

Elderly and Disabled

Long-term care. Long-term care has become a larger issue as the population ages and as medicine helps the chronically ill to live longer. Most of the bills addressing long-term care were recommended by the Health Care Task Force as a result of their study of the issue over the 2001 interim.

SB 02-22 would have required the Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to release investigation summaries and other information regarding complaints and occurrences within health care facilities (e.g. nursing homes) to the public. When complaints are received, the department would have had to begin an investigation of the facility within 10 days. The bill was postponed indefinitely. **HB 02-1323** authorizes CDPHE to create intermediate restrictions or conditions for disciplining an assisted living residence and requires the residence to submit a written plan of action for responding to violations found during an inspection. The department may impose fines up to \$2,000. Any money collected will be credited to the newly created Assisted Living Residence Improvement Cash Fund. **HB 02-1198** would have required the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing's (HCPF) Medical Services Board to promulgate rules to establish intermediate remedies that may be imposed on home health agencies, adult day care facilities, homemaker agencies, personal care agencies, and alternative care facilities. The bill was postponed indefinitely.

Senate Bill 02-027 requires HCPF to offer in-home support services to Medicaid enrollees who are eligible for either home- and community-based services or for the Disabled Children Care Program. Eligible persons or their authorized representatives are allowed to choose their in-home support service agency or their attendant. **HB 02-1027** would have required HCPF to conduct feasibility studies of case-mix reimbursement for agencies providing home health, homemaker, personal care, and alternative care services to Medicaid enrollees. Under a case-mix reimbursement system, providers are paid according to the level of resources used to treat their clients. The feasibility studies would have been conducted, however, only if sufficient donations were received to support them. The bill was vetoed by the Governor. **HB 02-1029** requires HCPF to perform a feasibility study to identify Colorado communities that can support a Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE). The PACE program provides a variety of long-term care services to low-income frail elderly persons. If sufficient funding is received for the completion of the feasibility study, the department must make an effort to establish six additional PACE sites by July 2006. **HB 02-1039** requires HCPF to implement a consumer-directed care program so that Medicaid enrollees may receive vouchers to purchase their own home- and community-based services.

Elderly. The bills to address seniors' issues focus on the creation and expansion of programs that support independence and promote care by family members. **HB 02-1067** creates the Family Caregiver Support Program to allocate money to the area agencies on aging to support services to family caregivers of older individuals or to older individuals who are relative caregivers of children under 19 years of age. **HB 02-1209** requires that a \$2.0 million allocation of sales and

use taxes to the Older Coloradans Cash Fund be ongoing. The Older Coloradans Program provides money to area agencies on aging to fund community-based services for persons 60 years-of-age or older. **HB 02-1276** creates the Supplemental Old Age Pension (OAP) Health and Medical Care Program to address the currently unmet medical needs of OAP recipients. A credit of \$1.0 million of sales and use tax revenue is dedicated to the fund.

Nursing shortage. Like other states around the country, Colorado's health care systems are experiencing a serious shortage of nurses. Four bills were introduced to try to address the state's shortage.

HB 02-1010 creates the More Nurses for Colorado Fund within the Office of the State Treasurer. Money in the fund will be used to increase the student capacity of state-supported nurse education programs. The fund will consist of gifts, grants, and donations from private sources. **SB 02-047** would have directed the Governor to enter into a multi-state nurse licensure compact to allow nurses from other states to practice in Colorado without seeking an additional license. The bill was postponed indefinitely. **HB 02-1031** eliminates the requirement that a nurse who applies for a retired volunteer nursing license must have retired within the past 4 years to receive such a license. Applicants may, therefore, have been retired from nursing for more than four years. **SB 02-134** would have directed the State Board of Nursing and the Department of Public Health and Environment to collaborate with the public and private sector to evaluate the recruitment and retention of nurses in Colorado; collect nursing workforce data; and make legislative recommendations to address the shortage of nurses in Colorado. However, the Nurse Shortage Alleviation Act from SB02-134 was incorporated into **HB02-1003**. This measure was enacted.

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