



CONNECTICUT WOMEN'S HEALTH CAMPAIGN e-News, July 21, 2009

In this issue: Sustinet veto overridden; health care partnership/pooling bill fails. National reform debate continues with significant developments on women's health.

CWHC News

Take a Quick Survey. Do You Exercise? Please take this short survey, and send to your networks. **We need results from 20 more women!**

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=UhH3bo6i_2bxUjutA5tnDdaQ_3d_3d

State Legislative Update

Veto Session. July 20, 2009. Universal health bill passes, overrides veto. Partnership/Pooling bill fails in Senate. The House voted 102 – 40 to override the veto of the Sustinet bill, H.B. H.B. 6600. The Senate voted 24 – 12 in favor of the override. This bill will establish a plan for universal health care by 2012. While the House successfully overrode the Governor's veto on the Healthcare Partnership Bill or "pooling" bill, H.B. H.B. 6582, by a 105-37 vote, it fell one vote short in the Senate. The Senate vote was 23 – 12. Twenty-four votes are needed to override a veto in the Senate.

Vetoed. PA 09-157 - SsB 1080. An Act Concerning Access to Health And Nutritional Information In Restaurants. This act requires chain restaurants to disclose on their standard printed menus or menu boards total calorie counts for standard menu items. The Department of Public Health would have adopted regulations incorporating the calorie information requirements into regularly scheduled inspections of such restaurants. Excerpt from the Governor's veto message:

"There has been a growing and troubling tendency by some to legislate nearly every aspect of our lives and society, including personal responsibility. Such legislation always comes at a cost to the taxpayer and to individual freedom...Each one of these laws comes at a price for our businesses and our state. Laws are nothing without enforcement, and we are asking our state Department of Public Health and local health districts to inspect, report upon, and – if necessary – fine the establishments, with no extra resources afforded to them to carry out such duties."

Federal Update – National Health Reform

Senate. Mikulski Women's Health Amendments pass the Senate HELP Committee by 12 to 11 vote. PCSW was quoted on importance of women's health concerns in national reform. **See**

<http://www.connecticutplus.com/cplus/information/news/health/Dodd-leads-fight-for-women-s-health-and-against-anti-choice-amendments55125512.shtml>

Senator Dodd's Consumer Protection Amendment to the *Affordable Health Choices Act, H.R. 3200*, passes Senate Health Education, Labor and Pensions Committee mark-up. Dodd's amendment would implement three key provisions. 1) Benefit explanations requiring insurance companies to explain to consumers the terms and benefits of the policies they offer. 2) The language must be easy for consumers to understand and insurance companies must disclose the issuer's right to change premiums, co-payments, etc. 3) Grants to states to enable them to establish, expand, or support offices of health insurance consumer assistance.

Senator Chris Dodd also worked to ensure that family planning and women's reproductive and preventive health services are included in the federal Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee bill. He has also fought against anti-choice amendments offered by Republican Senators.

House. The House Education and Labor committee recently rejected bans to abortion coverage. This committee also passed an amendment guaranteeing children access to Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) services — the standard pediatric benefits package under Medicaid — as part of any government-approved, Exchange-participating health plan.

Rep. Chris Murphy Amendment, based on H.R. 1072, Women's Health Office Act (WHOA). This amendment would codify the offices of women's health within the federal agencies in healthcare reform legislation. These offices give women access to the latest information and tools they need to make informed decisions about their health and the health of their loved ones. The offices of women's health elevate women's health within the federal government, from research at the National Institutes of Health to public education and promotion at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The House amendment codifies the offices but does not include authorization of funding, as does the Senate version

Latest Kaiser Family Foundation side by side comparison on national health care reform proposals. http://www.kff.org/healthreform/upload/healthreform_sbs_full.pdf

Women's Health Resources

The National Home Health Aide Survey. National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) announces the release of the 2007 National Home Health Aide Survey. The National Home Health Aide Survey (NHAS), the first national probability survey of home health aides, was designed to provide national estimates of home health aides employed by agencies that provide home health and/or hospice care. Home health aides who provided assistance with Activities of Daily Living (bathing, dressing, eating, transferring, and toileting), and were employed by agencies providing home health or hospice care, were questioned about many aspects of their jobs including: satisfaction, length of employment and plans to leave employment, training, relationships with supervisors, general work environment, pay, benefits, and safety. Data are available for analysis from telephone interviews with 3,377 home health aides. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhas.htm>

Preliminary Findings on VA's Provision of Health Care Services to Women Veterans. Officials at VA facilities identified challenges in providing health care services to the increasing numbers of women veterans seeking VA health care. One challenge was that space constraints have raised issues

related to privacy for women veterans. Officials also reported challenges hiring providers with specific training and experience in women's health care and in mental health care, such as treatment for women veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder or who had experienced military sexual trauma.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09884t.pdf>

Majority want long term care included in national health care reform. A national poll indicates that nearly 80 percent of Americans would be more likely to support a health reform proposal if it included measures to improve long-term care services for seniors. Findings also include:

- 92 percent of Americans say it's important to improve coverage that allows people to receive home-based care instead of going into nursing homes
- 79 percent of Americans are concerned about their own or a family member's ability to afford long-term care in the future
- 78 percent say they would benefit personally from health care reform that improves coverage for home and community-based long-term care services

The Senate bill includes the CLASS Act, which addresses these issues, as reported in previous editions of EESI e-News.

<http://www.thescanfoundation.org/documents/reports/Media%20Report%20final%20070609.pdf>

Rheumatoid Arthritis Linked to Air Pollution. Factors such as genetics may play a role in rheumatoid arthritis. Researchers at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School examined the link between air pollution and the incidence of Rheumatoid Arthritis in women. Proximity to roads were used as a measure for air pollution. They found that women who lived closer to interstate roads, major and secondary roads had a 33% greater likelihood of developing Rheumatoid Arthritis than did women who lived farther from large roads. This study suggests that environmental pollution, specifically air pollution, may play a role in the development of RA. (Hart JE, Laden F, Puett RC, Costenbader KH, Karlson EW (2009). Exposure to traffic pollution and increased risk of Rheumatoid Arthritis. *Environmental Health Perspectives*. 2009 July.)

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