

# FLORIDA SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

SENATOR BILL GALVANO, MAJORITY LEADER



This Week in the Florida Senate

February 1-5, 2016

## **Senate Bill 132, Direct Primary Care**

The Senate Health Policy Committee approved Senate Bill 132, Direct Primary Care, on Monday to clarify requirements concerning direct primary care contracts between patients and practitioners. The legislation puts to rest existing questions surrounding the regulation of direct primary care contracts to provide clarity to patients and doctors alike. Direct primary care is a primary care medical practice model that eliminates third party payers from the primary care provider-patient relationship. Through a contractual agreement, a patient pays a monthly fee, usually between \$50 and \$100 per individual, to the primary care provider for defined primary care services. SB 132 specifies certain provisions that must be included in a direct primary care agreement. The legislation also provides that a direct primary care agreement is not insurance and is not subject to the Florida Insurance Code.

## **Senate Bill 1144, Certificates of Need for Health Care-Related Projects**

Before opening in Florida, new health care facilities must complete a lengthy and difficult application process through which state government ultimately determines the need for a specific facility type or service. This regulatory framework reduces competition and limits patients' choices and access to health care. To eliminate this burdensome process, the Senate Health Policy Committee passed SB 1144, to create an exemption from the Certificate of Need (CON) process, as long as facilities provide or fund a threshold level of charity care to low income, uninsured residents. If a licensee chooses to use the exemption, the bill requires that the licensee sign an agreement with the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) stating that the licensee will provide or pay for charity care to low-income patients within its service district as specified in the bill. The bill also establishes penalties for licensees that fail to provide the required charity care.

## **Senate Bill 468, Computer Coding Instruction**

Wednesday, the Senate Appropriations Committee passed Senate Bill 468, to expand curriculum options for students by requiring schools to provide computer coding as an additional foreign language option in high schools. This legislation will not remove any existing foreign languages, and instead provides coding as an additional, voluntary option. Senate Bill 468 assures that Florida College System institutions and state universities will recognize computer coding credits as foreign language credits after students have completed two courses and obtained a related industry certification. Computer coding curriculum promotes computer science and technology instruction in high schools and will spur student interest in computer science.

## Senate Bill 7034, Prenatal Services and Early Childhood Development

To better serve infants and toddlers who have developmental delays the Senate Appropriations Committee passed Senate Bill 7034, to improve and expand the Early Steps Program. The Early Steps program and the early intervention services it provides assist families, who have a child with unique abilities, with the necessary skills to help their child in learning and development. This program is critical to establishing Florida's complete cradle to career pathway to economic independence for people with unique abilities. The legislation creates performance standards and accountability measures for the Early Steps Program and will also improve early identification, expand eligibility, implement statewide planning, provide for better coordination of available resources, and establish procedures for children to successfully transition to school district services when they age out of the Early Steps program.

## SB 7034 Improves Early Steps/ Early Intervention Services for Florida Children with Unique Abilities

- Creates Performance Standards/Accountability
- ▲ Improves Early Identification & Expands Eligibility
- ◆ Better Coordination of Available Resources
- Establishes Procedures for Successful Transition to School

#CradleToCareer



## Senate 2016-2017 Budget

The Senate Appropriations Committee approved Senate Bill 2500, to determine the state's funding for the Fiscal Year 2016-2017. The Senate budget prioritizes investments in education, health care, economic development, including unprecedented K-12 per student funding and nearly \$3 billion in total reserves.

The Senate budget dedicates the resources needed to increase per student funding to its highest level in the history of our state, and to date, our Senate committees have passed several options for our final tax cut package. Public safety, our public education system, and protection of our environment are among the most important responsibilities of state government and this budget demonstrates the Senate's commitment to ensuring these key programmatic and structural functions are properly funded.

Unlike Washington, we have to live within our means. We cannot just print or borrow money to pay for basic services. Just like Florida's families, we have to be resilient in the face of an uncertain economy. To do that we are making strategic investments, while making sure we have ample funding in our rainy day fund. The Senate remains committed to working with the House of Representatives to agree on a final tax cut package and to pass a balanced budget that funds the critical needs of our state.