MHA Legislative Update: February 2015

Rep. Cunningham Introduces H.R. 83, the Suicide Prevention Resolution

On Feb. 11, Representative Carla Cunningham (D-Mecklenburg), together with Representative D. Craig Horn (R-Union), introduced the Suicide Prevention Resolution (H.R. 83)—legislation that would allow the legislative research commission to research suicide prevention, particularly with regard to veterans and minors. This resolution passed the House in the short session, but stalled in the Senate. This is a bipartisan bill that is expected to pass this session. MHA supports passage of this legislation and thanks Rep. Cunningham for her legislative leadership on this issue. You can read the full resolution here.

McCory Delays Medicaid Expansion until Supreme Court Ruling

Governor Pat McCrory has indicated that he plans to wait to decide whether or not to expand Medicaid until the Supreme Court ruling on King v. Burwell in June.

The Supreme Court will decide if individuals who purchase healthcare in the federal exchange qualify for tax credits to offset those costs. North Carolina is in a Federally-facilitated Marketplace, wherein HHS performs all Marketplace functions, and would therefore be affected by the Supreme Court decision. Read more about the King v. Burwell here.

McCory’s decision could result in tabling the issue of Medicaid expansion for another year, as the General Assembly will be near its end by the Supreme Court ruling. Read more about Gov. McCrory’s decision to delay Medicaid expansion here.

DHHS Releases 2015 N.C. Suicide Prevention Plan

During the week of Feb. 23, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) released the 2015 NC Suicide Prevention Plan. MHA staff contributed to this 16 month process to empower all North Carolinians with knowledge and to highlight specific actions that they can take to reduce suicide. The plan also features more than 500 examples of what various groups, collectively and individually, can do to address suicide in their communities. Read more here.

Final Comparison of DHHS Budgets Available
The final DHHS budget was passed on Aug. 2, 2014 after a three hour debate to reconcile the House and Senate versions. To view a spreadsheet from NC Health News on how the budget changed between passage of the Senate version in May, the House version in June, and the final version in August, click here.

Senator Jackson Makes Social Media Headlines

February has not been without its share of bad weather for North Carolinians. The ice storm during the week of Feb. 16 left the halls of the state Legislative Building in Raleigh fairly bare—save one Democratic state senator from Mecklenburg County who did brave the storm. Sen. Jeff Jackson’s twitter feed went viral on social media after jesting that, "Due to inclement weather, I appear to be the only non-security person in the General Assembly this morning. I feel like I should hurry up and pass Medicaid expansion.” Several more tweets in the same vein followed including a mention that he ended a filibuster on child care subsidies because he needed a drink of water. Jackson only wishes it could be that easy. “Or even half this easy,” he said. “Wouldn’t it be nice if both sides had a voice in legislation instead of just ramming everything through.”

Sen. Jackson is a Chapel Hill native and previously worked as an assistant district attorney, prosecuting criminal cases on behalf of the people of North Carolina. He is now North Carolina’s youngest Democratic state senator.

Read more about how Sen. Jackson ended up on Buzzfeed and the Rachel Maddow Show here, or search for the @JeffJacksonNC handle or #JustOneLegislator hashtag on Twitter.

The Civitas Institute added up the cost of Sen. Jackson’s initiatives such as expanding Medicaid, reversing cuts to the University system, and making “heavy” investments in wind and solar energy. Read more here.

Remember, you can contact your policy makers at any time:

http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Representation/WhoRepresentsMe.aspx

http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/

Mental Health Training Opportunities

Inquire about MHA Training opportunities in your area. We offer Mental Health First Aid (Youth, Adult and Public Safety versions), QPR Suicide Prevention (Gatekeeper, Adapted for Refugees and Train the Trainer), Advocacy, and Managing Money in Recovery.

Contact Nancy Woodard about MHA trainings at email:
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