Legislative Briefing

OHA Health Policy Action

Your guide to proposed health legislation, what we think about it, and what we're doing about it.

March 2013

H.B. No. 5918; *An Act Concerning Private Duty Nursing For Severely Disabled Children*

What is this bill about?

H.B. 5918 will allow the Commissioner of Social Services to take whatever steps are necessary to provide private duty nursing as a covered service for severely disabled children in the HUSKY, Part B program.

By including private duty nursing for these most fragile citizens as a benefit of Husky B, these children can receive the benefit of timely and appropriate care and intervention. Although this need is not widespread, for those few children with severe disabilities, the need for intensive and skilled care in the home is paramount to maximize optimum outcomes. Many of these children arrive home requiring a ventilator, suctioning equipment, a pump for feeding, a monitor for their oxygen level, etc. But most importantly, they need skilled nurses to monitor and care for them. Although parents may be trained to provide some of this care for their sick children, they are not trained clinicians. It is unrealistic to expect them to provide this level of care on a continuous basis.

What are the implications of this bill for healthcare consumer advocacy?

Skilled nurses supplement these children's support system, ensuring that critical signs are not missed and that care is delivered in a timely and appropriate manner.

Please refer all media, agency, and legislator inquiries to Vicki Veltri

Talking Points

1. OHA is aware of this proposed legislation and submitted written public testimony **in support** of this bill.
2. This legislation represents an important acknowledgement of the needs that children with severe disabilities and their families are faced with on a daily basis.
3. OHA supports this legislation based on the principles of access to quality healthcare, evidence-based improvements to our healthcare system, and consumer maximization of value of the HUSKY, Part B program.

OHA represents the collective voice of 3.5 million healthcare consumers. For our state to be competitive, our people must be healthy. Our mission is to • assure managed care consumers have access to medically necessary healthcare • educate consumers about their rights and responsibilities under health insurance plans • inform legislators of problems consumers face in accessing care and propose solutions to those problems.