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## CORRESPONDENCE MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** February 20, 2006  
**TO:** Group Insurance Board  
**FROM:** Bob Conlin, Director of Legislation, Communications and Planning  
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**SUBJECT:** Legislative Update

The following is an update of bills introduced during the 2005 legislative session that have the potential to affect programs administered by the Group Insurance Board (GIB). Actions taken are listed in *italics* following a description of each bill. Bills that are new since the last Board meeting are marked with an asterisk. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

**AB 83** allows a state employee to elect not to receive health care coverage under a plan offered by the GIB and to elect instead to receive a monthly stipend equal to 24% of the lowest monthly premium amount the state would otherwise have been required to pay for the coverage.

*Introduced by Rep. Towns on 2/3/05. Referred to Committee on Gov't. Operations and Spending Limitations.*

**AB 108** allows certain private sector employers and employees to be covered under the state's health care coverage plan.

*Introduced by Rep. Nelson on 2/17/05. Referred to Committee on Gov't. Operations and Spending Limitations.*

**AB 199** allows purchase of health care coverage through the GIB by individuals engaged in farming (same as SB108).

*Introduced by Rep. Towns on 3/10/05. Referred to Committee on Insurance.*

**AB 329** adds a new appointed member to the GIB. The new member must be a chief executive or governing board member of a local unit of government (same as SB 149).

*Introduced by Rep. Musser on 4/15/05. Referred to Committee on Insurance. Passage recommended 15-0 on 6/21/05. Placed on Assembly Calendar for 11/1/05. Removed from consideration on 11/1/05 due to passage of companion legislation.*

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**AB 341** offers health savings accounts under the state employee health care coverage program (same as SB 131).

*Introduced by Rep. Strachota on 4/15/05. Referred to Committee on Health. Public hearing held 6/9/05. Recommended for passage 8-5 on 1/10/06. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance.*

**AB 352** provides that beginning January 1, 2006, any state resident who is eligible for a tax credit under the federal Trade Adjustment Assistance Reform Act of 2002 or who is receiving benefits from the federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation may elect to receive coverage under any health care coverage plan offered to state employees by paying the full cost of required premiums.

*Introduced by Rep. Sheridan on 4/22/05. Referred to Committee on Insurance.*

**AB 503** defines marriage as between one man and one woman and establishing domestic partnership; provides coverage for domestic partners of UW System employees and annuitants under health care coverage plans and long-term care insurance policies offered by the GIB.

*Introduced by Rep. Schneider on 6/17/05. Referred to Committee on Insurance.*

**AB 515** changes collective bargaining over health care coverage for municipal employees and allows municipal employers to change health care coverage plan providers. This could have the effect of increasing the number of local government employers who participate in the GIB local government health insurance program (similar to SB 242).

*Introduced by Rep. McCormick on 6/28/05. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance. Passage recommended 9-6 on 1/25/06. Referred to Assembly Committee on Rules.*

**AB 516** requires the GIB to prepare a report on offering group health insurance plans at different cost levels to local government employers and employees.

*Introduced by Rep. McCormick on 6/28/05. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance.*

**AB 517** requires the GIB to offer for purchase long-term care insurance policies to employees of local governments.

*Introduced by Rep. McCormick on 6/28/05. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance.*

**AB 519** amends statutes related to disclosure of health insurance claims experience of local government units and grants rule-making authority to the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance.

*Introduced by Rep. McCormick on 6/28/05. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance.*

**AB 617** requires coverage of certain health care costs in cancer clinical trials (same as SB 288).

*Introduced by Rep. Gunderson on 8/19/05. Referred to Committee on Insurance. Passage as amended by Assembly Substitute Amendment 1 recommended 15-0 on 11/29/05. Passed Assembly, as amended, on a voice vote on 2/2/06. Referred to Senate Committee on Agriculture and Insurance.*

**\*AB 799** requires health insurance coverage of smoking cessation treatment and medications.

*Introduced by Rep. Black on 10/31/05. Referred to Committee on Insurance.*

**\*AB 907** requires contract with a data organization for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of health care claims.

*Introduced by Rep. Underheim on 12/29/05. Referred to Committee on Health. Passage as amended recommended 13-0 on 1/10/06. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance. Passage as amended recommended 16-0 on 1/25/06. Referred to Rules. Placed on the calendar for 1/31/06. Passed Assembly, as amended, on a voice vote on 1/31/06. Referred to Senate Committee on Health. Concurrence recommended 5-0 on 2/9/06. Available for scheduling for floor action.*

**\*AB 993** creates new confidentiality and privilege provision related to “qualified improvement activities” concerning the review of health care data for quality improvement purposes.

*Introduced by Rep. Underheim on 2/7/06. Referred to Committee on Health. Public hearing held on 2/8/06.*

**SB 108** authorizes purchase of health care coverage through the GIB by individuals engaged in farming (same as AB 199).

*Introduced by Sen. Leibham on 3/10/05. Referred to Committee on Agriculture and Insurance.*

**SB 128** increases the limits for insurance coverage of nervous or mental health disorders or alcoholism or other drug abuse problems.

*Introduced by Sen. Hansen on 3/18/05. Referred to Committee on Agriculture and Insurance. Withdrawn from Committee on Agriculture and Insurance and referred to Committee on Health on 4/27/05. Passage, as amended, recommended by Committee on Health 5-0 on 12/14/05. Available for scheduling for floor action.*

**SB 131** offers health savings accounts under the state employee health care coverage program (same as AB 341).

*Introduced by Sen. Darling on 3/23/05. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance.*

**SB 149** adds a new appointed member to the GIB. The new member must be a chief executive or governing board member of a local unit of government (same as AB 329).

*Introduced by Sen. Brown on 3/29/05. Referred to Committee on Agriculture and Insurance. Passage recommended 7- 0 on 6/23/05. Placed on calendar for 9/20/05. Passed Senate on a voice vote on 9/20/05. Referred to Assembly Committee on Rules. Withdrawn from Committee on Rules and taken up by the Assembly on 11/1/05. Concurred in by the Assembly 96-0 on 11/1/05. Approved by Governor as Act 66 on 12/21/05.*

**SB 242** changes collective bargaining over health care coverage for municipal employees and allows municipal employers to change health care coverage plan providers. This could have the

effect of increasing the number of local government employers who participate in the GIB local government health insurance program (similar to AB 515).

*Introduced by Sen. Darling on 6/15/05. Referred to Committee on Agriculture and Insurance. Public hearing held on 10/26/05.*

**SB 288** requires coverage of certain health care costs in cancer clinical trials (same as AB 617).

*Introduced by Sen. Stepp on 8/17/05. Referred to Committee on Health. Passage, as amended, recommended by Committee on Health 5-0 on 10/20/05. Passed by the Senate, as amended, on a voice vote on 11/8/05. Referred to Committee on Insurance. Concurrence recommended by Committee on Insurance 15-0 on 11/29/05.*

**\*SB 486** allows coverage under Income Continuation Insurance if an employee failed to meet the criteria for coverage due to employer error.

*Introduced as remedial legislation by Law Revision Committee at the request of ETF on 12/27/05. Referred to Committee on Agriculture and Insurance. Passage recommended 7-0 on 2/16/06.*

\*Items new since last Board meeting.