

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH Subcommittee A

2012- 2013 Interims

SENATE MEMBERS

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Final Report of SUBCOMMITTEE A OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Subcommittee A was appointed at the request of the Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Health by a letter dated July 11, 2011, to the leadership of both the Senate and the House of Delegates following the conclusion of the 2010 Regular Session of the 79th Legislature. A copy of that letter with approval by the Speaker of the House of Delegates and the President of the

Senate is attached to this final report.

The Subcommittee was assigned the following specific topics or resolutions for study during the 2012-2013 interim period:

HCR 109 -Requesting a study on the feasibility or requiring coverage for eosinophilic disorders.

SCR 70 - Requesting the Joint Committee on Government and Finance study access to hearing aid devices and accessories.

HCR 140 -Requesting a study for strategies for ensuring that individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing have access to necessary and appropriate hearing aid devices and accessories.

Strengthening primary care, loan forgiveness, reimbursement.

Obesity and Chronic disease and coordinated approach to address.

During the course of the 2012 - 2013 interim period, the Subcommittee met and received information on topics of study regarding important issues related the topics that were assigned the subcommittee for study. Presentations were made and information was received from state agencies, the medical community, advocacy groups and other pertinent sources. The Committee **REPORTS** as follows:

**HCR 109 - Requesting a study on the feasibility or requiring
coverage for eosinophilic disorders**

The Subcommittee heard a presentation on eosinophilia by Steven Jubelirer, M.D. a specialist in hematology and oncology at the David Lee Cancer at Charleston Area Medical Center. Doctor Jubelirer gave the Subcommittee an overview of the disease, its causes and effects and discussed treatment options. A copy of his presentation is on file with staff of the Joint Committee on Health. He responded to a number of questions from the Subcommittee. Following the presentation by Dr. Jubelirer, the Subcommittee makes **NO RECOMMENDATION** with respect to this resolution.

**SCR 70 - Requesting Joint Committee on Government and
Finance study access to hearing aid devices and accessories.**

**HCR 140 -Requesting a study for strategies for ensuring that
individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing have access to
necessary and appropriate hearing aid devices and accessories.**

With regard to insurance coverage for hearing aid devices, the Subcommittee first heard from Christina Mullins, Director of the Division of Infant, Child and Adolescent Health within the Department of Health and Human Resources. Ms. Mullins gave the Subcommittee an overview of the types and extent of coverage currently available from state programs with regard to hearing aid devices. At a subsequent meeting, the Subcommittee received information from Marissa J. Sanders,

Executive Director of the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Ms. Sanders provided the Subcommittee with insight regarding the financial struggle and hardships in obtaining and maintaining hearing aid devices. She suggested an insurance mandate for all policies in West Virginia and that a fund be created to offset the costs of purchasing hearing aids.

Following these presentation the Subcommittee makes **NO RECOMMENDATION** with respect to this resolution.

Strengthening primary care, loan forgiveness, reimbursement.

To educate themselves on the issue of primary care physicians in West Virginia, the Subcommittee asked Dan Doyle, MD and Craig Robinson, Executive Director of Cabin Creek Clinic Health Systems to present. They presented background information on the Cabin Creek facility. They also provided statistical data to frame the issue of delivery of health care services in West Virginia. The Subcommittee was given specific detail on their interaction with frail and elderly patients and low income patients. They discussed the Accountable Care Organization at the Cabin Creek facility and how it is geared toward raising quality and reducing costs. The Subcommittee was also given an overview of the dually eligible population and the unique issues and problems which they present. The Subcommittee also heard from Kimberly Becher, M.D. from the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine at Marshall University. Dr. Becher provided the Subcommittee with some detail about the lack of understanding of medical school candidates regarding primary care as an option and informed the Subcommittee of the benefits of an increased loan forgiveness program

to assist graduates as they transition into the private sector to practice primary care. She also suggested the exploration of a reward and incentive program to medical schools to recruit and retain primary care physicians.

Following these presentations the Subcommittee **RECOMMENDS** the passage of legislation during the 2013 Regular Session of the 81st Legislature that would increase the loan forgiveness options available to primary care physicians. A copy of that legislation is attached to this report.

Obesity and Chronic Disease and Coordinated

Approach to Address

The Subcommittee first heard from James Becker, M.D., Medical Director for the Bureau for Medical Services. Dr. Becker discussed work that was underway at the Bureau on a state plan amendment relative to encouraging Medicaid recipients to develop a relationship with a Patient Centered Medical Home. Dr. Becker indicated that they project was well underway and that input had been received from a number of advocacy groups, stakeholders and policy makers in making decisions and developing the plan. Final determination of the approval of the plan rests with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid within the Department of Health and Human Services on the federal level.

The Subcommittee also heard from Jamie L. Jeffrey, M.D. Doctor Jeffrey is an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at West Virginia University, Charleston Division. She is also the Project

Director for KEYS 4 HealthyKids and the Medical Director for HealthyKids for Pediatrics Weight Management Program for the Children's Medical Center. Doctor Jeffrey offered a number of thoughts on the obesity epidemic of West Virginia's children. She provided the Subcommittee with essential background material to frame the issue, relayed personal stories of her experiences and successes and offered some suggestions to help address the problem. The most notable suggestion was an increase in the soft drink tax and the elimination of soft drinks within the school system entirely.

The Subcommittee also heard about diabetes prevention from Richard Crespo, Ph.D. Doctor Crespo is a Professor at the Marshall University School of Medicine. He provided the Subcommittee with an Executive Summary of the work being done by the Coalitions in the Appalachian Region to curb diabetes. To date there are sixty-six (66) coalitions in nine (9) states. The disease is particularly prevalent in Appalachia - 9.7% as compared to 7.8% nationally. He discussed programs and projects underway throughout West Virginia in local communities that offer some hope for reducing diabetes statewide. He offered some thoughts on local policy changes that were seen as successes. These included removing deep fryers from schools, developing walking trails, and improving physical activity facilities. He also gave some insight into the challenges being faced by these programs.

Following these presentations the Subcommittee considered legislation drafted by counsel of a bill for the passage during the 2013 Regular Session of the 81st Legislature that would create a sugar sweetened drink tax of one-cent per ounce with the funding being dedicated to the West Virginia School of Public Health. Following discussion the draft bill was not passed by

Subcommittee and they make **NO RECOMMENDATION** on this issue.

Miscellaneous Issues

Finally, the Subcommittee heard from Toni DiChiacchio, MSN, FNP-BC. Ms. DiChiacchio is a family practice nurse practitioner and is the owner of Health Thru Care, LLC. Ms. DiChiacchio presented regarding the barriers to a nurse practitioner practicing in West Virginia. Most particularly, she was concerned with the lack of autonomy which advance practice nurses experience through the statutory necessity of a collaborative agreement for prescription purposes. Additionally, our state code restricts the types and amounts of medications which an advance practice nurse may prescribe. She suggested that the removal of the need for a collaborative agreement and an expansion of the types of medications which an advance practice registered nurse may prescribe would improve health care services throughout the state.

Doctor Hoyt Burdick the current President of the West Virginia State Medical Association presented the opposing side of this issue. He discussed the patient safety concerns with the removal of the collaborative agreements. He further discussed the advantages to patient care of the agreements and the dangers in an expansion of the practice of advanced practice registered nurse prescriptive authority.

The Committee also heard a presentation by Dr. Roberto Kusminsky, M.D., Chairman of the Department of Surgery for West Virginia University in Charleston. Dr. Kusminsky spoke regarding breast cancer. He provided the Subcommittee with data regarding the reluctance of some women to receive a mammogram, the importance of a mammogram and the efforts that were being made

to reach out to women to impress upon them about early detection and treatment.

Following these presentations the Subcommittee makes **NO RECOMMENDATION** with respect to this issue.

Copies of the proposed bill and resolutions and any documents referenced in the report are attached.

Respectfully submitted:

Senator Dan Foster

Co-Chair

Delegate David G. Perry

Co-Chair