

State Legislative Update

Pennsylvania Association of Community Health Centers

Winter Meeting
February 21, 2008

The Environment

- Governor Rendell is in his final term in office.
- Democrats hold a one-seat edge in the House, Republicans control the Senate.
- It is an election year for the House and half of the Senate.
- It is going to be a tight budget year this year and next (at least).

The Governor's Budget

■ Cover All Pennsylvanians

- Governor wants to provide health insurance to the 767,000 people in PA without coverage.
- Money will come from tax increases on cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, cigars, enrollee and small employer cost sharing and the MCARE surplus.
- Program will cost \$480 million in 2008-2009.
- Program will cost \$1.1 billion in 2012-1013.

The Governor's Budget

- \$5 million to begin development and implementation of a statewide electronic medical records system.
- \$1.9 million to expand the challenge grant program, start a new nurse loan-repayment program, and enhance the primary care practitioner loan repayment program.
- Start an ER diversion program within the hospitals.

Legislation

- SB 8 – Money for Electronic Medical Records
 - Allows a 2-for-1 match for health centers
 - Passed Senate, still needs considered by House
- MCARE extension
 - Senate passed a one-year extension, House yet to act
 - Governor wants a multi-year extension
 - May get included in House healthcare push in March

Legislation

■ HB 1824

- \$12 million for expansion and new access points
- \$5 million for improved prenatal, obstetric and newborn care
- \$5 million for ER diversion

More Legislative Notes

- House Democrats plan to move healthcare reform in March
 - Sympathetic to workforce issues
- Senate Republicans want to fund EMR at \$25 million
 - As of now, will not fund it at the Governor's \$5 million request
- While not on the immediate horizon, there is a growing call for fee transparency
 - Just have to watch as it may require you to publish your sliding-fee scale

PACHC Policy Papers

■ Workforce

- Increase the size and number of loan repayment awards
- Cost: \$3 million

■ Capacity Expansion at Existing Centers

- Expand the Community Challenge Grant program by \$5 million annually
- Provide a 3-for-1 match for health centers

PACHC Policy Papers

■ New Access Points

- Fund 20 new access points over the next four years
- Cost: \$5 million annually (\$20 million total)

■ Money for Electronic Medical Records

- \$10 million annually for the next 3 years
- Keep the 2-for-1 match for health centers

Legislative Day at the Capitol

- Tuesday, May 13th
- Rally on the Capitol Steps at 12:30 p.m.
 - Lunch will be provided
 - **BRING BUSES FULL OF YOUR PATIENTS, STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS**
 - **GOAL IS AT LEAST 500 PEOPLE**
- Make appointments to see your legislators
- Tell the PACHC how many people you intend to bring as well as your legislative appointment schedule