



Legislative Update & Action Alert

May 30, 2008

Please read and forward to your colleagues and networks!

General Assembly Moving Quickly; House Budget Unveiled this week and Floor Vote Expected Next Week

This week we saw the unveiling of the proposed House budget which includes funding for several items of interest to Alliance members and partners. The House Appropriations Subcommittees have approved their budgets. The full House Appropriations Committee is expected to consider the budget on Tuesday with a vote by the full House on Wednesday.

A rundown of the week's activities related to Alliance's policy priorities:

[Secondhand Smoke Policy Priorities](#)

SB 1686 - State Government Grounds

SB 1686 is scheduled to be heard by the Senate Health Care Committee on Wednesday, June 4. This bill would establish a 50 foot smoke-free perimeter around all state government buildings and grant authority to local governments to implement and enforce smoking restrictions around the perimeters of local government buildings and other property. SB 1686 has been introduced by Senator William Purcell and Rep. Jennifer Weiss on behalf of the Justus Warren Heart and Stroke Task Force. To read the bill, go to:

<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Sessions/2007/Bills/Senate/HTML/S1686v2.html>

Talking points and fact sheets will soon be posted on the Alliance's website.

[Obesity Prevention Policy Priorities](#)

Establish Statewide "Quality" Physical Education Standards in NC's Basic Education Plan

Our efforts to create statewide PE standards ran into trouble this week. Rep. Larry Bell has been working with the Alliance to craft a bill to create statewide "quality" PE standards. However, legislative leaders and staff determined that the draft bill would make a policy change and was, therefore, ineligible for consideration during the short session. Bills may be eligible in the short session if they include an appropriation or are proposed by a study commission. The Joint Education Oversight Committee had previously declined to include the PE standards in their report, so the bill was not eligible via the study commission route either.

To become eligible, Rep. Bell was told that the General Assembly would have to pass a Joint Resolution permitting the body to bend the rules to consider a policy bill. This is why Rep. Bell introduced House Joint Resolution (HJR) 2388 rather than a bill. However, it is very unlikely that the House leadership will allow the consideration of a joint resolution to bend the bill eligibility rules. (To read HJR 2388), go to:

<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Sessions/2007/Bills/House/HTML/H2388v1.html>

In addition, we learned this week that our legislative champion in the Senate had decided against introducing the PE standard bills in the Senate this session. This leaves no serious route to passing the “quality” PE standards this legislative session. This effort is most likely dead for the short session.

Childhood Obesity Data Collection

We saw HB 2592 (sponsored by Reps. Larry Bell and Rick Glazier) introduced this week in the House. This bill would direct the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to collect childhood obesity data. However, the same legislative champion in the Senate also declined this week to introduce a bill for the childhood obesity data collection. Due to bill introduction deadlines, it was too late to seek another Senate sponsor.

(To read HB 2592 as it was introduced, go to: <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Sessions/2007/Bills/House/HTML/H2592v1.html>)

This leaves the House budget as the only serious vehicle for moving the data collection bill – and unfortunately, the proposed House Education budget, as it stands now, does not include funding or language for the collection of the childhood obesity data. The Alliance will continue to work behind the scenes next week with key House members to get the data collection effort into the House budget. Should efforts fail in the House, we will assess our chances of including the data collection language in the Senate budget despite the fact we do not have a bill introduced in the Senate. We’ll keep you posted.

Implement & Fund Child Nutrition Standards for Kindergarten – 5th Grade

The proposed House budget includes \$4 million in recurring funds to begin to the implementation of child nutrition standards – an effort that will address childhood obesity by ensuring that healthier foods are served in the state’s elementary school cafeterias. Though the original request for funding was \$20 million, this is a big victory following the release last week of an initial budget proposal that did not include any funding for the Child Nutrition programs.

Please take action:

Please THANK House Appropriations Chairs (listed at bottom of alert) for including \$4 million for Child Nutrition programs in the House budget.

Please URGE Senate Appropriations Chairs (listed at bottom of alert) to keep the \$4million for Child Nutrition funding in the Senate budget.

See below for information on which legislators to contact.

For additional information and talking points about the Child Nutrition Program and the important role it plays in the lives of NC’s school children, go to the Alliance’s website at:

http://www.rtpnet.org/alliance/pdfs/NC_ChildNutrition_Facts.pdf

http://www.rtpnet.org/alliance/pdfs/NCSchoolLunch_CostComparison.pdf

Additional Budget Items of Interest to Alliance Members

DPH Obesity Prevention Demonstration Projects: \$2 million

The proposed House budget includes \$2 million in non-recurring funding for demonstration projects to reduce obesity and the chronic diseases caused by obesity. The Department of Public Health (DPH) plans to fund local demonstration projects to create successful community models to fight obesity. The demonstration projects will be funded through existing Health Carolinians Partnerships, Statewide Health Promotion, and local health department infrastructure. Projects could take place in a variety of settings including preschools, schools, local communities, faith organizations, and healthcare settings. The community projects will demonstrate how science-based interventions can create increased opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity and lead to reduced obesity rates in North Carolina.

An example of a demonstration project might include a Healthy Carolinians Partnership that develops and implements a community pedestrian and bicycle master plan with its local Statewide Health Promotion staff while collaborating with the local YMCA to make fitness equipment and bicycles accessible to the community. Or, a Healthy Carolinians Partnership might use links to a local hospital to provide pediatric weight management tools to medical practices while also working to establish worksite wellness coordinators in the local hospital with assistance from Statewide Health Promotion staff. Communities chosen for the demonstration projects will serve as models for other counties as additional funding becomes available.

Tobacco Quitline

The Tobacco Quitline has been allocated \$500,000 in recurring funds in the propose House budget. The Tobacco Quitline is a service provided by professionally trained quit coaches who work with each tobacco user who calls to develop and implement an individualized quit plan. Unless the prevalence of tobacco use is reduced dramatically, one out of two current smokers in NC will die prematurely of a disease caused by their dependence on tobacco, shortening lives by an average of 13-14.[i]

Please communicate with both House and Senate Appropriations Committee leadership to let them know this is an important line-item to support, especially in light of the fact that the state pass HB 24 last year, requiring all state government buildings to be smoke-free. Talking points on the Quitline are available at the Alliance's website.

Please contact House and Senate members and urge them to KEEP funding in the budget for both the Obesity Demonstration Projects and the Tobacco Quitline.

Please THANK House Appropriations Chairs (listed below) for including funding for these programs in the House budget.

Please URGE Senate Appropriations Chairs (listed below) to include \$2 million for DPH Obesity Demonstration Projects AND \$500,000 for the Tobacco Quitline.

How to Contact Your Legislators

House and Senate members listed below need to hear from you on the need to fund the Tobacco Quitline and the Department of Public Health Obesity Initiative. Double click on the legislator's name to retrieve a direct phone number or email address.

House Speaker Joe Hackney (D-Chatham, Orange): 919-733-3451; joeh@ncleg.net

House Appropriations Committee Chairs:

Senior Chairman	Rep. Mickey Michaux - Durham
Chairman	Rep. Alma Adams - Guilford
Chairman	Rep. Martha Alexander - Mecklenburg
Chairman	Rep. Jim Crawford - Granville
Chairman	Rep. Phil Haire - Jackson
Chairman	Rep. Maggie Jeffus - Guilford
Chairman	Rep. Joe Tolson - Edgecombe
Chairman	Rep. Doug Yongue – Scotland

Senate President Pro Temp Marc Basnight (D-Dare): 919-733-6854; Marcb@ncleg.net

Senate Appropriations Committee Chairs:

Co-Chairman	Sen. Charles W. Albertson - Duplin
Co-Chairman	Sen. Charlie S. Dannelly - Mecklenburg
Co-Chairman	Sen. Linda Garrou - Forsyth

[Sen. Kay R. Hagan](#) - Guilford
[Sen. David W. Hoyle](#) - Gaston
[Sen. Robert Pittenger](#) - Mecklenburg
[Sen. Tony Rand](#) - Cumberland
[Sen. A. B Swindell](#) - Nash

Senate Education Appropriations Cmte Chr. [Sen. Vernon Malone](#) – Wake

E-MAIL:

To email your personal representative, go to this link for your member's email address:

<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/gascripts/members/reports/room-phone.pl?Chamber=House&viewType=normal>

To email your senator, go to this link for your senator's email address:

<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/gascripts/members/reports/room-phone.pl?Chamber=Senate&viewType=normal>

If you are not sure of the name of your representative or senator, check the General Assembly's website at:

http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/GIS/Representation/Who_Represents_Me/Who_Represents_Me.html

CALL:

To call your Representative or Senator, please call 919-733-4111 and ask for the legislator by name to be transferred.

**For additional information about the Alliance, please contact
Alliance Executive Director Pam Seamans at pamseamans@nc.rr.com;
or Alliance Program Director Charlotte Ranz at cran@mindspring.com.**

What *MORE* can you do to promote the secondhand smoke issue?

**Visit the Alliance's *new* website dedicated to making all worksites and public places
smoke-free in NC. Simply point and click to send a message to your legislators.**

www.smokefreenc.org

Have your organization, its board members, staff and volunteers sign the Alliance's secondhand smoke resolution to demonstrate your support for making NC's worksites and public places smoke-free.

Access the resolution by going to the Alliance's website at:

<http://www.ncallianceforhealth.org/resolution.html>

Also available on our website are fact sheets, talking points and other resources on secondhand smoke and the cigarette tax.

**For additional information, go to
www.ncallianceforhealth.org
for talking points and other resources.**

Call 919-463-8328
or e-mail ncalliance@heart.org for more information

i Fiore et al. Progress, Setbacks and Future Needs: Prevention 3 Million Premature Deaths and Helping 5 Million Smokers Quit: A National Action Plan for Tobacco Cessation. American Journal of Public Health. February 2004.