

## April 2008 Legislative Update

The 2008 Florida Legislative Session will conclude on May 2, 2008. The focus on balancing the state budget will impact most health and education bills.

SB 130 School Bases Health Centers, has no companion bill in the House and will most likely not go forward this session.

SB 176 School Nurse Services (One School, One Nurse), has no companion bill in the House and will most likely not go forward this session.

SB 510 School-entry Vision Examinations, has no companion bill in the House and will most likely not go forward this session.

SB 1344 Creates the Universal Health Access Plan for Children, has no companion bill in the House and will most likely not go forward. However, Governor Crist, in conjunction with the Florida Senate and the Florida House of Representatives, are working to craft legislation termed the “Cover Florida Health Care Access Program” that will expand the availability of affordable health care for uninsured Floridians, including children.<sup>1</sup>

SB 2358 Immunization/Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis Vaccine has no companion in the House and will most not go forward this session.

The following bills have identical House Bill companions and are being considered this session.

- SB 495/HB 1650: Epinephrine Auto Injectors in schools.
- SB 564/ HB 243: Automated External Defibrillators
- SB 2566/HB 1390: Vaccinations/Students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

Due to state budget constraints, legislation with fiscal implications will face funding obstacles. School nurses can expect to experience increased workloads. The January 2008 NASN Newsletter states that school nurses are the technical experts on every aspect of health care and that they know when the ratio between students and nurses is inadequate given the demographics of the student population<sup>2</sup>. School nurses possess a wealth of important information for decision makers! With that in mind it is more important than ever for school nurses to advocate for student health. The following excerpt from the NASN Newsletter article provides Tips for Advocacy:

- Be Clear
- Be Concise
- Be Consistent

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<sup>1</sup> CS/CS/SB 2534 is available online at <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/>

<sup>2</sup> Volume 23, Number 1, School Nurses Voices: Being Heard by Children, Parents, and Policymakers; available online via <http://www.nasn.org/Default.aspx?tabid=141>

Since all politics are local, use your expertise to voice your concerns with your elected officials about issues pertaining to student health. Contact your Legislator(s) via <http://www.flsenate.gov/Legislators/index.cfm?Mode=Find%20Your%20Legislators&Submenu=3&Tab=legislators&CFID=1370427&CFTOKEN=63882244>

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