

Legislative Update

CWHC Priorities

CWHC selected three priorities for women's health legislation this session: a comprehensive sexuality education incentive grant; funding and expanded slots for the home care program for the disabled; and the establishment of a statewide sexual assault nurse examiner/forensic nurse program.

PA 08-88, AAC the State-Funded Home Care Program for the Disabled (s.S.B. 414). Governor Rell's FY 2008-2009 state budget included the development of a state funded pilot home care program for adults with disabilities, ages 18 – 64. The new state funded pilot home care program for adults with disabilities mirrors the CT Home Care Program for Elders by providing services adults with disabilities ages 18 to 64 who are at risk of going into a nursing home or who are prematurely living in a nursing home. Services include case management and there is currently a small waiting list. *The Governor signed the bill on May 27, 2008 and it takes effect July 1, 2008.*

HB-5591 Healthy Teens — Failed. This bill would have established a competitive grant to fund health education for adolescents through the State Department of Education. The curricula would include comprehensive sexuality education including prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

s.S.B. 243, AAC the Establishment of a Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Program— Failed. This bill would have required the Office of Victim Services (OVS) to establish a program to train sexual assault forensic examiners and make them available to victims at participating hospitals.

In addition to these three priorities, CWHC also monitored the following legislation:

s.H.B. 5536, AA Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership – passed, but not yet signed or vetoed. This bill would allow municipalities, certain municipal contractors, nonprofit organizations, and small businesses to join the state employee health insurance plan for their employees and retirees. Governor Rell has expressed concern over the bill.

PA 08-68 Presumptive Eligibility for Pregnant Women in Medicaid – (SB 659). Changes Dept. of Social Services procedures from expedited to presumptive eligibility which allows the state to grant immediate HUSKY health care coverage to pregnant women. Also prohibits DSS from counting a tax refund received under the federal Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 resources when determining eligibility for public benefits. (This prohibition applies to the month the tax refund is received and the following two months.) *Governor has signed this law.*

s.S.B. 681, AA Establishing a Minority Health Advisory Commission – passed the General Assembly, no action by the Governor yet. This would establish a 32-member Commission on Health Equity to work to eliminate disparities in health status based on race, ethnicity, and linguistic ability. (PCSW would be one member.)

S.B. 562, AAC Increased Access to the Medicaid Program for the Medically Needy Elderly and Disabled – Failed. This bill would have required DSS to increase the income limits when making Medicaid eligibility determinations for persons who are aged, blind or disabled.

HB 5618 AAC Revisions to the HUSKY Plan — Failed. The bill contained language to delay changes in healthcare delivery for HUSKY clients until 7/1/09. It included provisions for a feasibility and cost study of various HUSKY health care delivery systems and required the state to separate HUSKY from the Charter Oak Health Care.

PA 08-145 AA Implementing The Governor's Budget Recommendations Regarding The Tobacco And Health Trust Fund (HB 5020) This act increases the amount the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund trustees can recommend for disbursement for tobacco prevention, education, cessation; substance abuse reduction; and unmet physical and mental health needs. Beginning in FY 09, it allows the trustees to recommend disbursement of up \$6 million. *Pending Governor's signature.*

PA 08-158, AAC Optional Services Covered under Medicaid (SB 558) Includes hospice care as a covered service under Medicaid. *If signed, this change will be implemented on 1/1/09.*

s.H.B. 5622, AAC Expansion of Shelter Services for Victims of Household Abuse – Failed. This bill would have provided 24 hour on-site support staff at domestic violence shelters.

Health Fact Did You Know?
About one-third of women in Connecticut report having arthritis or other chronic joint problems.



Attendees at the CWHC's special screening of the PBS Documentary "Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick" at CPTV Studios on April 29, 2008



CWHC members networking at the screening of "Unnatural Causes."

Health Fact Did You Know?
About 14 million adolescent girls become mothers every year. More than 90% of these very young mothers live in developing countries. (World Health Organization)

Women's Health Resources

Smoking cessation for pregnant women. DPH has announced availability of funding to provide tobacco cessation services to low-income pregnant women and women of childbearing age (13-44) across CT, through federally qualified health centers. An independent evaluation will also be conducted. RFP #2008 -0920: http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3152&q=389676&dphNav_GID=1601 Total funding - \$800,000 to support both components. **Deadline for submission: 6/25/08.** Funding is made available to DPH from the Tobacco & Health Trust Fund. Source: Tobacco Trust Fund

The Connecticut AHEC Medical Interpreter Certificate establishes a foundation for all community interpreters and provides specialized training in health care interpretation. In addition to expertise in the code of ethics and the modes and techniques of community interpreting, a health care interpreter must understand health care as a cultural system and master the most common medical concepts, procedures, and terminology. This 40-hour training program accommodates up to 15 participants. The core components of the training include:

- Interpreting techniques, guiding the encounter, and memory skills;
- Health care in cultural perspective;
- Structure and principles of U.S. health care;
- Biomedical practitioners, methods of diagnosis and medical terminology.

The Connecticut Area Health Education Center is a not-for-profit agency dedicated to improving access to primary health care. As part of a national network of agencies, Connecticut AHEC accomplishes its mission by supporting health and human service providers who currently serve our most vulnerable communities and by encouraging and training individuals who are just beginning health care careers.

The Connecticut AHEC Medical Interpreter Certificate in Health and Community settings are taught by instructors who represent Latin American and Middle Eastern countries. Their qualifications include advanced degrees, experience as trained medical interpreters, and a personal dedication to increase access to health care. Our instructors have been trained and certified as medical interpreters and as instructors by the **Northern Virginia Area Health Education Center.**

For more information contact: Maritza Rosado, Director, Medical Interpreter Training, (203) 671-4685 rosado.ahec@snet.net www.easternctahec.org

Emergency Fund For Breast Cancer Patients

The Connecticut Breast Cancer Coalition Foundation supports an Emergency Fund for non-medical expenses to help women with financial needs associated with breast cancer. Each request is reviewed by the Emergency Fund Board. Applications must be completed by a patient's care manager or physician. Additional information: info@cbcfc.org.

Families USA Report

Families USA generated state-level estimates of the number of deaths due to lack of health insurance. Between 2000 and 2006, the estimated number of adults between ages of 25 and 64 in Connecticut who died because they did not have health insurance was more than 1,100. Read about it at...

<http://www.familiesusa.org/assets/pdfs/dying-for-coverage/connecticut.pdf>

Online Self-Assessment Tool Addresses Disparities In Depression

(Source: AMCHP Member Briefs - April 11, 2008. Secondary Source: CT Women's Consortium.) The National Center for Cultural Competence developed this online module to address racial and ethnic disparities in the diagnosis and treatment of depression. The model uses self-assessment as a learning tool for providers to: heighten awareness; influence attitudes toward practice; and, motivate the development of knowledge and skills to incorporate cultural and linguistic competency into the diagnosis and treatment of depression. The module can be accessed at: <http://www.guchdgetown.net/13D/>

Emotional Wellness

The Health Resources and Services Administration's Office of Women's Health has developed the *Bright Futures for Women's Health and Wellness (BFWHW)* series which includes tools to address the connection between women's mental and physical well-being and encourage better health across the lifespan.

- A Young Woman's Guide to Emotional Wellness at http://mchlibrary.info/BFWHW/BF_young_women_Revised_707.pdf

- A Woman's Guide to Emotional Wellness at http://mchlibrary.info/BFWHW/BF_Woman_revised_707.pdf

Future CWHC Electronic Bulletins

The CWHC newsletter will be issued as needed during the off-session and once a month or more often as needed beginning the month after the start of Connecticut's legislative session. These bulletins will not be limited to legislative information, nor will they prompt calls to action. **If you would like to post an announcement about a publication, conference or other event, please e-mail.**

CWHC General Membership

Click on the links provided to see a list of existing [CWHC members](#), [our principles](#), and a [sign up sheet](#). CWHC will *not* ask members to sign on each year. If your organization is on the attached list, you are "grandmothered" into membership. If you wish to be a new member, please fill out [this form](#). If you are an existing member that is no longer interested in membership, please [e-mail](#).

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#). Comments or questions? Please [e-mail us!](#)

