

**Idaho Public Health Association**

Legislative Update – Week Ending January 14, 2012

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| **The 2012 legislative session commenced with the** [**Governor's State of the State Address**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?llr=m7hzescab&et=1109092366109&s=434&e=001rlm7d1NfLBaXhP7Z8TWyqks5SuAwBK9dUClX_KV8tb3u5-SgEEzXMQM72J_h_j6OWwVfcdfuDjW9OJSU3FZcxJKbpAxT6h9i8qaLkjf2Fcyra5UNkGrx9J82fMCQpLHoJnyi9lG0zxugw749GYP-xOiwJR_g_JvTVxd4Qm2U9kdlOvt3aKL6ErJrSAJ9w92I)**delivered on Monday, January 9th.**  Although much anxiety awaits the outcome of the Health Insurance Exchange issue, Governor Otter kept his comments brief on the subject. He did indicate he would do his best to explain to lawmakers the consequences of spurning a $20.3 million federal grant to set up the exchange which is envisioned as being a transparent, online marketplace for consumers to compare and purchase insurance. The concept of an Idaho health insurance exchange was endorsed (an 11-1 vote) by the Legislature's Health Care Task Force. Next week's edition will include supplemental background information regarding the exchange and the controversies surrounding the issue. The Governor is proposing in his budget to restore the "rainy day funds" that were tapped into during the downturn, to fund the education changes that were passed last year, provide one time bonuses to state employees, and to pass not-yet-identified $45 million in tax cuts. In his budget he is capping overall general-fund spending growth at 5 percent, for a spending level slightly below the forecast. The Department of Commerce is the only agency to have some of its funding restored. Otter also unveiled a new "IGEM" or [Idaho Global Entrepreneurial Mission](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?llr=m7hzescab&et=1109092366109&s=434&e=001rlm7d1NfLBYQr3ZALU2WN_rYFmt9z7XYn7tWqxxtdhYc8gsyd0GXhDJsuFUT4MfOw7W5cFZItS_ivr5Qu7N5uCjPx8LIumN8CHXQvEFzNzGOEvmBXeOBJClEg3yY1CNFHveZUy7F5mzhGBFF7pJVvQ==) jobs initiative. IGEM would provide $5 million to support collaboration between university researchers and businesses with the goal of generating new "knowledge-based economy jobs". Similar initiatives have been considered successful in other states although most invested more money. Utah, for example spent $75 million compared to Idaho's $5 million. When the Speaker of the House welcomed the Governor to the Chamber prior to his address, he said there was agreement between the Senate and House that this would be a short session. It's an election year, and with re-districting and a closed Republican primary in May, many members may very well be anxious to head home in a timely manner to begin campaigning.  The Governor's current year budget is projected to end with a positive balance of $130 million. Lawmakers often say that years with money are harder than years without money. Everyone will be trying to get funding for their industry or program, and most likely there will not be enough to satisfy all the requests and needs.  In preparation for the session the EOC has already begun to set the target revenue number and Health Care Task Force has been meeting to review health related legislation that will be introduced during the session.    The [Economic Outlook Committee (EOC)](http://legislature.idaho.gov/budget/EORAC/index.htm) will hear expert industry and academic analysis to establish projections for 2013 revenue from state sales and individual and business income taxes. By the end of the session, the Legislature will pass a balanced budget based on these predictions that will represent compromises between the executive and legislative branches.  Currently the only pieces of legislation the [Health Care Taskforce](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?llr=m7hzescab&et=1109092366109&s=434&e=001rlm7d1NfLBZFixu_G2Ic95MCvIA3ZeXz3a8vp5lbZJ-5tYP9zirePwNdmXxWcp1ZfVNA3NehigTgtqRJCT1twdSU8GZ0pmEubR0I09WVCc7PwHKpRgN0BgMPT0baDrtIJGTuIb4r-mCkMMcgJ1mjbS08VPj53qSBTmlCkvXOp6hJ0RhVSaEwpA==) has endorsed are the Idaho Health Care Exchange and a concurrent resolution related to the development of a statewide plan for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias. An increase in the Idaho tobacco tax to $1.25 and a proposal to allow dental hygienists to perform specific functions in extended access areas were also presented to the Health Care Taskforce. There will undoubtedly be many more health related proposals introduced during the session as presentation to the Task Force is not required.  In the State of the State address, Gov. Butch Otter said that when he first was elected, he had "three broad priorities," that haven't changed: "Encourage economic opportunity, ensure responsible government, and empower Idahoans to be the architects of their own destiny." He said the economic downturn has required "efficiency and prudent frugality" and stated that "What we had to do then will become our new normal going forward."  *Starting next week, in addition to providing a summary, IPHA will be tracking specific pieces of legislation. You will be able to click on the bill number and read the entire bill. A summary of the bill and its status will be included in this email. Welcome to the legislative season and thank you for your engagement and interest!* |

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| **Join Us! New Policy Committee Members Always Welcome** We encourage you to visit the IPHA Policy Committee pages for helpful advocacy links and updates. And if you are interested in joining the Policy Committee, please contact committee chair Katie Quinn, MHS at krq@hotmail.com. The committee meets the second Wednesday of each month at 6:00 in the Health Sciences Building at BSU. |

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***Kimberly Gallagher****, a student in the Master of Health Science Program/Public Policy Emphasis at Boise State University, is the IPHA legislative intern for 2012. She will be monitoring health related policy activities and providing weekly updates throughout the session.*

*Our goal is to provide you with nonpartisan, objective insight that will both inform and serve as a catalyst for involvement in the policy making process.   Kimberly looks forward to your input and comments, her contact information is* ***kimberlygallagher@u.boisestate.edu****.*