



FAFP Committee Week Update February 16, 2007

Members of the House of Representatives were in town this week holding budget hearings. The Appropriations Committee received a few more presentations from agencies regarding the Governor's budget priorities. No significant revisions were offered from the initial request submitted by Governor Crist earlier this month.

The House Health Care Council held some discussion regarding physician reimbursements from Medicaid. Members were told that physicians have not received a major increase from Medicaid in almost 18 years. The issue appears to have garnered a great deal more interest from several House members this year, including Rep. Alan Hays (R-Umatilla) and Rep. Gayle Harrell (R-Port St. Lucie). Budget staff explained to get all Florida physicians reimbursed to the Medicare levels it would cost the state of Florida an estimated \$239 million dollars. That doesn't include the federal match.

There was also discussion about how to that point a series of incremental increases may be necessary. However, with overall state tax revenues falling behind estimates, the likelihood of any significant increase appears remote. In fact, talk among senior budget chairmen is the state's revenue slow-down and the anticipated "continuation" budget for the coming fiscal year.

Also this week, **Dr. Cyneetha Strong** met with the new Secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration, Dr. Andrew Agwunobi. They had a wide-ranging discussion on a number of issues including electronic medical records, funding for residency programs, Medicaid reimbursement policy and the overall importance of family medicine to our health care system. FAFP looks forward to a strong working relationship with the new Secretary.

Next week the House and Senate have committee meetings. We expect a very busy week and will continue to keep you posted.