

# IDPH Legislative Update

## Iowa Department of Public Health

### February 9, 2009

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#### [Highlights](#)

**Different pace.** Normally this time of year budget subcommittees would have their spending targets, which is the amount of funding available for that subcommittee, and lobbyists and lawmakers would be starting the negotiating process for what will be in the appropriations bills. But with everyone waiting for the federal stimulus and March revenue estimates, the pace is different at the Capitol this year. Policy bills are the primary focus and subcommittee meetings are picking up.

**IDPH presentations.** Director Tom Newton has been a frequent speaker at the Capitol so far this year. He presented last Tuesday to the [Health and Human Services Budget Subcommittee](#) on the Public Health Modernization Act. His presentation is available on the HHS Subcommittee Web site by clicking [here](#).

Director Newton is also presenting on the Act to the [House Human Resources](#) Committee today at 2:00. He is scheduled to discuss the department's budget tomorrow before the [Health and Human Services Budget Subcommittee](#) at 10:00.

The House is expected to take up debate on [HF 8](#) Clergy as Mandatory Reporters and also [HF 122](#), a bill from the Iowa Board of Pharmacy regarding reporting of certain precursor substances and extending the prescription drug database program to June 30, 2011.

**This week.** The federal stimulus watch continues. The U.S. Senate made significant changes to the spending priorities in the stimulus package compared to the U.S. House version after three Republican Senators agreed to join the 58 Democrats last Friday providing a filibuster-proof margin. Senators are expected to vote on the bill this week with the goal of a quick conference to get the bill to President Obama's desk for signing by next week. The Senate maintained funding for health information technology but prevention and wellness funding in the House bill were not included in the Senate version.

#### **Committee Meetings**

##### [House Human Resources](#)

Monday, Feb. 9, 2:00 p.m., Room 103 Capitol

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2:00 p.m., Room 103 Capitol

##### [Senate Human Resources](#)

Monday, Feb. 9, 4:00 p.m., Room 22 Capitol

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 3:00 p.m., Room 22 Capitol

## Health and Human Services Budget Subcommittee

Tuesday, Feb.10, 10:00 a.m., Room 116 Capitol

Thursday, Feb. 12, 10:00 a.m., Room 116 Capitol

### **Subcommittee meetings**

To see upcoming subcommittee meetings, refer to the [House Subcommittee Schedule](#) and the [Senate Subcommittee Schedule](#) on the General Assembly's Web site. Below are the health-related subcommittee meetings scheduled so far this week:

Monday, Feb. 9

[HSB 111](#) Public Health Modernization Act

1:00 p.m. in the House Lounge

[SF 48](#) Health Care Omnibus

1:00 p.m. in room 116, Capitol

[HF 38](#) Epinephrine in Schools

4:30 p.m. in the House Lounge

Tuesday, Feb. 10

[SF 26](#) Uninsured Hospital Discounts

8:00 a.m. in the Senate Lounge

[SSB 1062](#) Infectious Disease Testing for Corrections

11:30 a.m. in the Senate Lounge

Wednesday, Feb. 11

[HSB 86](#) Plumbing Board Changes Bill

10:00 a.m. in the House Lounge

[SSB 1160](#) Dept of Elder Affairs Omnibus

11:30 a.m. in the Senate Lounge

[SSB 1143](#) Liability Protection for the Drug Donation Program

2:00 p.m. in the Senate Lounge

Thursday, Feb. 12

[SF 1](#) Health Care Coverage for Autism

2:00 p.m., room 22, Capitol

### Mental Health Parity Moves Forward

The [House Human Resources](#) Committee passed full mental health parity legislation, [HF 139](#) on a party line vote of 12-9 last Thursday. The bill requires insurance coverage of all mental health conditions, including alcohol or substance abuse treatment services. The bill was referred back to committee last week after previously passing out of the committee due to a drafting error.

The bill requires that mental illness treatment must be provided by a licensed mental health professional or services provided in a licensed hospital or health facility. It also requires that alcohol or substance abuse treatment must be provided by a substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation facility as licensed by IDPH.

The committee amended the bill with numerous changes as follows:

- the new bill is called the "Equality in Health Care & Veterans Wellness Act;"
- requires the Division of the Mental Health and Disability Services of the Department of Human Services the Division of Behavioral Health at IDPH to coordinate with the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs to maximize access to mental health and substance abuse treatment for veterans;
- eliminates the advisory commission;
- delays the effective date to 2010; and
- clarifies exemptions so that the bill does not apply to accident-only, specified disease, short-term hospital or medical, hospital confinement indemnity, credit, dental, vision, Medicare supplement, long-term care, basic hospital and medical-surgical expense

coverage as defined by the Insurance Commissioner, disability income insurance coverage, coverage issued as a supplement to liability insurance, workers' compensation or similar insurance, or automobile medical payment insurance.

The bill now moves to the House floor for debate. Rep. [Beth Wessel-Kroeschell](#) is the floor manager for the bill.

### [Budget Savings Web sites](#)

You may have heard, but Iowa Democrats and Republicans have established separate Web sites to allow Iowans to provide budget saving suggestions. Below are the links to see or submit comments.

House Democrats:

[www.iowahouse.org/openbudget](http://www.iowahouse.org/openbudget)

House Republicans:

[www.iowahouserepublicans.com](http://www.iowahouserepublicans.com)

### [Health Care Reform II Subcommittee Schedule](#)

Subcommittee meetings on [SF 48](#), the Health Care Omnibus bill, began last week. The subcommittee members are Sens. [Jack Hatch](#), [Joe Bolkcom](#) and [Jim Seymour](#). At the first meeting last Monday, Sen. Hatch provided an overview of the bill. At the second meeting last Thursday, Division VI of the bill on workforce shortages was discussed.

Representatives of Iowa Health Systems, Mercy Health Network spoke about their plans to establish a Medical Residency Training Grants Program, Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program, Nurse Educator Forgivable Loan Program, and a Nursing Faculty Fellowship Program. Based on comments from various groups it is likely Division VI will be amended.

Sen. Hatch announced the subcommittee schedule for the remaining divisions in the bill. He said the subcommittee will discuss amendments and take action on the bill in subcommittee on Feb. 18. Following is the tentative subcommittee schedule for [SF 48](#).

<b>Feb. 2</b>	Bill overview
<b>Feb. 4</b>	Workforce shortages (Div. VI)
<b>Feb. 9</b>	Iowa Choice Insurance Exchange (Div. II) Health care transparency (Div. VIII)
<b>Feb. 11</b>	Children's Health Care Network (Div. IV) Adult Children (Div. III)
<b>Feb. 16</b>	Iowa Health Care Partnership (Div. I) Immunity for Free Care (Div. V)
<b>Feb. 18</b>	Pharmacy provisions (Div. VII) Amendments Vote

### [Department Bills Update](#)

Last week, the House and Senate Human Resources Committees agreed that the House would start work on IDPH bills and the Senate would start work on bills from the Department of Human Services. So watch the House versions of IDPH bills.

The House and Senate held subcommittee meetings on [HSB 86](#) and [SSB 1102](#) Plumbing Board Clean Up bills last week. Both meetings were for informational purposes only and the subcommittees did not take action on the bills. The department and the Board are working with stakeholders to address various concerns. The House is holding another subcommittee meeting this week to continue work on the bill.

The IDPH Omnibus bill passed, [HSB 50](#), was on the agenda for full committee debate last week but was pushed aside when debate on mental health parity legislation went long. It is expected to be taken up by the House Human Resources Committee this week.

Presentations on the Public Health Modernization Act, [HSB 111/SSB 1103](#), continue and the bill will get its first subcommittee meeting today in the House. The IDPH Technical bill, [SSB 1093](#) now has its House companion, [HSB 132](#) and hopefully will have a subcommittee scheduled soon.

**Have a good week.**

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