

# Legislative Newsletter

Feb. 3, 2017



## Gov. Signs First Bill of the Session

Gov. Branstad signed the first bill of the 87<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Wednesday, enacting the de-appropriations bill (Senate File 130). Earlier in the week, the House substituted their bill for the Senate version, which was adopted on party lines. The signed version includes general fund de-appropriations of \$88.2 million, and transferring of \$25.1 million.

The week included some emotional and contentious debates in the Senate chamber. The Senate approved Senate File 2, commonly known the Planned Parenthood Defunding bill, along party lines and with Sen. Johnson siding with the Republicans. As part of that legislation, the State of Iowa would decline federal funds that match the funding the state receives for family planning and women's health services. The State will substitute state funds and then seek other venues to provide women and children's health services.

The Senate also approved 1.1 percent of allowable growth funding (Senate File 166). This was a reduction from the Governor's recommendation of two percent. This bill also was passed along party lines, with Sen. Johnson siding with the Democrats.

The Urban County Coalition visited with Republican and Democratic leadership at the Capitol Tuesday to discuss mental health funding concerns, and publishing costs the counties bear when meeting minutes and resolutions have to be published in local news sources. The

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UCC told leadership in the House and Senate they would prefer electronic publication, or at least would try to compromise on abbreviated versions to reduce publishing costs to the counties.

The UCC along with other partners in the coalition trying to get the mental health funding system updated from its 20-year-old limitations continues to work with legislators. There appears to be full awareness of the emerging crisis in funding mental health in Iowa and thus far, positive discussions with several legislators in both the Senate and House. Lack of action will lead to the disintegration of the Mental Health Regions as they hit financial walls as a result of the lack of flexibility in funding their state-mandated services.

The first funnel is Feb. 10. All individual bill requests must be submitted to the Legislative Services Agency with a bill sponsor by then. As a reminder, all appropriation and ways and means bills are funnel-proof. Committee Chairs may also introduce committee bills past funnel deadlines.

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