

## 2012 Idaho Legislature

Week in Review

March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Submitted by: Karin Iuliano, Program Manager  
Nurse Leaders of Idaho/Idaho Alliance of Leaders in Nursing

This week marks the 11<sup>th</sup> and perhaps last week of the legislative session. While many health issues and initiatives are nearing the final stages of deliberation, others have been abandoned. The 4 Idaho Board of Nursing Bills have passed both houses and are on their way to the Governor. Though ethics legislation was not addressed this session, Sen. Pearce (R-New Plymouth), the chairman of the Resources Committee is facing an ethics committee for voting 22 times without disclosing a conflict of interest; the senator has oil or gas leases on his property. The controversial [HB464 OIL AND GAS BILL](#) passed the Senate on a 28-6 vote. The "going home bill" will likely be some sort of tax relief for top earning individuals and/or businesses. The debate between the Republicans and the 2 houses seems to center on tax relief vs restoring salary cuts to teachers, and the wisdom of doing either with "one time money". Legislation that would cap expenditures at 5.33% of revenues has passed the House, complicating these decisions further. Proponents of the spending cap argue that it would ensure that government is small; opponents argue that the services provided by government are important and increasingly costly.

A high profile bill, [SB1358 STUDENT HARASMENT AND CYBERBULLYING](#) has passed the senate (25-8) after the bill's committee hearing received numerous testimonies. The bill must now past through the House. Likewise, [SB129 MESSAGE THERAPY LICENSING](#) has also passed the Senate and the House Commerce Committee. The bill would establish a licensing process for therapists as there is currently no regulation.

The House has deliberated on many health issues as well. [HB551 CORONER UNCLAIMED BODIES](#) passed the house (66-2) and would allow coroners to cremate unclaimed bodies. The bill makes exceptions for veterans. [HB632 YOUTH ATHLETES/ CONCUSSION GUIDELINES](#) met success in the House with a passing vote (59-7), while [HB486 MINORS, PHOTOTHERAPY AND TANNING DEVICE](#) has now gone back to committee twice for amendments. The bill now requires medical consent under age 15, and parental consent and evidence of age between 16 and 18.

Committee hearings have been intense these last two weeks, with high attendance and strong emotional public testimony. [SB1349 ABORTION](#) has passed both houses and awaits the signature of the Governor. He can veto it, sign it, or allow it to become law without his signature. Media editorials have highlighted what would appear an inconsistent ideology among policy makers when it comes to individual rights vs government mandates. The bill would require women to receive ultrasounds before

receiving an abortion. [SB1348a](#) MEDICAL CONSENT AND NATURAL DEATH ACT that forbids health care providers from withholding food and medications against the wishes of a dying patient has been amended by the Idaho Medical Association and has passed the Senate.

### **Tobacco Tax**

After a strong effort on the part of the American Cancer Society and its allied organizations, including the IPHA, the Tobacco tax increase will not be heard on either of the floors this year. The draft legislation did not get enough votes to have it printed, essentially killing the bill without an opportunity for a public hearing. After the hearing, Rep. Schaefer was singled out for writing a strongly worded, negative email to individuals who urged him to support the bill.

### **Health Insurance Exchange**

There is still some talk about running a bill to establish a state Health Insurance Exchange. With limited time, it would seem unlikely, but it is possible to get things done quickly when the political will is there. Rep Nonini's resolution, [HCR45 PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGE](#)- has passed the House on a 49-13 vote. The resolution encourages private health insurance agencies in Idaho to create their own health insurance exchange. [SJM104 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES REGULATION](#), which opposes the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act's mandate that requires coverage of contraceptive in acceptable plans, has been adopted by the Senate.

### **Legislation of Interest**

To be routed to a full text version of each bill, click on the bill's title in blue. The Idaho Legislature home page also offers a free bill tracking service that provides email alerts regarding any status changes. To sign up, click [HERE](#).