



Monday *MONITOR*

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COMMITTEE CHAIR DISTRIBUTES COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE WITHOUT SPONSORS SIGN-OFF

Rep. Cynthia Davis (R-O'Fallon) distributed a committee substitute to **HB570** (Harris, D-Hillsboro)—the **Abortion Reporting Bill**—that she had amended without the sponsor's knowledge. The bill, which would require physicians to ask each woman seeking an abortion the reason why—and then report that reason to the state—would now also require the physician to report abortions and save a tissue specimen from teens 13 and younger (victims of statutory rape) and on teens 14-18 if the physician has reason to believe a sexual offense has been committed. This reporting is already standard practice. However, without law enforcement personnel on-site at the time of collection, the sample would not be submissible as evidence. This bill has now moved from simply inappropriate prying to worthless 'evidence' collection. The bill was, nevertheless, approved in committee; it should be rejected if it comes to the House floor.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS ON HEALTHCARE

Advocates for women's health have made a point of attending the numerous legislative Town Hall meetings on healthcare that have been held across the state this month. More than 75 Kansas City area residents attended a meeting sponsored by Reps. LeVota, Low, Curls, LeBlanc, Hughes, Holsman, Talbot and Kander on April 9. The meeting, held on the UMKC campus, was focused on the current state of health care in Missouri and the impact the budget will have on health care in the future. The legislators called on their constituents to voice concerns about the problems surrounding health care in Missouri and the need to expand health care coverage to the thousands of uninsured Missourians. Community representatives from the Mid-America Regional Council, Partnership for Children and Planned Parenthood also advocated for measures that would expand access to affordable health care for women and families across Missouri. From the lively discussion and dialogue, it was clear that many constituents were committed to getting involved and taking action on these important issues. Similar meetings have also taken place in Springfield with Reps. Lampe and Norr, and in St. Louis with Reps. Schupp, Colona, Hummel, Atkins, Walsh, Webb, and McNeil. Many Missourians shared their stories and made it clear they are closely watching their elected representatives on these matters.

CONGRESSIONAL HEALTH REFORM LISTENING POST

Paula Gianino, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region, was invited to participate in a stakeholder panel that presented information on health reform to Congressmen Emerson, Clay, and Carnahan. The event, held at Christian Hospital NE, was extraordinary in that a 13-member panel stayed on point and provided significant insight into the issues that need to be tackled. At Congresswoman Emerson's urging, the 'Listening Post' brought together business, labor, providers, hospitals, insurers, pharma, primary & specialty physicians, safety net providers, funders, and consumer advocates to provide input information to our congressional delegation about the key issues in health reform.

James Kimmey, President & CEO of Missouri Foundation for Health, stated early in the meeting: 'we need a target statement' to determine where we are going. There was significant emphasis on the importance of a focus on wellness, a need for primary care physicians and ensuring the continuity of safety net providers, as well as finding ways to battle the social determinants of health: income, education, and poverty. Gianino emphasized the need to include Nurse Practitioners in the discussion and the need for options for safety net providers to access affordable pharmaceuticals, especially birth control methods, in order to continue to serve the uninsured. The health reform discussion at the national level is promising, however, it was clear that the 'public plan option'—a vital element of the discussion—is in danger of being kicked to the curb. To advocates for the uninsured and under-insured, the public plan option is key to access and cost containment.

The congressional delegation promised to host a second meeting once a bill is formulated.

A (TEXT) MESSAGE FOR ALL: GET YOURSELF TESTED.

By JENEE OSTERHELDT. *The Kansas City Star*. Posted on Tue, Apr. 14, 2009

OMG. LOL. IMO. There's text message terminology for everything from "shaking my head" (SMH) to "for the win" (FTW), but "*get yourself tested?*" GYT is the latest acronym to hit cell phones and computer screens. But this instant-message craze is actually for a good cause.

In recognition of STD Awareness Month, MTV and the Kaiser Family Foundation teamed up to launch the "GYT: Get Yourself Tested" campaign. The movement is dedicated to increasing testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. The channel is featuring PSAs and a movie about Pedro, the MTV "Real World" reality star who died of AIDS. Celebrities such as Joy Bryant, Perez Hilton and Good Charlotte are helping promote the crusade. The official site, GYT09.org, will post information about STDs, how to talk to your partner, the doctor and more. It will also direct users to their nearest testing location. Or people can text a ZIP code to the GYT short code, 49809, to find a testing center.

Getting tested is as simple as asking your doctor during a checkup. If you want to be more anonymous, find a testing center or go to Planned Parenthood. Rapid tests can provide results in a half-hour or less. And for the month of April, Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri is offering free STD testing and joining the GYT campaign, too. People can go to locations in Kansas City, Columbia, Wichita and Hays, Kan., and get a variety of STD tests for free. Affiliate locations will continue to offer low-cost testing. In addition to helping make testing more accessible, Planned Parenthood plans to spread awareness at area high schools and colleges. You also might see their reps out on condom blitzes, in which they pass out safe-sex kits at bars and pub crawls.

Some might think a whole month dedicated to STD awareness is strange. But the truth is, it's necessary. One in two young people in America will contract a sexually transmitted disease by the time they turn 25. Locally, the numbers are also alarming. According to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, almost 20,000 STD cases were reported in 2007 in the Kansas City area. About 5,000 of those were people with HIV or AIDS. And those are just the reported cases. Imagine how many people might not know their status. GYT.

DOCS DIFFER ON REMEDY FOR GAPS IN HEALTH CARE

By BARBARA SHELLY. *The Kansas City Star*. Posted on Thu, Apr. 16, 2009 10:15 PM

Dr. Jim Barnett works in a general internal medicine practice and makes hospital rounds in Emporia, Kan. Dr. Rob Schaaf is a family physician in St. Joseph, Mo. As doctors, they see patients struggling to afford medical care. As state legislators, they play key roles in shaping health care policies. After that, their paths diverge.

Barnett, a Republican state senator, has been in the forefront of efforts in the Kansas Legislature to expand access to health insurance. Schaaf, a GOP House member, has done his best to block bills that use state money to help low-income Missourians obtain medical insurance. Schaaf caused an uproar in Jefferson City recently when he declared state-subsidized health insurance to be economic slavery. When I talked to him later by telephone, he was not apologetic. "Why should I be? I'm right," he said. "Most people understand economic slavery and they're tired of it. They don't want to be paying for people who don't want to work." In Schaaf's view, health insurance is not a right, but something people should work for. Arguments about lost jobs and unaffordable policies hold no sway with him. People can choose to work extra jobs, save their money and buy insurance policies with high deductibles, he said. Instead they make bad choices and expect government to bail them out. [...]

Barnett, who lost the governor's race to Democrat Kathleen Sebelius in 2006, has solid credentials as a fiscally conservative Republican. But he regards health care as a community responsibility. "As an American and a Republican, I'm comfortable with the government helping people with health care," he said. "We are going to pay for it one way or the other. Unfortunately, our system is such that we pay for it on the tail end when it's most expensive."

Barnett has pushed for a plan under which very low-income families would get state and federal money to help them buy private insurance policies. He has proposed portable health insurance and the use of pretax dollars to help businesses and employees create pools of money to buy private insurance plans. Those plans haven't been enacted — partly because many Republicans in the Kansas Legislature are more in sync with Schaaf's views — but Barnett keeps trying. Schaaf and Barnett do occupy some common ground. [...]

But in an era of skyrocketing medical costs, job uncertainty and the proliferation of expensive, chronic diseases such as diabetes, Schaaf's remedies are akin to prescribing a dose of castor oil for a complicated condition that requires a more extensive treatment. If states are going to lead the way on health care, as many believe they must, I'll put my faith in Barnett's more sophisticated and compassionate brand of medicine.