



LEGISLATIVE BRIEFS...

June 2008

Update: Where Are We with the Medicaid Protection Safety Act?

Last month NYS PTA members responded to the call to *TAKE ACTION* on bipartisan house bill, H.R. 5613. This critical bill imposes moratoria on changes to reduce or eliminate Medicaid reimbursements for school districts for transportation, rehabilitative services, evaluation and administrative costs. H.R. 5613 passed the House by a vote of 342-62! More importantly, there were more than enough votes to overturn the President's threatened veto. This happened despite last minute opposition from the Republican leadership. New York's Congressional representatives in the House voted overwhelmingly to support the moratoria.

However, our work is not done. The issue moved on to the Senate where we face a different set of challenges and possible legislative vehicles to carry the moratoria. While the measure is expected to pass the Senate, it is not clear if there will be enough support to override a Presidential veto. For more information...

http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/PageServer?pagename=healthy_child_medicaid_update_mostrecent

Take action: <http://capwiz.com/npta2/home/>

Around the State:

Legislation to Educate Children, Parents and Teachers Safe Internet Use

The bill (S.7051), sponsored by Senator Stephen Saland (Poughkeepsie) directs the State Education Commissioner to work with the State Police, the New York State Office for Technology, and other appropriate resources to develop software and a handbook of guidelines concerning safe and responsible use of the Internet. The materials will be provided to students in grades three through twelve, as well as their parents or legal guardians. For more information...

<http://www.senate.state.ny.us/pressreleases.nsf/2e0e86fa9105ed5a85256ec30061c0be/cf442650f39126d6852574350067cc99?OpenDocument>

<http://www.assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?bn=S07051&sh=t>

Turf Wars

Given the relatively recent development of new-generation synthetic turf, there are unanswered questions, particularly related to children on sports fields, regarding its potential effects on health and the environment, with the rubber infill one of the main sources of concern. While some express concern regarding the release of certain chemicals from the rubber particles, others praise the turf for reducing injuries and cutting maintenance costs. Although research is limited, most has shown that, given

current knowledge, the use of synthetic turf indoors does not cause any elevated health risk, even in vulnerable populations such as children .

Assembly bill A9503 provides for a public health study by the department of health on the use of crumb rubber in synthetic turf; seeks a moratorium on its use and installation pending the health department`s report and provides for a site specific environmental impact statement whenever synthetic turf use is proposed. For more information...

<http://www.ehponline.org/members/2008/116-3/focus.html>

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/28/nyregion/nyregionspecial2/28turfwe.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

<http://www.newsday.com/services/newspaper/printedition/sunday/news/ny-liside045673415may04.0.3706663.story>

<http://www.assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?by=k&qs=synthetic+turf>

Cell Phone Ban in City Schools Upheld

Implementation of a ban on the use of cell phones in NYC schools was upheld by the First Dept of the Appellate Division. In *Price v. New York City Board of Education* parents challenged the ban by arguing it violated their constitutional rights and exceeded the school district`s authority. What is your school policy? For more information...

http://www.nyssba.org/index.php?src=news&submenu=on_board&srctype=detail&category=On%20Board%20Online%20May%2012%202008&refno=339

Around the Capital

Federal Appeals Court to Reconsider Ruling on NCLB Challenge

On behalf of U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, Bush administration lawyers successfully sought the reexamination of a ruling of Cincinnati`s 6th Circuit Court that revived a challenge to the No Child Left Behind Act. The Pontiac School District claim that the Act imposes an unfunded mandate on both states and school districts was upheld by a three-judge panel. For more information...

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/05/07/36conn.h27.html>

Child Nutrition and Health: A National Priority

NYS PTA continues to urge both state and federal legislators to recognize the relationship between good nutrition, student achievement and healthy lifestyles. PTA representatives recently participated in a conference call with NY Congressman Eliot Engel`s office to ask his support of the Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection Act. As stated by bill sponsor, Senator Lisa Murkowski, "At school, our children learn in health class to eat five fruits or vegetables a day, but when they go to lunch they are able to buy soda, potato chips and a candy bar. A study recently concluded in Sweden found that schools that banned sweets, donuts and soft drinks saw the number of overweight children drop by six percentage points in just four years." For information...

<http://thehill.com/op-eds/competitive-foods-and-child-obesity-2008-02-04.html>

Take action: <http://capwiz.com/npta2/issues/alert/?alertid=10888381>