

Texas Senate Committee on Health and Human Services Interim Study Assignments

In a letter to her constituents, Senator Jane Nelson has outlined the interim assignments for the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services. In Sen. Nelson's words: "It is vital that we hear from those working on the front lines of our health and human services challenges, including expanding access to health care; promoting healthy lifestyles; addressing our medical workforce shortages; protecting our most vulnerable citizens; preparing for public health threats; and many others."

DCMS will be monitoring the interim process closely and will keep you up to date on the schedule of hearings. DCMS staff also will attend and report on the specific hearings and seek input from members and their office staff when appropriate. DCMS will work closely with TMA staff to develop strategies and plans regarding these interim studies and will communicate these with our members. As we continue through this interim period, we will provide updates on the interim charges for each relevant legislative committee.

Below are some highlights from the issues that will be reviewed before the 82nd legislative session (convening January 2011).

- **National Health Care Reform:** Study the implications of federal health care reform legislation on Texas' health care and insurance industries.
- **National Health Care Reform:** Study the impact of federal health care reform legislation to Medicaid and CHIP, local and state programs for the uninsured, and the state budget.
- **Wellness Programs:** Examine community-based prevention programs and wellness programs. Examine obesity disparities between different ethnic groups and ways to narrow these gaps.
- **Smoking:** Consider the fiscal and health impact of secondhand smoke on business and service sector employees.
- **H1N1/Pandemic Response:** Review the state's ability to respond to the H1N1 influenza pandemic and assess the state's ability to track and record H1N1 vaccinations through ImmTrac.
- **Physician Shortage:** Study the state's long-term needs for health professionals and make recommendations to enhance the efficient use of APNs in Texas.
- **Social Service:** Study social service-related prevention and early intervention programs and other states' efforts to administer these programs.
- **Aging Population:** Explore strategies to support the health care needs of aging Texans.
- **Mental Health:** Study the type, duration, frequency, and effectiveness of mental health services available to and accessed by abused and neglected Texas children.
- **HHSC Eligibility System:** Examine HHSC's eligibility system and make recommendations to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

- **Stem Cell Research:** Review human stem cell and cloning research conducted, funded, or supported by state agencies and make recommendations for appropriate data collection and funding protocols.
- **Texas Medical Board:** Study current practices of the Texas Medical Board relating to disclosure of complaints.
- **Quality:** Review health care quality improvement initiatives in Texas aimed at improving the efficiency, safety, and quality of health care in Texas.
- **Health Information Exchange:** Study and make recommendations on the exchange of health care information. Review how to use this information to improve care and reduce costs. Consider the feasibility of developing multiple regional health information exchanges in Texas.
- **Medicaid:** Review the Medicaid HCBS waivers to ensure that people with significant disabilities receive needed services while containing costs and increasing access.
- **“Old Business”:** Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Committee during the 81st Legislature, Regular and Called Sessions, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation.