

Legislative Update

2012 Legislative Session – Week 4

February 3, 2012 marked the end of Week 4 of the 2012 Legislative Session. We are about at the mid-point of session and thus far, from an Aging Network perspective, we arrive at this 'midpoint' having made progress toward our policy and appropriations goals.

Beginning the week of February 6th, we can expect many anticipated developments starting with the release of the Senate Appropriations Committee Chair's budget proposals which are slated to be released beginning Wednesday, February 8th. Advocates who were waiting for the appropriate time to travel to Tallahassee and visit their Senators should do so beginning February 6th.

Last week we received very important and positive news from the Senate President and HHS Appropriations Committee Chairman, Senator Negron, that the Senate Budget allocations would more closely resemble those of the House of Representatives. Recall from earlier information provided, that the anticipated Senate budget reduction allocations were appearing to be much larger than those of the House of Representatives. As a result the anticipated budget cuts for the Senate HHS Appropriations Committee have been reduced from \$850 million to \$390 million. That's the Good News! The Bad News is the Senate HHS Appropriations Committee will be required to reduce CURRENT spending levels by \$390 million and Chairman Negron continues to emphasize that he intends to cut Hospital and Nursing Home Medicaid rates as a last resort. The committee will look to other program reductions and program eliminations FIRST.

We will continue to advocate for NOT cutting home and community care programs serving seniors as well as for increased funding to serve those on the waiting lists most at risk of institutional care. We will keep you up to date on all new developments this week and encourage you to continue your efforts with your elected officials to advocate on behalf of seniors and the programs they rely on for help.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Beck

President, PinPoint Results

Background Screening Legislation Update:

House Bill 943 has one more committee stop left before heading to the House Floor. We are hoping that the House Health & Human Services Committee will hear and pass the bill during Week 5.

Senate Bill 320 also has one more committee stop before heading to the Senate Floor. We are hoping that the Senate Budget Committee will take up the bill and pass it during Week 5.

All Advocates should continue to advocate with members of the House Health Care Committee for HB 943 to be placed on the agenda and passed. In addition, please also reach out to members of the Senate Budget Committee for SB 320 to be placed on the Senate Budget Committee agenda. These

committee members, particularly the Committee Chairs MUST HEAR FROM YOU! There are dozens of bills trying to make it to the committee agenda's and time is of the essence! A link to committee member contact information is found below:

Senate Budget Committee: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/Show/BC/>

House Health & Human Services Committee:

<http://myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Committees/committeesdetail.aspx?SessionId=70&CommitteeId=2593>

Appropriations:

As stated earlier, the House budget contains NO cuts to Aging Home and Community Care Programs and in fact, provides significant increases in the budgets for Community Care for the Elderly, the Aging and Disabled Adult Medicaid Waiver, the Assisted Living for the Elderly Medicaid Waiver, and for the Nursing Home Diversion Program. Additional funding is also provided for the Aging & Disability Resource Centers for the Choice Counseling function under Managed Long Term Care.

The Senate will release its budget proposal during the coming Week 5 of session. Watch closely for information concerning the Senate Budget for Aging Programs.

A link to House and Senate Appropriations Committee members is found below.

House Healthcare Appropriations Subcommittee link:

<http://www.myfloridahouse.com/Sections/Committees/committeesdetail.aspx?SessionId=70&CommitteeId=2599>

Senate Health & Human Services Appropriations Committee link:

<http://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/Show/BHA/>

Please do not hesitate to contact me at rbeck@pinpointresults.com with any questions that you may have and I will do my best to respond to you in a timely manner.