

2008 Legislative Review

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The second session of the 115th Indiana General Assembly adjourned before the midnight deadline on March 14, 2008. Although this was the “short” session, legislators tackled several significant proposals including property tax reform (passed) and illegal immigrants (didn’t pass).

HB 1172 Various Professions and Occupations

This large bill became increasingly larger during the session as it was amended several times. Language added was from SB 154 **Select Joint Commission on Medicaid Oversight**, SB 155 **Study on Domestic Violence Program**, HB 1020, **Umbilical Cord Blood** and SB 363 **Uniform Emergency Health Practitioners Act**.

Although the language for the Nurse Licensure Compact remains in the bill, we will have to wait to see if the National Compact Administrators (the un-elected group of out-of-state individuals who regulate the Compact) will not permit Indiana to join. An amendment supported by the Attorney General to require investigations to remain confidential until charges are filed with the Board of Nursing (current law) remains in the bill. The Compact Administrators want investigations to be placed in the national data system. If Indiana is permitted to join the Compact it will not be effective until at least July 1, 2009. ISNA will keep Indiana nurses informed re: Indiana’s participation in the Nurse Licensure Compact.

This bill also contains language that would permit the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency to use a larger percentage of the nurse license renewal fees to fund the Indiana State Nurses Assistance Program.

SB 302 Professional and Occupation Licensing.

This Senate bill was another large bill to clean up and make language consistent among the various licenses administered by the Professional Licensing Agency. There are two issues that specifically impact nurses: (1) the provision that prohibits Advance Practice Nurses from entering into collaborative practice agreements with physician assistants and (2) one which adds APN’s to the list of practitioners who are subject to sanctions if they repackage and then sell free samples that they had received from the drug manufacturers.

HB 1125 Various Government Matters

Last session the General Assembly adopted a two-year-budget with appropriations for the Area Health Education Centers (AHEC). More than half way through the fiscal year, the State still had not released any of the funds. Many legislators were not pleased that the administration decided to withhold the funds. The approved conference committee report requires the Budget Agency to allot and otherwise take the steps necessary to make available for expenditure and distribution to area health education centers before May 2, 2008, at least 75 percent of the amount appropriated by P.L. 234-2007

for area health education centers for the state fiscal year beginning July 1, 2007, and ending June 30, 2008.

2008 Elections

Finally, if you hadn't noticed, 2008 is an election year. You may know about the Presidential candidates, but don't forget that all 100 Indiana House seats and 25 of the 50 Senate seats are up for election. Even before the primary in May, we know that it will be a different General Assembly as more than 10 percent of the current legislators have indicated they will not be returning.

They include:

Senate

District 2	Samuel Smith, Jr., D-East Chicago
District 12	Marvin Riegsecker, R-Goshen
District 18	Thomas Weatherwax, R-Logansport
District 19	vacant due to the death of David Ford, Hartford City
District 21	Jeff Drozda, Westfield, will be moving to South Carolina this summer
District 33	Glenn Howard, D-Indianapolis
District 44	Robert Jackman, R- Milroy

House of Representatives

District 16	Eric Gutwein, R-Rensselaer
District 26	Joe Micon, D-West Lafayette
District 63	Dave Crooks, D-Washington
District 77	G. Philip Hoy, D-Evansville
District 79	Michael Ripley, R-Monroe
District 86	David Orentlicher, D-Indianapolis
District 89	Lawrence Buell, R- Indianapolis
District 94	Carolene Mays, D-Indianapolis
District 97	Jon Elrod, R-Indianapolis

Note that Representatives Orentlicher and Mays are both Democratic candidates in the May Primary for the Congressional House District 7 seat currently held by Rep. Andre Carson. Rep. Elrod will likely be the Republican challenger for that seat in the November election.

So what does this all mean for nurses and nursing?

It means that you must register to vote.

You might find out who the candidates are and what they believe in.

When you find a candidate that you can support – do it!

- Write their campaign a check, stuff envelopes, make phone calls, or walk door-to-door with them. Get to know them.
- Let them know what matters to you as a citizen, a parent, a property owner and, yes, as a nurse.

And last, but certainly not least – vote!

Thanks also to ISNA's year-round government affairs team which helps us watch out for the interest of nurses and nursing: SDS Group, Doug Simmons, President; Glenna Shelby, Vice President; and Ron Breyemeier for their daily presence and assistance at the State House.

2008 HOUSE BILLS

NOTE: The changes made in conference committee are indicated in **bold type**.

HB1140 Coverage for orthotic and prosthetic devices. (Murphy, Dillon)

Requires certain coverage for medically necessary orthotic and prosthetic devices under a state employee health plan, a policy of accident and sickness insurance, and a health maintenance organization contract. **(The conference committee report: (1) amends the definition of "orthotic device"; (2) provides that required coverage for orthotic and prosthetic devices applies when certain persons provide the device or perform repair or replacement; (3) requires the same coverage and reimbursement for orthotic and prosthetic devices as the coverage and reimbursement under Medicare, but specifies that the applicable deductibles are not required to be equal to Medicare deductibles; (4) specifies that a prosthetic device and orthotic device lifetime maximum coverage limitation must not be included in and must be equal to the lifetime maximum coverage limitation that applies to other items and services generally under the plan, policy, or contract; and (5) requires that certain deductible, copayment, and coinsurance provisions applying to orthotic and prosthetic devices be no less favorable to a covered individual, insured, or enrollee than deductible, copayment, and coinsurance provisions applying generally under the plan, policy, or contract.)**

03/21/2008 Signed by the Governor