

Legislative Update

July 11, 2008



Please read and forward to your colleagues and networks!

Community Colleges and Motor Fleets Secondhand Smoke Bills Pass House and Await Governor's Signature; FINAL Budget Approved by Both Chambers

We have come a long way this session with two out of three Alliance secondhand smoke bills passing thus far. We have successfully continued the public discussion about the dangers of secondhand smoke and maintained legislative momentum around the issue. The Alliance thanks all those who have communicated with their legislators to encourage their support of both the Community College (SB 1669) and the Motor Fleets (SB 1681) bills. SB 1669 has been signed by the Governor while SB 1681 awaits his signature. A more detailed explanation of each bill is below.

Also—VERY IMPORTANT--Please take a moment to thank primary sponsors Rep. Jennifer Weiss (D-Wake) and Senator William Purcell (D-Scotland) for leading these bills through the legislative process on behalf of both the Alliance and the Justus Warren Heart and Stroke Prevention Task Force. They have been strong supporters of protecting state workers and the public from the dangers of secondhand smoke and they deserve our thanks. Rep. Weiss can be reached at: Jenniferw@ncleg.net. Senator Purcell can be reached at: Williamp@ncleg.net.

On Tuesday, July 1 [SB 1669-Community Colleges Tobacco-Free](http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Sessions/2007/Bills/Senate/HTML/S1669v3.html) passed the House by a vote of 116 to 3. The bill was identical to the bill passed by the Senate, so the bill was sent directly to the Governor. The bill was signed by the Governor on July 11. SB 1669 clarifies [the authority of](#) the governing boards of local community colleges to make their community college campuses tobacco-free. To see a final version of the bill as ratified, please go to <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Sessions/2007/Bills/Senate/HTML/S1669v3.html>.

On Monday, July 7 [SB 1681-State and Local Motor Fleets Smoke-Free](#) was approved by the full House following the defeat of an amendment proposed by Rep. Leo Daughtry (R-Johnston) that would have allowed smoking in permanently assigned state vehicles. This amendment was defeated by a vote of 55 to 64. The bill was then approved by the House by a vote of 101 – 18. Because there were minor changes made to the bill by the House, the bill was sent back to the Senate for concurrence. On Wednesday, July 9 the Senate concurred with the minor House changes by a vote of 43-5. The bill now awaits the Governor's signature. The Governor is expected to sign the bill.

SB 1681 would require all vehicles owned, operated and leased by the state be 100% smoke-free and clarifies that local governments have authority to make vehicles owned, operated and leased by local government 100% smoke-free. To view a copy of the final version of SB 1681 as ratified, go to: <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Sessions/2007/Bills/Senate/HTML/S1681v4.html>

Of the three secondhand smoke bills introduced this session, only one remains to be acted on. [SB 1686 – Smoke-Free State and Local Building Grounds](#) has not yet been calendared to be heard by the House Judiciary 1 Committee. Given that the General Assembly plans to adjourn within the next week, it is unlikely this bill will be acted on this session. However, we are watching to see what happens with this bill and will keep Alliance members posted. SB 1686 would protect state workers and the public by prohibiting smoking 25 ft from the entrances, windows and ventilation systems of state government buildings, and grants local governments authority to establish a smoke-free perimeter of up to 50 ft around local government buildings.

Alliance Budget Priorities

On Monday, July 7, the House and Senate each approved the final version of the budget agreed to by House and Senate budget conferees. The final budget includes the following Alliance priorities:

- **The Tobacco Quitline** was funded in the final budget at \$500,000 recurring annually. In addition, the Quitline is also authorized to recommend over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapy products and supply the products free of charge to individual callers.
- **Obesity Prevention Projects** were funded in the final budget at \$2 million in nonrecurring funds (the original request was for \$12.5 million). With the funds the Department of Public Health (DPH) plans to fund local demonstration projects to create successful community models to fight obesity and the chronic diseases caused by obesity. The demonstration projects will be funded through existing Health Carolinians Partnerships, Statewide Health Promotion, and local health department infrastructure. The community projects be designed to demonstrate how science-based interventions can create increased opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity and lead to reduced obesity rates in North Carolina.
- **Child Nutrition Programs** received *NO* funding in the final budget. The Senate had proposed \$2 million in recurring funds for child nutrition programs while the House had proposed \$4 million. However, \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds is included in the DPI budget to be used for child nutrition programs but exactly how the funds will be used is undetermined at this time.
- There will be a **transfer of a total of \$8.5 million from the Health and Wellness Trust Fund** (HWTF) to the General Fund. This will result is less money being available to the HWTF for the provision of local grants.
- **An Obesity Task Force** is created in the final budget to be co-chaired by the State Health Director and the Chairman of the State Board of Education. The Task Force is to “review current State activities in the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Public Instruction, and the Health and Wellness Trust Fund and develop a comprehensive statewide strategic plan with recommendations for preventing childhood obesity.” The goals for the task force as outlined in the budget bill include creating a strategic plan that will encompass the following initiatives:
 - (1) Providing healthier foods to students;
 - (2) Improving the availability of healthy foods at home and in the community;
 - (3) Increasing the frequency, intensity, and duration of physical activity in schools;
 - (4) Encouraging communities to establish a master plan for pedestrian and bicycle pathways;
 - (5) Improving access to safe places where children can play; and
 - (6) Developing activities or programs that limit children's screen time, including limits on video games and television.

Membership on the task force shall include, but is not limited to, representatives from the following organizations:

- (1) Health and Wellness Trust Fund
- (2) North Carolina Institute for Public Health

- (3) UNC Active Living by Design
- (4) Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina
- (5) NC Hospital Association
- (6) NC Parent Teacher Association
- (7) American Heart Association
- (8) School Nutrition Association of North Carolina.

The creation of this task force was initiated by Rep. Doug Yongue. He also made mention on the House floor during the budget debate of including the NC Alliance for Health at the Task Force table when it convenes.

**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 North Carolina'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