discussed at the December 12 WVPCA board meeting, Senator Stollings mentioned to Walker & Stevens privately, the future possibility of immunizations being provided by pharmacists without a registered nurse or physician being present.

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

Walker & Stevens

Matt Walker
Jeff Stevens