



Dear Friend:

One of the most important steps we can take to improve the quality of life in our communities is ensuring access to quality health care. During the 2009-10 legislative session, the General Assembly took action on a number of bills to improve quality of care and expand access to services. I have included information on several of these measures in this legislative update. As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you might have. Your input is always welcomed and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Richard T. Alloway II
Senator Richard Alloway II

General Assembly Enacts Health Insurance Non-Discrimination Law

I was pleased to support legislation that was signed into law in 2010 that will help prevent discrimination in Pennsylvania's health insurance industry. Act 14 of 2010 brings Pennsylvania into compliance with the federal requirements included in the Public Health Service Act.

The new law will help prevent discrimination against individuals who suffer from mental health or substance abuse issues; individuals who are genetically predisposed to certain conditions or have family mem-

bers who suffer from genetic disorders; and dependent college students who take a leave of absence for medical reasons.

The legislation gives the Pennsylvania Department of Insurance the authority to enforce the new law in the insurance industry.

In addition to preventing discrimination in the health care insurance industry, the law also extends the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) until 2013.



Senate Approves Plan to Expand Community-Based Health Care Clinics

During the 2009-10 legislative session, the Senate passed legislation that would help develop and expand Community-Based Health Care Clinics that provide vital health care services for the uninsured.

Senate Bill 5 would create the Community-Based Health Care Program within the Department of Health to provide grants to develop and expand community health care clinics. The clinics would improve access to health care services for low-income individ-

uals and elderly or disabled individuals with limited means of transportation.

The community health care clinics would offer services such as preventive care, pharmacy services, dental treatment, behavioral health and other vital services that can help seniors and low-income adults avoid costly hospital emergency visits and avoidable hospital admissions. The clinics would emphasize cooperation between the patient,



physicians, nurses, and clinic staff and provide high-quality and cost-effective health care regardless of patients' insurance status or ability to pay.

Senate Passes Volunteer Continuing Medical Education Act

The Senate passed legislation during the 2009-10 legislative session that would credit volunteer time by health care professionals toward their continuing education requirements.

The Volunteer Continuing Medical Education Act would

allow physicians, dentists, dental hygienists, nurses or certified registered nurse practitioners to apply volunteer time served in a community-based health care clinic toward the completion of no more than 20 percent of their mandatory continuing education hours required by their individual licensure board.

The legislation was part of the 15-bill HealthNET PA package introduced by Senate Republicans to help improve access to health care services and guarantee quality of care.

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