

Legislative Link

A legislative update provided by the United Way of Florida, Inc.

SUPPORT HEALTHY START!

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United Way of Florida

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Open Letter to Legislators:

Dear Legislator:

The gains we have made in implementing Healthy Start, Medicaid for pregnant and postpartum women and other vital public health programs are threatened for the first time in a decade.

We're bringing our deep concern to you because the highly regarded 2004 KIDS COUNT report revealed that Florida's rates of low birth weight and infant mortality have increased, reversing trends that were moving in the right direction for years.

Clearly, the resources that were initially appropriated for these programs are no longer sufficient to meet the Florida's maternal and child health care needs. When Healthy Start began in 1992, the Department of Health estimated that funding was available to meet less than half (46%) of the need for services. In 2005 dollars, Healthy Start resources now cover less than one-third (30%) of those women at-risk for a poor birth outcome. While it is true that the Healthy Start Medicaid waiver helped local programs increase the duration and intensity of services to those at greatest risk, state funding was never increased to cover the more than 20,000 additional babies born annually compared to 1992.

Healthy Start Coalitions leverage local and federal resources. We coordinate efforts with public health departments and other community agencies to develop cost-effective systems of care that respond to the unique needs of our communities. However, it is apparent that we have reached the tipping point of diminishing returns. We need an additional investment of state funding to regain the progress we began over a decade ago.

An additional \$9.5 million per year would provide services to one-third more women and infants, than are currently served by General Revenue funds (\$27.5 million). This funding will allow the state to draw down an additional \$5.5 million in federal support, increasing state resources. Funds would be distributed to local Healthy Start Coalitions to support case management and other risk reduction services for at-risk pregnant women and newborns.

We need your support in seeking additional state general revenue for Healthy Start in the 2006-07 state budget. We certainly can make the case for prevention, both in lives and dollars saved.

Sincerely . . . Sarah Gosney, President

UNITED WAY OF FLORIDA SUPPORTS HEALTHY START

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COMMITTEE'S PROPOSED BUDGET:

- \$50 million reduction in GR for the Florida KidCare program due to a decrease in caseload. This reduction in GR will result in a loss of \$119 million in federal funds.
- \$342 million increase in GR for Medicaid workload and price level increases.
- \$7.5 million increase in GR for the restoration of Medicaid Adult Partial Dentures, Visual, and Hearing services. This is a result of my efforts.
- \$26 million increase in GR to raise the nursing home staffing level to 2.9 hours of direct care per resident.
- \$10 million increase in GR to restore the cut in nursing home reimbursement rates from FY05-06.
- A 3% cost of living rate increase for persons working in the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) - - \$8.9 million GR.
- A 10% cost of living rate increase for support coordinators working with developmentally disabled patients and their families in APD -- \$2.6 million GR.
- \$5 million increase in GR for the independent living program.
- \$1.2 million increase in GR to serve an additional 1,500 special needs children who are adopted.
- \$10.8 million increase in GR to bring about equity in funding for child welfare services community-based care providers throughout the state. The funding will result in an average cost of \$9,270 per child. However, Miami-Dade County will not lose funds.
- \$5.4 million in GR to fund the deficit in psychotropic drugs in mental health treatment facilities.
- \$9.5 million in GR to fund Florida Healthy Start.
- County Health Departments in the following counties received \$21 million in GR for maintenance and repair: Charlotte, Duval, Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, Broward, Volusia, and Bay.
- \$5 million in Tobacco funds for the Tobacco Awareness Program.

AREAS OF CONCERN WITHIN THE HHS BUDGET FOR FY 06-07:

Independent Living for children who age out of foster care:

- The HHS budget provides for \$5 million but the actual need is more like \$13 million.

Medicaid Aged and Disabled Program (MEDS/AD):

- No funding was included in the budget for this group of about 3,500 individuals who were eliminated from the program last year.
- While Medicaid still picks up some Medicare cost sharing for these individuals, they no longer receive the full range of Medicaid services which were available to them.
- It would take about \$8 million in GR to provide services to this group.

(Source: Senator Frederica Wilson and Senate Appropriations Committee)

Getting Old

I feel like my body has gotten totally out of shape, so I got my doctor's permission to join a fitness club and start exercising. I decided to take an aerobics class for seniors. I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and perspired for an hour. But, by the time I got my leotards on, the class was over.

ALL IN THE NAME: HURRICANES

Only once, since record-keeping began in 1851, have there been 21 tropical storms and hurricanes in the Atlantic. That was in 1933 when forecasters didn't regularly name storms.

What's more, a storm name is retired if it causes widespread damage and deaths.

An international committee of the World Meteorological Organization, a United Nations agency in Geneva, Switzerland, maintains the worldwide lists for hurricane names.

Currently, there are six separate 21-name lists and each of them is used every six years in a rotation. They don't include names that begin with q, u, x, y and z because there aren't enough names starting with those letters.

Australian meteorologist Clement Wragge began giving women's names to tropical storms before the end of the 19th century, according to the National Weather Service.

From 1950 to 1952, the United States named storms by a phonetic alphabet, starting with Able, Baker and Charlie. That became confusing because the same names were used each year, so female names were used starting in 1953 in a list created by the National Hurricane Center. The first one was called Tropical Storm Alice. That was considered biased against women, so men's names were added in 1978 in the Pacific and a year later in the Atlantic, with Hurricane Bob.

(Source: Sarasota Herald Tribune, 9/22/2005)

CRISIS IN CHILD WELFARE

Florida's Independent Living Program, which provides - among others - financial assistance to foster children who have "aged out" of the system at age 18 should cost about \$16,700 per year, per child. However, because of under funding, Florida has only about \$7,124 available for each child. These funds are used by the former foster children to pay for rent, utilities, food, and necessities.

Next year, the Department of Children and Families, which oversees the program that is administered by Community Alliances, projects there will be about 2,496 young adults eligible for the services, at a cost of about \$41.6 million. The Governor's budget - in line with the Department's request - asks the 2006 Legislature to invest only \$13 million in the program. If the Legislature agrees, the same shortfall that has occurred this year - about \$32 million - will be repeated next year.

The situation is dire, and Community Alliances have pushed the issue to the fore, contending that it is the state's responsibility to provide adequate funding. DCF, on the other hand, contends there is no money available at the state level, and that the Community Alliances must come up with the funding shortfall themselves, using local funding.

The most important issue should be providing the assistance these young adults need in order to start their adult lives on a positive and productive note.

Actual Analogies and Metaphors Found in High School Essays: (The way these young minds think is scary.)

- *Her face was a perfect oval, like a circle that had its two sides gently compressed by a Thigh Master.*
- *His thoughts tumbled in his head, making and breaking alliances like underpants in a dryer without Cling Free.*
- *He spoke with the wisdom that can only come from experience, like a guy who went blind because he looked at a solar eclipse without one of those boxes with a pinhole in it and now goes around the country speaking at high schools about the dangers of looking at a solar eclipse without one of those boxes with a pinhole in it.*
- *She grew on him like she was a colony of E. Coli and he was room-temperature Canadian beef.*

BILLS HEARD THIS WEEK

(Some information below is excerpted from legislative staff analyses)

PCB FFF 06-01 – Welfare of Children (Future of Florida’s Families Committee)

PCB FFF 06-01 establishes a centralized office to examine, oversee, and implement abuse prevention services by creating the Office of Child Abuse Prevention within the Executive Office of the Governor.

Creating an Office of Child Abuse Prevention is viewed as untangling the fragmented web of services to bring a more efficient, streamlined and accessible array of services to the families of the State of Florida. That is, layers should be removed, communication networks should be developed, prevention management should increase, and accountability should be created. A centralized prevention office will lay the foundation for success in accessing prevention services for years to come.

The bill also addresses the welfare of young adults aging out of the foster care system by expanding the eligibility pool, requiring the development of a plan for each community-base care (CBC) service area, providing for the direct deposit of funds, and authorizing CBCs to purchase housing and other services.

Last Action: 3/21/06 HOUSE Committee bill filed as HB 7173

CS/HB 49 – Caregivers for Adults (Meadows)

CS for HB 49 enables the Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) to contract with a not-for-profit corporation operated in compliance with chapter 617, F.S., and specifies that such contracted corporation may be physically located in the Florida Policy Exchange Center on Aging (FPECA, or the “Exchange Center”) at the University of South Florida. Its mission is to foster the development of caregiving for adults as a non-licensed paraprofessional activity and promote the use of nationally recognized best practices information by non-licensed caregivers. Following is background information and a detailed description of the legislation.

Last Action: 3/21/06 HOUSE Favorable by Community Colleges & Workforce

CS/HB 241 – Florida KidCare Program (Vana)

The Florida KidCare Program was created in 1998 to provide health benefits to uninsured children through the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) or Medicaid. KidCare has four program components: Medicaid, Medikids, Healthy Kids, and the Children’s Medical Services (CMS) Network. Participation by children in these programs is contingent on age, family income, and special health care needs.

House Bill 241 CS amends section 409.814, Florida Statutes, to allow a family with a child who is not eligible for the Medikids or Healthy Kids components because the family income is above 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or because the child is not otherwise eligible for premium assistance to participate in these components if the family pays the full premium without any premium assistance.

The bill requires the Agency for Health Care Administration to begin enrollment of children in Medikids from families with income above 200 percent of the FPL or children not eligible for premium assistance by July 1, 2006.

The bill has no fiscal impact on state or local government.

Last Action: 3/17/06 HOUSE Favorable by Health Care Appropriations

CS/HB 249 – Florida 211 Network (Jennings)

House Bill 249 CS amends section 408.918, Florida Statutes, to expand the Florida 211 Network to provide services in each county. The bill revises legislative intent by adding the finding that a statewide Florida 211 Network would be of great benefit to Floridians, particularly in times of disaster. The bill requires each Florida 211 Network provider to coordinate with county emergency management agencies to determine how the 211 Network may be used in the event of a disaster.

Bills Heard this Week continued

HB 249 continued

The bill provides a \$5 million appropriation from the General Revenue Fund to the Agency for Health Care Administration (agency) for Fiscal Year 2006-2007, with unencumbered funds reappropriated for the 2007-2008 fiscal year in the General Appropriations Act, to support the statewide expansion of the Florida 211 Network to all counties and to enhance the operations of existing 211 providers. The bill directs the agency to distribute the funds to the Florida alliance of Information & Referral Services (alliance). The alliance is to make the funds available to 211 providers on a matching basis, with each 211 provider required to match \$1 for \$1 the amount that it is provided from the alliance.

By December 15, 2006, 211 providers receiving state funds are required to report to the alliance the expenditure of their funds. By January 1, 2007, the alliance is required to provide a statewide report to the agency. No later than February 15, 2007, the agency is required to submit a statewide expenditure report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Last Action: 3/17/06 HOUSE Favorable with CS by Health Care Appropriations

CS/HB 329 – Adult Protective Services (Culp; Gibson, H; Sobel)

Chapter 415, Florida Statutes, provides for adult protective services and establishes a program of protective services for all disabled adults or elderly persons in need of them. This bill amends the Adult Protective Services Act to allow the Department of Children and Family Services explicit authority to protect persons from the effects of self-neglect by redefining the term "neglect" and redefining the term "abuse" to include abuse by a relative or household member.

This bill further amends the Act by including the Agency for Persons with Disabilities among the list of departmental agencies, employees, and agents with access to all records concerning reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of the vulnerable adult, including all reports made to the central abuse hotline, and all records generated as a result of such reports.

Last Action: 3/29/06 HOUSE Favorable by Health Care Appropriations

SB 376 – Cystic Fibrosis Treatment (Margolis)

The bill requires group health insurance policies and group health maintenance organization (HMO) contracts to provide coverage for all medically necessary chest physiotherapy provided by a licensed respiratory therapist, home health care, equipment, supplies, and enteral formulas used to treat cystic fibrosis if the patient's treating physician or a physician authorized by the insurer or HMO who specializes in the treatment of cystic fibrosis certifies that such services are medically necessary. The insurer may require that the policyholder or subscriber is responsible for any deductible or co-payment that generally applies under the policy or contract.

The bill would not apply to any individual health insurance policy or individual HMO contract. It would also not apply to the standard policy, basic policy, or limited benefit policy sold to a small employer since a mandated benefit does not apply without a specific reference to such small group policies. The bill applies to policies or contracts issued or renewed on or after the effective date of the bill, October 1, 2006.

Last Action: 3/21/06 SENATE Favorable by Banking and Insurance

HB 535 – School Safety (Bogdanoff)

House bill 535 prohibits bullying and harassment of students in Florida schools, and requires school districts to adopt policies for enforcing this prohibition. The bill defines bullying and harassment, and sets forth specific minimum requirements for school district policies.

Last Action: 3/21/06 HOUSE Favorable with CS by PreK-12

ANIMOSITY: When you rearrange the letters: IS NO AMITY
MOTHER-IN-LAW: When you rearrange the letters: WOMAN HITLER
SNOOZE ALARMS: When you rearrange the letters: ALAS! NO MORE Z'S
A DECIMAL POINT: When you rearrange the letters: I'M A DOT IN PLACE

Bills Heard this Week continued

HB 629 – School Food Service Programs (Zapata)

House Bill 629 requires that school districts develop and implement a plan to eliminate high-fructose corn syrup products from their food service programs and on school grounds. The bill assigns the Department of Education (DOE) the responsibility of monitoring the planning and implementation of the removal of high-fructose corn syrup products and reporting on implementation efforts to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, annually, beginning on January 1, 2008.

Last Action: 3/21/06 HOUSE Favorable by PreK-12

SB 676 – Official State Pie/Key Lime (Bullard)

Chapter 15, F.S. designates official state emblems. To date, there are designations for a state tree, state fruit, state beverage, citrus archive, shell, stone, gem, wildflower, play, animal, freshwater fish, saltwater fish, marine mammal, saltwater mammal, butterfly, reptile, air fair, rodeo, festival, moving image center and archive, litter control symbol, pageant, opera, renaissance festival, railroad museums, transportation museum, soil, fiddle contest, band, and sports hall of fame.

Currently, no pie is designated as the official state pie. This bill designates key lime pie as the official state pie. The first Key Lime Pie was created in the 1850's in south Florida.

Last Action: 3/22/06 SENATE Favorable by Governmental Oversight and Productivity

SB 714 – Annual Intangible Personal Property Tax (Atwater)

Chapter 199, F.S., imposes two different intangible personal property taxes: an annual (or recurring) tax is imposed at the rate of 0.5 mill on the value of stocks, bonds, notes, and other intangible personal property; a non-recurring tax is imposed on obligations secured by liens on Florida realty at the rate of 2 mills. Individuals and businesses are currently obligated to pay an annual (recurring) tax on stocks, bonds, notes, governmental leaseholds, and interests in limited partnerships registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Current law exempts from the annual (recurring) tax \$250,000 for each natural person and \$500,000 for each natural person and spouse filing a joint return. The law also provides a \$250,000 exemption for corporations and other legal entities.

This bill repeals the 0.5 mill annual (recurring) tax imposed on stocks, bonds, notes, and other intangible property. No change is made to the 2 mills non-recurring tax imposed upon obligations secured by liens on Florida property.

Last Action: 3/21/06 SENATE Favorable by Banking and Insurance

HB 761 – Trespass on the Property of a Certified Domestic Violence Center (Carroll)

Section 810.09, F.S., currently provides that it is a first degree misdemeanor to commit trespass on lands. The offense level is increased to a third degree felony in certain circumstances. For example, it is a third degree felony if the offender is armed during the trespass; if the property trespassed is a posted construction site; if the property is posted as commercial property designated for horticultural products; if the property trespassed is posted as a designated agricultural site for testing or research purposes; or if a person knowingly propels any potentially lethal projectile over or across private land without authorization while taking, killing, or endangering specified animals.

HB 761 amends section 810.09, F.S., to increase criminal penalties from a first degree misdemeanor to a third degree felony for trespassing upon a domestic violence center. In order for the felony penalties to apply, the domestic violence center must be certified under section 39.905, F.S. and must be legally posted and identified in substantially the following manner: THIS AREA IS A DESIGNATED RESTRICTED SITE AND ANYONE WHO TRESPASSES ON THIS PROPERTY COMMITS A FELONY.

Last Action: 3/22/06 HOUSE Favorable by Future of Florida's Families

*If you're not familiar with the work of Steven Wright, he once said:
His mind sees things differently than many do, to our amusement. Here are some more of his gems:*

Bills Heard this Week continued

HB 971 – Senior Services (Sobel)

HB 971 creates an independent special district (district) for the purpose of providing funding for services for seniors in Broward County. The boundaries of the district are coterminous with the boundaries of Broward County. The district is authorized to levy an ad valorem tax not to exceed .5 mill on taxable property within the district subject to referendum approval by voters of the district. The referendum required to approve the ad valorem tax levy must be held in conjunction with the primary election held on September 5, 2006.

The bill provides for the district to be governed by the Broward County Council for Services for Seniors consisting of 11 members: the executive director of the area agency on aging of Broward County; the Broward County director of human services; one member of the Broward County board of county commissioners for a 2-year term; two nonvoting members of the Broward County legislative delegation for the county appointed by the delegation chair for a 2-year term; two representatives of the Broward League of Cities appointed by the President of the League of Cities for a 2-year term; and four members appointed by the Governor for a 4-year term.

Last Action: 3/22/06 HOUSE Favorable by Elder & Long-Term Care

HB 999 – Suicide Prevention (Adams)

House bill 999 establishes a pilot program on suicide prevention and depression for secondary schools in Brevard, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties during the 2006-2007 fiscal year. In order for one of the authorized counties to receive funding, a proposal must be submitted to the Department of Education (DOE) by September 1, 2006.

The bill requires that local school personnel in each participating county receive materials; either the entire student body or a select portion of the student body of a participating school must be screened; and prior to the screening, the parent of each student must be provided with a copy of the screening form and additional information that will assist the parent in the identification of depression and suicidal tendencies along with helping initiate family discussions. The bill provides that a parent may refuse to allow his or her child to participate in the program.

Last Action: 03/21/06 HOUSE Favorable with CS by PreK-12,

HB 1233 – School Readiness (Ausley)

At least 10 school readiness coalitions around the state have implemented quality rating systems to provide parents, caregivers, providers, and coalitions an opportunity to gauge the quality of school readiness providers. HB 1233 requires the Early Learning Advisory Council, in conjunction with the Agency for Workforce Innovation, to contract with one or more nationally known experts on quality incentives and rating systems to conduct a study that includes examination of early learning quality incentives and rating systems in Florida and other states, including North Carolina and Oklahoma, and to develop recommendations for an early learning quality incentives and rating system that provides financial incentives for participating providers from the state of Florida. The study is required to seek input from representatives from Children's Services Councils, Early Learning Coalitions, Providers, Private and Faith-based Child Care Provider Associations, Community Colleges, and Colleges. In addition, the bill requires the Office of Program, Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to study the administrative and operational structure of the Child Care Services Program offices, the Department of Children and Family Services and make recommendations regarding appropriate administrative and operational structures, together with the appropriate state agency to administer child care regulation functions. OPPAGA is also required to conduct a study on the effectiveness of the child care executive partnership.

Last Action: 03/21/06 HOUSE Favorable with CS by PreK-12,

Bills Heard this Week continued

SB 1278 – Persons with Disabilities (Wise)

Senate Bill 1278 creates the Interagency Services Committee for Persons with Disabilities to develop and implement a coordinated, multidisciplinary, and interagency intervention service system for youth with disabilities who are between three years and 30 years of age. The service system is to eliminate barriers to educational opportunities and enhance educational opportunities that will lead to future employment of these youth.

Last Action: 3/22/06 SENATE Favorable with CS by Governmental Oversight and Productivity

HB 1309 – Local Housing Assistance (Jennings)

HB 1309 amends existing law relating to local housing assistance plans by providing homeownership down payment assistance to “essential service personnel” and “building trades personnel.” The bill accomplishes this by:

- Providing homeownership down payment assistance eligibility criteria, including a 5-year commitment; an assistance limit of 25% of the purchase price; and verification of compliance.
- Providing for removal of security lien upon completion of the 5-year commitment by the eligible employee.
- Encouraging local governments to incorporate provisions within the local housing assistance plan to better recruit and retain “essential service personnel” and “skilled trades personnel.”
- Providing for the allocation of funds.
- Providing the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Corporation) with rulemaking authority to implement the provisions of this bill.
- Providing an appropriation to the Corporation from the Local Government Housing Trust Fund in an amount to be sufficient for the purpose of providing funds for affordable housing to assist in the retention and recruitment of “essential service personnel” and “persons skilled in the building trades.”

Last Action: 3/21/06 HOUSE Favorable by Growth Management

HB 1363 – Affordable Housing (Davis)

HB 1363 addresses the issue of affordable housing by:

- Creating the Community Workforce Housing Innovation Program (CWHIP), a program which incents public-private partnerships and the use of joint resources to provide affordable rental and single-family housing opportunities, in high-cost counties, to persons with medium incomes.
- Providing CWHIP grant eligibility.
- Authorizing special districts to provide housing assistance to their employees.
- Providing guidance for the assessment of just valuation of affordable housing when a cap rate is used.
- Providing a property exemption for affordable housing property owned by a nonprofit entity.
- Providing guidance for assessment of just valuation of affordable housing.
- Removing the cap on the distribution of documentary stamp revenues to the State Housing Trust Fund, which cap is scheduled to be implemented in FY 2006-2007.
- Lowering the mortgage loan rate for Corporation loans under the State Apartment Incentive Loan Program when the project targets certain populations.
- Providing authority for school boards to provide affordable housing for teachers and other instructional personnel.

Last Action: 3/21/06 HOUSE Favorable with CS by Growth Management

They're Back! Church Bulletin Bloopers:

- *A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.*
- *At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What Is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.*
- *Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.*
- *Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.*

HB 1623 – Persons with Disabilities (Bean)

The bill creates the Interagency Services Committee for Persons with Disabilities, intended to develop and implement a coordinated, multidisciplinary, and interagency intervention service system for youth with disabilities who are between three years and 30 years of age. The service system is designed to eliminate barriers to educational opportunities and enhance educational opportunities that will lead to future employment of these youths.

The bill requires that the committee consist of state agency heads of those agencies involved in providing educational, social, and employment support services, including the Commissioner of Education, the director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Secretary of Health Care Administration, the Secretary of Health, the Secretary of Children and Family Services, the director of Workforce Florida, Inc., the director of the Division of Blind Services, the director of the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, the director of the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, and the director of Individuals in Supported Employment within the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

The bill requires that DCF, DOE, DOH, and APD provide staff and administrative support to the committee, and the chairperson is to designate one of the agencies to perform “administrative responsibilities” for the committee.
Last Action: 3/22/06 HOUSE Favorable with CS by Elder & Long-Term Care

SB 2026 – Florida State Employees’ Charitable Campaign (Wise)

The practical effect of the bill is to align the Florida State Employees’ Charitable Campaign practices on the distribution of undesignated funds with Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 950.501, for the Combined Federal Campaign for employees of federal agencies. Those federal regulations direct the proportional distribution of undesignated funds to charities in the same proportion that they received designations in the campaign.

Last Action: 3/22/06 SENATE Temporarily postponed by Governmental Oversight and Productivity

SB 2050 – Florida Healthy Kids Corporation (Peaden)

Healthy Kids currently covers 3,841 non-qualified, non-citizen children (i.e., non-Title XXI) utilizing state funds, family contributions and local matching funds. Families participating in the program pay either \$15 or \$20 per family per month depending upon their family size and income. Each fiscal year since 2002-2003, the Legislature has established the maximum amount of state funds that can be spent on this population and the minimum amount of local match that must be collected. For the 2006-2007 fiscal year, the local match cash contribution minimum is \$7 million and the maximum state contribution is \$1.9 million. Because of declining enrollment in this population, it is expected that local match collections will exceed the projected costs for this fiscal year. The current number of Title XXI (federal/state) enrollees is 160,089 and the non-subsidized/full pay5 enrollees total 23,282.

The Legislature determines, as part of the General Appropriations Act, the minimum amount of local match funds that FHKC is required to collect to provide coverage for non-Title XXI children. The FHKC accepts voluntary local match money from municipalities, counties, school boards, etc., to pay for the premium of children who are not eligible for Title XXI federal funds. If local match money is not collected from a county, then non-Title XXI children from that county may not participate in the Healthy Kids program. The FHKC calculates the county’s local match rate based upon that county’s percentage of the state’s total non-Title XXI expenditures for providing Healthy Kids coverage to non-Title XXI children, as reported in the FHKC’s most recently audited financial statement. FHKC provides written notification to the counties by May 1 of each year. Local match funds that are unspent at the end of the fiscal year are retained by the Corporation.

“...in the United States...80 percent of the population believe God created the universe, (and) less than half believe in evolution.” Newsweek, Evolution of a Scientist, November 28, 2005.

Bills Heard this Week continued

Senate Bill 2050 amends the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation Act by removing the eligibility criteria presently used to determine which non-Title XXI children are eligible for state and local funded assistance in paying health insurance premiums under the Healthy Kids program. The effect of this change would be to reopen non-Title XXI enrollment under the program. The bill changes the method for calculating the voluntary local county match contributions received by the FHKC to subsidize the premium for non-Title XXI eligible children.

The bill proposes that the FHKC calculate a county's local match rate based on the county's enrollment of non-Title XXI eligible children as of March 1, 2004, and requires that a county's local match contribution shall not exceed 30 percent of the monthly premium for the county's non-Title XXI enrollment, after the family premium is deducted, and the remaining 70 percent shall be taken from the General Appropriations Act.

The legislation provides FHKC with authority to apply any unspent local match contributions at the end of the fiscal year to the county's local match obligation for the next year. The bill also changes the due date (from May 1 to June 1) that the FHKC must provide written annual notification to the local entities of their local match contribution amounts under the Healthy Kids program.

Last Action: 3/21/06 SENATE Favorable with 1 Amendment by Banking and Insurance



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