



 Image result for idaho caregivers alliance

Week 2

January 21, 2018

Greetings members of the Idaho Public Health Association (IPHA) and Idaho Family Caregiver Alliance (ICA) and welcome to the 2018 Idaho Legislative Session. My name is Pragna Naidoo and I am the IPHA/ICA legislative intern. My goal is to provide you with meaningful weekly updates, legislative summaries, and other resource materials. Please contact me if you have questions or comments or ideas on items for the Update, pragnanaidoo.policyintern@gmail.com.

Bill Highlight: The Idaho Health Care Plan

Background

The Idaho Health Care Plan is the featured bill of the Update for this week. The plan calls for Idaho to seek two waivers from the federal government. Both waivers are designed to lower the cost of health insurance in Idaho and improve access. It would potentially yield opportunity to purchase subsidized insurance plans through the state insurance exchange for 35,000 Idahoans who fall into the coverage gap. The first waiver (**1332**) lets **35,000** individuals who fall below the income threshold qualify for the subsidies available to those with higher incomes. The second waiver (**1115**) shifts a small group, **2,500 – 3,500** people, who have one of 12 costly medical conditions in to a Medicaid plan. For further information, please see the [Idaho Health Care Plan Fact Sheet](#), courtesy of *Close the Gap Idaho*.

Legislation and Response

Three members of the House Health and Welfare Committee voted against introducing the bill although a public hearing will be held in the next week or so. I encourage you to attend the hearings and follow the progress of this initiative in the Update.

Rep. John VanderWoude, R – Nampa, claimed the bill was too vague, “not ‘putting the meat on the bones’ to specify what exactly Idaho would seek in federal waivers.” Others who oppose

the proposal expressed concerns about the burden on taxpayers or that it does not go far enough in providing coverage for chronic health conditions. The position of *Close the Gap Idaho* is that the proposal is a good first step in the right direction as it has the potential to move **35,000** Idahoans out of the coverage gap. However, it is not a full solution to the coverage problem in Idaho, and further action is needed.

For deeper insight into action surrounding this bill, visit Betsy Z Russell's article in the Spokesman-Review [here](#).

House Health and Welfare Corner

Spotlight on Idaho Commission on Aging (ICOA)

As presented by Cathy Hart, Idaho State Longterm Care Ombudsman, the ICOA proposed amendments to terminology and complaint processing procedures. The goal of these changes was to better reflect existing practices and the intent of the Older Americans Act (OAA). Specifics include updating of protocols for the disclosure of records; clarification of HIPAA rules and access to records in an investigation; and clarification of when an ombudsman may have access to facilities for purposes of an investigation. Changes were approved via voice vote. Access to all changes available [here](#).

Spotlight on Behavioral Care

There is a significant shortage of Behavioral Care Unit beds in skilled nursing facilities (SNF) in Idaho. This is due in part to Rules related to establishing payment rates for such beds. Sheila Pugatch, Idaho Division of Medicaid, proposed a change in rule that will shorten the cost reporting period from a full year to a minimum of **60** calendar days. This amendment will allow more providers to enter the market and increase access to appropriate care. Kris Ellis from the Idaho Health Care Association reported that four SNF in Idaho were already in the process of expanding Behavioral Health Beds. She and members of the Idaho Alzheimer's Planning Group thanked the Division of Medicaid for making this change.

Tobacco 21

The advocacy group will return to the Statehouse this year in support of a bill designed to raise Idaho's smoking age from 18 to 21. Tobacco 21 introduced legislation last year, but the bill failed to make it out of committee.

Advocates assert that much of the pushback is from tobacco and e - cigarette retailers. Corey Surber, State Director of Advocacy for Trinity Health, adds that they "didn't hear from legislators' concern about decrease in tobacco tax revenue...it's more about the freedom issues or whether the government should intervene in telling people what to do." Senator Fred Martin, R - Boise, will introduce the legislation in the Senate State Affairs Committee this session. Link to full story [here](#).

Conversation with Idaho Legislative Leadership

AARP hosted a telephone town hall with Senator Hill, Idaho President Pro Tem of the Senate, and Representative Bedke, Speaker of the House. The call provided an interactive question and answer session. Topics included upcoming elections, current legislative session, and other matters pertinent to Idahoans. For instance, Senator Hill and Speaker Bedke spoke directly to protecting mentally ill from abuse, the grocery tax credit, and access to health care for Idahoans living in rural areas. See link for access to [audio](#) of call.

Advocacy Days

January 24: CID (Consortium for Idahoans with Disabilities), more information [here](#)

January 29: ACS CAN (American Cancer Society), details [here](#)

February 8: AARP Idaho, details [here](#)

February 22: Idaho Alzheimer's Association Advocacy Day, details [here](#)

Beyond State Borders

Spotlight on RAISE

The call to action by 40 million family caregivers has finally been heard by U.S. policy makers through the bipartisan RAISE (Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage) Family Caregiver Act. Passed by Congress, the RAISE Family Caregivers Act requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to form a family caregiving advisory council. This council will advise and work with the Secretary to develop a coordinated family caregiving strategy. This strategy will recommend actions that communities, health and social service providers, government, employers, and others can take to address the increasing challenges facing America's families in their caregiving role.

The bill now goes to the U.S. President to be signed into law. Access full bill text and more information [here](#).

Speak for Health

APHA recently launched #SpeakForHealth, a new way for the public health community to talk about why public health matters and call on elected officials to support public health. APHA makes it easy to talk about public health advocacy priorities on [social media](#) and to share a [pre-written and customizable letter](#) with representatives. Check out the APHA [#SpeakForHealth page](#) and make your voice heard.

To Watch

Senator Maryanne Jordan, D - Boise, filed a personal bill to expand Medicaid. She believes it is important to continue to evaluate the cost of any new programs against the cost of Medicaid expansion. Idaho's decision not to expand Medicaid created a healthcare coverage gap in the state under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). For example, **78,000** Idahoans did not make enough money to qualify for subsidized insurance plans through the state insurance exchange. See [here](#) for the full story and how to track the bill.

IPHA / ICA Bill Tracker

If there are specific Bills or Rules that you would like to be tracked, please reach out. For full bill text and more information regarding bills this session, please go to the [Idaho Legislature Bill Center](#)

Bill No	Description	Last Action
H0335	Employment, taxable wage rates	01/17/2018 Senate - Introduced, read first time; referred to: Local Government & Taxation
H0336	Medicaid, nursing facilities	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H0337	Behavioral health, council, boards	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H0338	Health care, insurance, assistance	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H0339	Pharmacy, drug substitutions	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare

H034 2	Hospitalization, mentally ill	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H034 3	Dentistry, dental specialists	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H034 4	Dental hygienists, access settings	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H034 5	Dentistry, convictions	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H034 6	Board of dentistry, compensation	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H034 7	Ombudsman for elderly, reporting	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H034 8	Board of acupuncture, honorarium	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H034 9	Occupational therapists	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H035 1	Pharmacy, licensing and registration	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H035 2	Occupational licensing, physicians	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H035 3	Volunteer health care providers	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
H035 4	Opioid antagonists, filing	01/17/2018 House - Reported Printed and Referred to Health & Welfare
S121 9	Health insurance, waiver	01/19/2018 Senate - Introduced; read first time; referred to JR for Printing
S122 3	Insurance, living donors	01/19/2018 Senate - Introduced; read first time; referred to JR for Printing
S122 4	Medicaid expansion	01/19/2018 Senate - Introduced; read first time; referred to JR for Printing