



## ***85th Texas Legislature***

### ***Legislative Issues and News Update***

***January 27, 2017***

*The Texas Legislature convened January 10th and will be in Austin until May 29. During those 140 days, legislators will make decisions that profoundly impact long term care in Texas. Throughout the session, the Texas Health Care Association team will work to make sure the voices of long term care providers and friends are heard while also keeping you informed on the activities of the Legislature. Stay tuned to these communications for the latest information on what is happening at the State Capitol.*

### **Legislature**

Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick named Senate committees for the 85<sup>th</sup> Legislature last week. With little change to the membership from last session, the make-up of the committees remained fairly stable with only one committee getting a new chair (Administration).

The two committees that deal with long term care issues are Finance and Health and Human Services. Their composition for this session is:

### **Finance**

*Jane Nelson, Chair*

*Joan Huffman*

*Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, Vice Chair*

*Lois Kolkhorst*

*Paul Bettencourt*

*Robert Nichols*

*Brian Birdwell*

*Charles Schwertner*

*Kelly Hancock*

*Kel Seliger*

*Larry Taylor*

*Royce West*

*Carlos Uresti*

*John Whitmire*

*Kirk Watson*

### **Health & Human Services**

*Charles Schwertner, Chair*

*Borris Miles*

*Carlos Uresti, Vice Chair*

*Charles Perry*

*Dawn Buckingham*

*Van Taylor*

*Konni Burton*

*Kirk Watson*

*Lois Kolkhorst*

House committees have not yet been named but they are expected to be announced as early as next week.

### **Budget**

Each chamber revealed their initial budget for the 2018-19 biennium last week.

The Senate budget includes \$103.6 billion in general state spending. Medicaid is cut by \$800 million from the last biennium with no increase for cost and case load growth.

The House budget actually spends \$4 billion more than the Comptroller estimates is available (the final budget must balance). It increases Medicaid spending by \$900 million over the 2016-17 biennium.

Each budget increases transportation and child welfare spending. The House budget cuts border security funding while the Senate maintains it.

The budget writing committees in each house will now get to work changing those documents before moving them to a vote before their entire chambers. They will then form a conference committee to reconcile the differences. That will likely begin in late April or early May.

### **Bills of Interest and Hearings this week:**

The Senate Finance Committee will take up the Health and Human Services budget on Monday at 10 a.m. They will take public testimony on the budget on Tuesday starting at 9 a.m. THCA President/CEO Kevin Warren will testify at that hearing.

You can watch the hearings at: <http://www.senate.texas.gov/av-live.php>

Also, the Senate Finance Committee's Workgroup on Health Care Costs will meet on Friday (Feb. 3) at 9 a.m. or upon adjournment of the full committee.

**Join our weekly Legislative Briefing calls.**

**Every Monday**

**2:30pm to 3:00pm CST**

**Number: 1.888.721.8686**

**Code: 9766950**

**Capitol Visitors:**

Karen Kersh, who is the administrator of Care Choice of Boerne (a Charleston Health Care Group facility) made visits to the Capitol on Thursday. She met with aides to her legislators—Senator Donna Campbell and Rep. Kyle Biedermann—to discuss THCA priorities for this session.

Next week, representatives from Diversicare Health Care Services (South Division), Cantex Continuing Care Network, and Crown Point Health Suites will come to the Capitol to let their voices be heard on long term care issues.

Please let Scot Kibbe know if you are interested in advocating on behalf of long term care this session and he will be able to provide you current information and materials for your visits. He can be reached at 512-458-1257 or [skibbe@txhca.org](mailto:skibbe@txhca.org).

You can find who represents you and his or her contact information at <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/Home.aspx>.



*Karen Kersh, Administrator at Care Choice of Boerne, met this week at the Capitol with Matt Sims, who is the Legislative Director for her Representative, Kyle Biedermann (R-Fredericksburg).*

## **This Week in Texas History**

January 26, 1945—Audie Murphy, a Hunt County native and America’s most decorated combat soldier of World War II, earned the Medal of Honor by single-handedly repelling a German attack.

January 27, 1928—Marshal Ratliff was convicted for his role in the “Santa Claus Bank Robbery”—so called because Ratliff wore a Santa Claus suit while robbing a bank in Cisco.

