



Committee Weeks of January 6-10 and January 13-17, 2014

Friday concluded the 6th committee week scheduled before the 2014 Session. Both January committee weeks were short and a tad uneventful in nature.

Governor Scott released the child welfare portion of his proposed DCF budget. He has asked for an additional \$31 million plus in additional funding for child protective services. He recommended restoring all non recurring monies for substance abuse and mental health.

This is not his entire DCF budget. His full proposed budget should be released the last week of January or the first week of February. Until then, he will be rolling out small portions of his budget.

[Review the Child Protective Services Budget](#)

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The Governor also announced that former Representative Carlos Lopez-Cantera will be Florida's Lieutenant Governor.

[Review the press release](#)

Wednesday, January 8, 2014

Senate Children Families and Elders Affairs Committee met regarding medically needy children and was supposed to discuss the state's child welfare system but because of time constraints, they never got to the child welfare portion. The Council will be following this committee and will monitor/participate in any portion relating to child welfare that specifically relates to the family's needs for mental health and substance abuse services.

Senate Health Policy met Wednesday afternoon. On the committee's agenda was the Senate's ALF bill. The bill, SB 248, sponsored by Children, Families and Elder Affairs Committee, provides that the MEds are responsible for mental health residents who are not enrolled in Medicaid. We are following the bill closely and possibly proposing some language to clarify what residents qualify for under DCF oversight/services. We will also be working closely with Rep. Ahern who is sponsoring the House version of the bill.

SB248 passed out of committee unanimously without debate.

[Review SB248](#)

Thursday, January 9, 2014

House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee met to hear APD's, AHCA's and DCF's proposed budget requests and their 10% budget cut exercises.

Chairman Hudson stated at the beginning of the meeting that although there will be a budget increase this year, it does NOT mean your program is safe nor does it mean it will be refunded. He is asking his committee to be precise and prudent this year. He will be looking to invest in programs that are serving Florida's needs and that have good return on investments.

The Chairman also stated that he was only hearing the 10% budget cut exercise because it is mandated under current statute. He has no desire to cut any HHS department's budget by 10%.

DCF's budget proposal is in the link below. Dr. Nevin Smith, Interim Assistant Secretary, presented the department's proposed 2014-15 proposed budget for mental health and substance abuse. The presentation included the department's required budget issues for possible reductions and this year's required listing of agency budget issues for reprioritization.

For mental health and substance abuse the department has requested recurring funding for all programs funded last year with non-recurring general revenue. This includes all the projects funded last year, \$6.1 million for the CAT Teams, and \$8.9 million for the substance abuse Pregnant Women and Children programs. The only new funding requested by the department is \$2.9 million for two FACT Teams. This request includes an additional \$330,000 per team for "wrap around" services. The department did not identify where the teams should be placed but that a competitive procurement process through the MEs would identify location. The committee did not appear to be interested in the reprioritization issues either.

[Review the presentation](#)

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House Select Committee on Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act met Thursday afternoon. Testimony was heard on the impact of consumers and agents in regards to the federal exchange roll out. Small businesses also presented on how to handle the new ACA rule changes regarding insurance cancellations and renewals

Senate Health and Human Services Appropriations heard a presentation by DCF on sober living housing. The legislature asked DCF to conduct a study on whether sober houses should be regulated by DCF. The result came back inconclusive. There was no discussion on the subject.

[Review the SoberLiving report](#)

Friday, January 10, 2014

House Select Committee on Health Care Workforce Innovation met. A panel of nurses, doctors, and their association leaders were there to discuss and answer legislators' questions regarding the healthcare work shortage but it quickly turned into and ended as a battle between nurse anesthetists and anesthesiologists.

Tuesday, January 14, 2014

Senate Children Families and Elder Affairs Committee met to hear two Senate bills on sexually violent predators, SB 522 and SB 524. Both bills passed out unanimously.

[Review SB522 & SB524](#)

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Senate Health Policy Committee met to work shop telemedicine. At this time PCB 7016 will be the Senate's venue for telemedicine and Rep. Cummings will carry the House bill (not yet drafted). From the discussion, it appears the Senate will have a much more conservative approach to telemedicine whereas the House's version will be much broader and include more provisions and providers. The Senate's version will probably only include licensed Florida physicians in their bill. More to come...

[Review the committee packet](#)

Wednesday, January 15, 2014

Senate Appropriations on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development Committee met Wednesday. The Florida Housing Finance Corporation presented on the implementation of the National Mortgage Settlement Funding. The Council is tracking and following the development of the implementation and will encourage legislation to help individuals with behavioral health diagnosis.

Senate Appropriations on Health and Human Services Committee met to discuss graduate medical education funding and maintenance adoption research. House Health Care Workforce Innovation Committee met on labor market statistics.

Upcoming Committee Weeks

The week of **February 3**

The week of **February 10**

The week of **February 17**

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Shane Messer [via email here](#).

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