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Dealing With Alzheimer's Disease

States are facing many challenges in providing quality health care services to their elderly citizens. One issue involves Medicaid supported long-term care services for patients with Alzheimer's disease. An upcoming State News article will focus on state policies on care for Alzheimer's patients. What is your state doing, and what do you think needs to be done. Visit Capitol Comments, CSG’s blog, and click on the Health link to add your comments.

In The Past

What are the 10 Forces of Change States Can’t Ignore? You can get a preview of a new report due to be released at CSG’s Spring Meeting in Puerto Rico in June by visiting Capitol Comments, and clicking on the Trends link. You’ll also be able to find out which governor has the most power on the blog, as well as learn more about a new leadership training opportunity for state officials.

Talk Back

What would you like to see covered in Capitol Comments? Click on the Talk Back link on the CSG blog and give us some ideas of the type of information you seek.

This Month in the NEWS

Have you made plans to attend CSG’s Spring National Committee and Task Force meetings in Puerto Rico?

The spring meeting promises to be an informative one, with sessions on many policy topics. Gov. Brad Henry’s Sustainable Energy Initiative—his focus during his tenure as CSG president—will be featured during a plenary session. A workshop on energy is also planned.

In addition, task force meetings will focus on financial services, education, health and public safety and justice, as well as energy and environment. Two workshops on health are also planned.

The meeting will be held at the El Conquistador Hotel in Puerto Rico June 10–13. Check www.csg.org for more details on the meeting.

Question:

In which state is the state capital in a city that is the lowest rank in size within that state?

To find the answer, log onto CSG’s Web site at www.csg.org!
This year’s congressional reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 will give states an opportunity to make the legislation more pertinent and responsive to the real needs of children.

The Wyoming Department of Education worked for more than six months with educators, parents and community members to identify areas of improvement for the reauthorization. The department structured its proposal in the format of concerns and proposed solutions for the following six areas:

- State Education Agency Capacity Building
- Highly Qualified Teachers
- Assessment
- Accountability Systems
- Subgroup Issues
- Funding

Wyoming, a rural state that serves 48 districts and 362 schools, has faced challenges due to its small population and lack of federal and state resources. The proposal says limited resources to provide technical assistance in rural states makes it difficult to hire and retain highly qualified department staff, provides only limited research-based products and services, challenges the ability to implement quality data systems in all districts, and supplies an insufficient technical assistance budget. The department recommends that NCLB reauthorization include increased federal administration and technical assistance funds, and that the funds have greater flexibility so they can be combined in support of state and district improvement initiatives.

In addition, Wyoming has had difficulty fulfilling the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) requirements set forth by NCLB. In the concerns section, the department said the NCLB requirement that a certified social studies teacher is highly qualified in geography, history, economics, civics and government is difficult to meet in small rural schools. To remedy this, the department recommends that reauthorization recognize teachers with a content major in social studies as highly qualified in history, geography, economics, civics and government.

The comprehensive recommendations by the Wyoming Department of Education are available online in PDF. To find concerns and recommendations not listed in this article, visit http://www.k12.wy.us/A/docs/NCLB_recommendations.pdf.

A recently released issue brief by the Alliance for Excellence in Education reports that on average, households headed by a high school graduate accumulate 10 times more wealth than those headed by a high school dropout. In other words, for every $500 of wealth a high school dropout’s household accumulates, their peers with diplomas accumulate about $5,000.

Household wealth is defined by the report as assets, which include cash investments, material possessions and investments in nontangible property, such as academic degrees. The report says although education can be the key to higher earnings, it is even more important to the accumulation of assets.

Based on these findings, the Alliance has determined that United States citizens would have accumulated more than $74 billion more in wealth if every head of household in the United States today had received at least a high school diploma.

According to the report, an important benefit of wealth is the cushion that accumulated assets provide for families that face sudden unemployment, disability or any financial emergencies. Regular income helps families pay for day-to-day living expenses; assets allow them survive financial hardships. But, the report says, 25.5 percent of all American households had insufficient net worth to sustain living at the federal poverty level for three months in the event their income is disrupted.

The report says both wealth and poverty tend to perpetuate themselves, and the effects of wealth are so significant that it can take as long as five generations for the effects conferred by wealth to disappear.

The Alliance suggests that asset-building programs like the G.I. Bill and, more recently, a policy focus on the idea of creating savings accounts for children that would be funded at higher levels for poorer families, can increase high school graduation rates, thus increasing the nation’s collective wealth.

The study includes a chart that provides state-by-state information on the number of households headed by high school dropouts, their household wealth, the number of households headed by high school graduates, their household wealth, and the potential additional wealth a state could accumulate if all heads of household were high school graduates.

To find out more about how this data affects your state, visit www.all4ed.org/publications/hiddenbenefits.pdf.
Survey Says: Generation Next Presents New Outlook on Politics

A report by the Pew Research Center encourages policymakers to meet Generation Next.

According to the report, Nexters are the most tolerant of any generation on social issues such as immigration, race and homosexuality and are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party than the preceding generation of young people. But evidence is mixed on whether Nexters will be any more engaged in civic life than young people in the past, which could blunt their political impact.

Members of Generation Next, who were born between 1981 and 1988, use text messaging and instant messaging to remain in constant contact with friends, say a growing number of immigrants strengthens the country, support gay marriage and accept interracial dating.

At the same time, Nexters seem less critical of government regulation of business, but are also less critical of business itself, and are the most likely of any generation to support privatization of the Social Security system.

One-in-five members of Generation Next say they have no religious affiliation or are atheist, nearly double the proportion of young people who said that in the late 1980s. Only about four in 10 agree it’s a citizen’s duty to always vote, and most Generation Nexters reject the statement, “When something is run by the government, it is usually inefficient and wasteful,” which runs against what the majority of the nation believe. According to the report, this sentiment reflects a less cynical view of government and political leaders.


Mental Health Courts Can Save Taxpayers Money, RAND says

“Justice, Treatment and Cost: An Evaluation of the Fiscal Impact of Allegheny Mental Health Court,” a recently released study by RAND conducted for the CSG Justice Center, is the first to look at the fiscal impact of a mental health court in the United States.

Mental health courts’ goals are to link individuals convicted of nonviolent crimes to community-based treatment for mental illness, alcoholism and drug addiction in order to reduce their jail time and get them the help they need to reduce the chance they will commit new crimes. They offer defendants with mental illnesses the opportunity to participate in court-supervised, community-based treatment instead of typical criminal sanctions.

In 1997, there were only four courts of this kind in the United States. Because of their newness, few studies have measured the performance of these courts, and no studies until now have assessed their costs.

The RAND study indicates that participants in the Allegheny County Mental Health Court program received more mental health services and spent fewer days in jail than they might have if they had been sentenced in the criminal court. The research found that government costs to provide mental health services would primarily be offset by money the government saved from participants spending less time in jail.

To determine the fiscal impact of the Allegheny County Mental Health Court, RAND researchers gathered information on treatment, criminal justice and entitlement program costs from six state and county public agencies. They compared these costs with costs government would have had to spend on these participants during a comparable period if they had gone through the criminal court system, and with their costs before and after an arrest in the years prior to their entry into the mental health court.

According to the report, nearly a quarter of jail inmates who reported having a mental health problem had served three or more prior jail terms. Governments around the country spend millions of dollars each year to incarcerate these inmates for relatively minor offenses, such as trespassing and disorderly conduct, the report says.

To find out more about mental health courts, visit www.rand.org/news/press.07/03.01.html.
## State Snapshots

**Number of Deaths Due to Alzheimer’s Disease and Rate per 100,000 Population by State, 2003**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of Deaths</th>
<th>Rate per 100,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>1,268</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>Arizona</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>147</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Rhode Island</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
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<td>63,457</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics Report 2006: 54 (13).*

Number of deaths and the rate per 100,000 population are reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the National Vital Statistics Reports. The most recent report by state is from Vol. 54, No. 13, published April 19, 2006.

This chart appears in the Alzheimer’s Association’s 2007 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures, which gathers for the first time in one place, statistics that illustrate the impact of Alzheimer’s on individuals; families; federal, state and local governments; the health care system; and the economy. The report was released in March.
Alabama’s child welfare system has made tremendous progress since it was placed under federal court oversight 19 years ago. The settlement agreement in the case was dissolved in January, the first time a state has exited federal oversight entirely. State officials know, however, that there is still work to be done.

By Dr. Page B. Walley
On Jan. 16, 2007, U.S. District Judge Ira DeMent issued a landmark opinion—after 19 years of federal court oversight, Alabama’s child welfare system not only met the high expectations of the court, it also demonstrated an unsurpassed, although imperfect, ability to provide for the safety and well-being of children and families in distress.

With that, DeMent completely dissolved the R.C. v. Valley settlement agreement, making Alabama perhaps the first state to exit such federal oversight entirely. The ruling has garnered national attention.

Alabama’s child welfare system achieved this goal through an epic metamorphosis. It changed its bottom-up philosophy, employee training and development, caseload standards and performance measurement, and established citizen oversight committees—all undergirded with improved technology and additional financial and personnel resources. The work of many employees, advocates, service providers, foster families and government officials committed to change and willing to abide by the law of the harvest—you reap what you sow; you reap later than you sow; and you reap more than you sow—has resulted in a bounty that few imagined possible 20 years ago.

In 1986 Jefferson County (Birmingham) Circuit Judge Sandra Storm ordered a child, initials R.C., into Alabama’s foster care system. In what Storm described as a “nightmarish, long journey through hospital mental wards, psychotropic medication, and separation from his family,” R.C. experienced a shameful maltreatment which symbolized the shortcomings of an entire system.

At that time, a commission appointed by the governor discerned that the average caseload of child welfare caseworkers in Alabama was 60 to 70. In addition, caseworkers had inadequate training, child abuse allegations were not investigated, equipment for caseworkers’ use was antiquated, and on and on. The child welfare system was failing Alabama’s most needy. The American Civil Liberties Union, on behalf of R.C. at his father’s request, sued the state, and the state agreed to enter into a consent decree requiring radical improvement—or conversions—of not only its state child welfare system, but also the system in each of Alabama’s 67 counties.

Some cardinal principles and accomplishments of the system’s transformation merit special mention.

First, each county, under the oversight of the state office, developed a system of care founded on the principles that:

1. Children should live with their families when they can do so safely;
2. Comprehensive services should be provided to children and their families;
3. Regular family planning meetings with the family and individualized community support teams should be held with the focus on reunification, relative placement or adoption; and
4. Reports of child abuse and neglect should be investigated in a timely manner.

In addition, the state and each county developed citizen-composed quality assurance committees to review practice and outcome information related to the improvement efforts. Also, “report cards” for each county’s child welfare performance were created and permanently and publicly posted on the DHR Web site.

The report card consists of a four-level ranking of each county’s performance over a six-month period on the following indicators:

1. Safety—Cases of abuse/neglect (CANs) pending, prevention assessments pending more than 90 days, and response time of initial contacts on CANs received;
2. Permanency—No compelling reasons/termination of parental rights 15 of last 22 months, TPR petitions overdue greater than 90 days for children with adoption as the permanency plan; and
3. Qualitative Items (from reviews of cases by County QA committees)—Average child and family status rating, average system performance rating.

A tiered social work classification system enhanced employee professionalism. Child welfare caseworkers are expected to have at least a bachelor’s of social work and are required to obtain a license within one year of employment. Attracting caseworkers with a master’s of social work and offering financial incentives for licensure also were prioritized in the classification changes. An extensive training curriculum was developed, accompanied by an aggressive recruitment and retention effort. The state initiated a consortium of Alabama universities and colleges, which train and produce BSWs and MSWs. This allowed for improved student preparedness for employment with the Department of Human Resources.

Better utilization of federal funds, in conjunction with a greater investment of state dollars, allowed for the surge in the number of social workers in the field, the increase in entry pay and supplements for service in certain placements, and the precipitous reduction in worker caseloads to between eight to 18 on average, depending on the type of case.

Each county, and five separate regions in Jefferson County—Alabama’s largest county, which includes Birmingham—were subjected to a rigorous conversion process culminating in a conversion review, which included presentations by child welfare staff and community stakeholders to the federal monitor, plaintiff’s attorneys and DHR state leadership. These 71 separate presentations were conducted only after the system had matured and could document performance attainment on 51 separate indicators of safety, permanency and well-being. The monitor then made a decision as to whether the state had achieved conversion. Prior to the state’s release, each of the 71 jurisdictions successfully converted, and the state ultimately demonstrated that the systemic conversion could be sustained.

In a Jan. 21, 2007, op-ed piece in the Birmingham News, Storm, who is now retired, looked to the genesis of these reforms, and reflected that R.C. would now be 26 years old. “The progress the state has accomplished improving the DHR system is nothing short of phenomenal … there are enough people and funding to meet professional standards at DHR in every county,” she said.

Indeed, the professional practice, employee quality and support, family-centered focus, and performance standards which are measured constantly and used to manage have absolutely
transformed a system from what many national experts have concluded is a proverbial “worst-to-first” achievement.

But what now? How can the state ensure the system will not regress now that court oversight has been withdrawn?

First, the family-focused philosophy has been and continues to be systemically embedded throughout DHR. Basically, the mantra is “if it isn’t good enough for my child, it isn’t good enough for anyone else’s child.” The state has permanently codified all of the R.C. policy in the DHR Administrative Code. Now R.C. principles are DHR principles, and the state is raising its performance expectations and practice above what the consent decree contemplated.

Second, the aforementioned permanent Quality Assurance committees and supervisory and performance accountability network from the counties to the state office help assure DHR’s steadfastness.

To build redundancy of quality review into the system, in addition to each county undergoing ongoing review by its respective county QA committee, the state QA office subjects every county to an exhaustive case and system review—basically replicating the original conversion review process using the 51 performance indicators—at least once every three years.

What are our ascension goals now that we have reached this plateau?

We are challenging ourselves to expand our “continuums of care,” where we no longer incentivize the provider community for services to children in out-of-home placement, but rather for aggressive work with children and families to prevent removal or rapidly reunify families by “stepping children down” on a continuum of services from more restrictive to least restrictive placement. This results in providers overhauling their models of service provision.

We have, through the competitive bid process, expanded competition among provider partners and closely monitor performance outcomes, (e.g., percentages of children remaining in home/not removed initially, length of stay in out-of-home care, long-term stabilization upon return, etc.). Every child in any out-of-home care placement is assessed every six months by an independent assessment team using a standardized instrument to determine progress and either stepping that child down and back toward home or determining why current services are not resulting in progress and making the appropriate adjustment.

We are even preparing what we believe is a highly progressive proposal for providers to be economically compensated only upon a child’s return to home … and believe we will have positive responses.

Our intent is to continue an annual reduction in the number of children entering out-of-home care while expanding our services in-home. We have more than 75 percent of our children in care in home and/or basic foster care, one-fifth of 1 percent (0.2 percent) in deep-end residential services, and 12 children in out-of-state placements. Our goal in 2007 is to return all of Alabama’s out-of-state children home and to step-down those children in out-of-home care so that 75 percent have a less restrictive placement.

The harvest recently reaped in Alabama’s Child Welfare System signals the end of a season, but a good farmer knows that a new season has already begun. While we are pleased, we are not proud because the work continues with the hope of a more bountiful harvest ahead.

—Dr. Page B. Walley has served as the commissioner of the Alabama Department of Human Resources since January 2004. He previously served as commissioner of the Alabama Department of Children’s Affairs. This article was previously published by the American Public Human Services Association. It is reprinted with permission from the APHSA.
U.S.-Mexico Relationship Faces Tough Challenges Ahead

While enjoying an unprecedented level of cooperation in recent years, the U.S. and Mexico face important challenges that will affect the long-term prosperity of North America.

By Edgar Ruiz

The United States and Mexico face growing challenges to the long-term prosperity of North America. Both countries will need to address the contentious issue of immigration, promote a shared vision for economic competitiveness and give government the tools to manage binational concerns along their shared border effectively.

In July 2006, Mexico experienced the closest presidential election in its history. The election results displayed a great divide between northern and southern Mexican states. States in northern Mexico have benefited from cross-border trade and greater economic exchange as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Southern states have not benefited from such trade integration and historically have seen a decline in economic competitiveness, increased unemployment and a high exodus of migrants.

As Mexico moves forward from this important election cycle, President Felipe Calderon must deal with poverty, workforce and economic development, justice and energy reform, public safety and education. Moreover, his administration will need to hammer out a new bilateral agenda with the U.S. to address border security, immigration and economic integration that goes beyond NAFTA.

Immigration Reform

The Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks dramatically altered the prospects for both countries to advance an integrated immi-
Migration agreement as the U.S. shifted its focus to the global war on terror and border security. Since then, the U.S.-Mexico relationship has been dominated by immigration, primarily from a security perspective. Congress and U.S. citizens have had an intense debate over immigration, focusing on border security, the estimated 11.5 million to 12 million undocumented immigrants already in the U.S., and unmet U.S. labor needs, particularly in agriculture, according to the Web site of the Chamber of Deputies in the Mexican Congress.

In 2004, President George W. Bush proposed a temporary worker program to match willing foreign workers with willing U.S. employers. The president also asked Congress to work with him to achieve immigration reform that controls the border, offer incentives for temporary workers to return home, and protect the rights of legal immigrants while not unfairly rewarding those who entered unlawfully.

Immigration came to the forefront in the fall of 2006 as the U.S. Congress debated several measures, including the passage of the Border Fence Act, which authorizes 700 miles of additional fencing, barriers, checkpoints and lighting along the southern border. The Act also increases the use of advanced technology such as cameras, satellites and unmanned aerial vehicles to reinforce security, according to a White House fact sheet. Many criticized this measure as an “enforcement only” approach that did not address the root of the problem. The bill’s passage sparked criticism in the U.S. and Mexico about the negative symbolism of a border fence.

The U.S. Congress also considered immigration reform legislation, including a bill cosponsored by Sens. John McCain and Edward Kennedy that included temporary worker and earned legalization provisions. While such reform efforts were not passed in the last session, similar versions will likely be introduced in 2007.

In addition to federal legislation, several states and local governments have attempted to curb illegal immigration using a series of laws and ordinances. In addition to English-only laws, these measures included ordinances denying public services to undocumented immigrants, giving local law enforcement authority to detain undocumented immigrants and punishing homeowners who rent to undocumented immigrants.

Although the immigration debate has become polarized, pragmatic solutions need to prevail. Both countries share a responsibility to secure the border, and both must pass laws to promote secure, safe, legal and humane immigration patterns.

Enforcement-only approaches have been ineffective in reducing undocumented immigration. For instance, operations along the California and Texas borders in the 1990s provided more border patrol agents and illegal immigration control operations. While initially successful, these efforts eventually led to rerouting migration flows overland through dangerous desert and mountain areas such as Arizona and New Mexico, as well as underground through sophisticated tunnel systems, border expert David Shirk told Newsweek in October 2006. Since then, the federal government has continued...
The Agreement for Regional Progress offers an integrated vision of how the region can take advantage of its 30 million inhabitants, dynamic growth and border crossings which account for more than 50 percent of the total crossings between Mexico and the U.S.

—Texas Secretary of State’s Web site

to increase border enforcement with little success in stopping undocumented immigration as evidenced by the presence of 11 million unauthorized residents in the U.S., according to the Newsweek article.

Moreover, enforcement-only measures have had the unintended consequence of increasing criminal smuggling networks. The harder it is for undocumented immigrants to cross the border, the more they rely on professional smugglers and organized criminals to enter the country, Shirk told Newsweek. The Associated Press recently reported that the use of smugglers for illegal crossings was 55 percent in 2005, up from 18 percent in 2000. Border enforcement tragically has increased immigrants’ exposure to physical risks and deaths.

Mexico, which loses a significant number of young and productive employees to migration, must create an environment that promotes job opportunities and investments, particularly in rural areas and southern states. In the long run, such approaches will stem migration. Moreover, Mexico must invest heavily in education to prepare its labor force for jobs of the future. However, promoting economic growth in Mexico will not reduce undocumented immigration overnight, and it will not address the legal status of undocumented immigrants already in the U.S. As such, the president and the U.S. Senate must seek legal solutions, such as a temporary guest worker program, Shirk told Newsweek.

A New Economic Vision for the Border

As the world has become more interconnected, U.S. and Mexico stakeholders have begun discussions to enhance regional, continental competitiveness. The issue has captured considerable attention in North America as numerous manufacturing jobs continue to move overseas.

The Maquiladora industry, the most visible demonstration of the U.S.-Mexico trade relationship, has been impacted by global competition and outsourcing. Maquiladoras are manufacturing plants that process and assemble components imported into Mexico that are, in turn, exported, usually to the U.S. The industry uses relatively inexpensive Mexican labor to perform a range of manufacturing operations including assembly and processing. In recent years, these types of operations have moved to lower cost locales in Central America, Southeast Asia and China. Plants with the simplest production practices, such as textile, clothing and furniture manufacturing, are among the first to leave. The continued exodus of industries in these sectors has made it clear that Mexico can no longer compete on the basis of cheap labor.
However, Mexico’s proximity to the U.S., the world’s largest consumer market, gives it a unique advantage over other countries. Its location is ideal for designing and producing items for which proximity to the end user matters. The long-term prosperity of Mexico’s manufacturing sector will depend on its ability to capitalize on this advantage with rapid-fire turnaround that Asia and other countries can’t match. Meanwhile, this sector, along with the support of government from both countries, must seek to produce more complex, value-added products that are not as dependent on low-end manufacturing skills.

Regional partnerships can promote collaboration and joint marketing of assets in both countries. For example, in 2004 Texas and the Mexican Northeast states of Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Coahuila and Chihuahua signed the historic Agreement for Regional Progress to create jobs and economic opportunities along the border. Under the agreement, these states agreed to establish technical cooperation programs. The agreement offers an integrated vision of how the region can take advantage of its 30 million inhabitants, dynamic growth and border crossings which account for more than 50 percent of the total crossings between Mexico and the U.S., according to the Texas Secretary of State’s Web site.

In a similar fashion, government and the private sector along the Arizona-Sonora and California-Baja California border have been working to enhance economic growth through a series of projects such as the CANAMEX Corridor Project and the proposed Silicon Border project.

The CANAMEX Corridor Project extends from central Mexico to Alberta, Canada, and promotes tourism, communications, transportation investments and streamlined international clearance at land border ports of entry. The Silicon Border proposal was conceived by semiconductor industry executives concerned about overdependence and concentration in Asia. It would create a 10,000 acre High-Tech Science Park along the border between Baja California and California, according to a presentation by Daniel Hill at the second Regional Border Economic Development Forum in 2006.

Enticing and maintaining valued-added manufacturing operations in North America not only increases the standard of living for both countries, but also offers unique commercial advantages. A case in point is Motorola, which transferred its manufacturing operations to China because of low labor costs. Now relocated to Nogales, Sonora, Motorola has established a close working relationship between engineering centers and manufacturing sites. Production is closer to customers and within the same trade zone.

**Governance Reforms**

Today, as a result of recent government reforms and increased political plurality, Mexico’s federal Congress and individual states wield greater influence in politics than ever before. Ongoing efforts to decentralize authority in specified policy areas have given legislatures, governors and other agencies greater standing in the policymaking process. Further reforms will be needed to continue Mexico’s democratic advancement.

However, state executive and legislative branches remain challenged and limited due to the primacy of the federal government in Mexico. As a result of the federal government’s dominance over public revenues, state and local governments are dependent on federal resources to meet basic needs and deliver public services. State institutions in Mexico need to be strengthened so they can be effective change agents.

Differences in governmental structures, as well as very restrictive term limits, challenge the continuity of binational cooperation. In Mexico, state legislators, mayors, city councils and federal representatives in Mexico’s Chamber of Deputies are allowed to serve a single three-year term. Governors, federal senators and the president serve a single, six-year term.

These challenges are compounded by the minimal coordination between governments and the private sector on both sides of the border. As such, U.S. and Mexico border state legislatures must expand their cooperative relationships. Because of their unique understanding of the complex issues affecting the border region, border legislators can provide community-based approaches to benefit the region. Border lawmakers can serve as effective critics and advocates of federal proposals in Washington, D.C., and Mexico City so national strategies correlate to practical realities. As Mexico continues to change politically, state legislatures are becoming breeding grounds for new political leadership. State legislatures will be the innovators in policy matters including public education, regional planning and fiscal reform.

—Edgar Ruiz is the program director of the Border Legislative Conference in CSG’s Western Regional Office. This article is an abbreviated version of one appearing in the upcoming 2007 Book of the States, published by CSG.
In 1927, Oliver Wendell Holmes said “taxes are what we pay for a civilized society.”

Eighty years later, one form of tax—the property tax—is being scrutinized by state and local governments, due in part to the meteoric rise of property values in recent years.

A flood of legislation is being considered across the country to address concerns about property tax increases, how tax revenues are calculated and distributed, and local governments’ reliance on those revenues.

Property taxes have often been the target of public discontent. In fact, the public considers the property tax to be the least fair among all state and local taxes, according to a recent poll conducted by the Tax Foundation. Gerald Prante, economist at the foundation and author of a new special report, postulates this is because “…taxpayers are more acutely aware of what property taxes cost them than they are of income, payroll, corporate or sales taxes. Sometimes, property taxes are paid into an escrow account without much personal attention from the taxpayer, but often property taxes involve the actual writing of a huge check to the local government.”

This awareness means that property owners have become increasingly vocal about their rising tax burdens. In many states, grass roots organizations have sprung up to influence the property tax discourse. For example, Virginians Over-Taxed on Residences (VOTOR) has a single goal: to limit property value assessment increases and property tax rates. A New Jersey group called Citizens for Property Tax Reform, reportedly had 500,000 participants in 2004.

Dissatisfaction with property taxes is not a new phenomenon. Throughout the 1970s, states came under pressure from constituents to implement property tax limits, culminating in the one of the most well-known of such
Property Taxes Under Scrutiny

By Jennifer Burnett

measures—California’s Proposition 13. Passed in 1978, Proposition 13 limited the property value assessment to the current value plus 2 percent per year. Many states followed California’s lead and subsequently passed similar measures.

In 1980, Massachusetts voters went even further and passed Proposition 2½, which placed constraints on the amount of property taxes a city or town could levy, established two types of voter-approved increases in taxing authority, and allowed voters to mandate a reduction in taxing authority.

In jurisdictions across the nation, property values—in particular, residential real estate prices—have skyrocketed in recent years and a renewed interest in limiting or reforming property taxes has followed. Figure 1 illustrates trends over the last 20 years in the S&P/Case-Shiller U.S. National Home Price Index.

While the index was relatively flat throughout the 1990s, steep increases can be seen beginning around 2000.

There are, of course, variations across regions and even within states when it comes to how much residents have to pay. Of the top 10 counties (with populations greater than 65,000) that paid the highest median real estate taxes in 2005, six were in New Jersey and four were in New York. The residents of Westchester County, N.Y., made the highest median payment out of all these counties—$7,337. See table on page 18 for state property tax rankings.

Increased property taxes generally translates into larger revenue streams for local and state governments, but it can also result in huge tax burdens for property owners. The rise in property value and therefore property taxes has outpaced income growth, leaving property owners to pay out a growing proportion of their income to the government. From 2000 to 2004, property tax collections increased 27.7 percent, while over the same period personal income grew at little more than half that rate—15.9 percent.

This has led many states to consider revisions to existing property tax guidelines, often in order to provide relief for homeowners from steep tax bills or to limit how much those bills can grow in the future.

“Almost every state is looking at some form of property tax cap,” said Myron Orfield, a property tax expert and law professor at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

New York, with some of the heaviest property tax burdens in the nation, is considering a tax relief package aimed at middle class homeowners proposed by Gov. Elliot Spitzer.

“I believe those middle class New Yorkers, who bear the brunt of soaring property taxes and have the least ability to pay them, should be top priority,” he has said.

Under the governor’s proposal, the state would provide $6 billion in additional property tax relief over the next three years, with the majority of savings going to those homeowners with incomes at or below $60,000 ($80,000 in the New York City metropolitan area).

Alongside his relief package, Spitzer wants to shift some costs away from local governments—thereby reducing the property tax liabilities of homeowners—by increasing state aid to schools. Connecticut Gov. M. Jodi Rell is offering up a proposal with a similar intent. Though property taxes constitute a small portion of state tax revenue (usually less than 2 percent), local governments often derive a huge part of their budgets from these taxes and a large chunk of those revenues go to funding local schools. The Tax Foundation calculates that public schools are

Figure 1: S&P/Case-Shiller U.S. National Home Price Index, 1Q 1987—4Q 2006

Note: The S&P/Case-Shiller® U.S. National Home Price Index is a composite of single-family home price indices for the nine U.S. Census divisions and is calculated quarterly.
the greatest beneficiary of property taxes, receiving nearly 50 percent of all collected property taxes.

Given the aging of America, some legislative measures are aimed specifically at lessening the tax burden for older Americans on a fixed income. In 2006, for example, Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman signed into law a revenue package that, according to AARP, “significantly expands tax relief to limited-income older and disabled homeowners … and lessens the property tax burden on low-income seniors who might otherwise be forced out of their homes due to high taxes.” As of March 2006, 25 states provided special property-tax exemptions or credits for the elderly.

Another form of property tax reform known as property tax swaps—trading property taxes for an increase in another type of tax—has also made headlines over the last year. New Jersey, Idaho and South Carolina all chose to lower property taxes last year, and made up the lost revenue by increasing the sales tax. Texas, where property taxes rose almost 84 percent from 1996 to 2004, dropped property tax rates and picked up higher taxes on cigarettes and certain business activities. Proposals are in place in Florida, Indiana and Illinois to follow suit this year.

As previously discussed, increased property taxes were catalysts for many of these proposals. But, while home prices have been on the upswing the past few years, that trend has reversed in more recent months. (See Figure 1) According to the National Association of Realtors, the median price of an existing home sold in January 2007 was down 3.1 percent from last January—the sixth straight month prices have posted a year-over-year drop. Price drops could bring a reprieve from increasing property tax bills, but could also impact revenue streams for local governments and place pressure on policymakers to reconfigure newly conceived tax relief measures.

In the years to come, property taxes will likely continue to be a target of debate for property owners as well as an issue of concern for policymakers. As the real estate market cools off, the call for property tax reform may also cool off—for now.

—Jennifer Burnett is a research analyst at The Council of State Governments.
States and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are facing a rapidly expanding counterfeit prescription drug problem aided by a complicated distribution network, new technologies and the Internet.

By Jack Penchoff
When Indiana state Sen. Marvin Riegsecker, a pharmacist, asked a pharmaceutical distributor if one of his patient’s prescription drugs was real or counterfeit, the distributor told Riegsecker, “trust us.” It was an answer the veteran lawmaker did not want to hear.

As a result, Riegsecker pushed through the first state law to address the growing problem of counterfeit drugs in the United States through criminal penalties, tougher licensing requirements for wholesalers and tighter controls on drug shipments through the distribution chain.

The legislation was signed into law by Gov. Mitch Daniels in May 2005 and has been adopted in some form by a dozen other states.

**Complexity Makes Counterfeiting Easier**

The distribution of prescription drugs is complicated and involves manufacturers, wholesalers, secondary wholesalers, repackagers and pharmacies. That complicated network makes it easier for counterfeit drugs to enter the system.

The problem is further muddied by the split jurisdiction of drug safety. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration oversees the approval and manufacture of drugs, and the states are in charge of distributing and dispensing those drugs.

The use of the Internet has made it easier for counterfeiters. More than half the cases involving fake drugs, reports the FDA, are related to the Internet.

One FDA study showed that 85 percent of the Internet drug sales purported to be from Canadian pharmacies actually originated from 27 different countries.

Despite the Internet’s role in the growing counterfeit drug trade, pressure continues to grow in the states for the FDA to ease its regulations on the sale of drugs re-imported to the U.S.

**Pedigree Enforcement Delayed**

The FDA has been fighting a two-decade battle to regulate drug distribution.

Since 1988, the FDA has tried to control the drug supply line through the Prescription Drug Marketing Act. The PDMA would require wholesalers to track drug shipments once they leave the normal distribution channels. But delays and challenge, most recently by secondary drug wholesalers, have not allowed the FDA to enforce that requirement.

To fill that gap, Indiana and other states are legislating pedigree requirements in their states.

**Profitable Trade**

Even enhanced state regulation hasn’t stopped the rising tide of counterfeit drugs. Counterfeiters are reaping millions of dollars.

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Cocaine distribution is complicated. You need scientists. You have the DEA on your back and the borders are tightly controlled. You can manufacture fake pills for a penny each and sell them for 30 cents, which is still cheaper than what the legitimate pill costs. It’s also a national security issue. Terrorists can easily put poison drugs in the system and do it state-by-state.

—Bryan Liang, professor of law and executive director
Institute of Health Law Studies at California Western School of Law
In March, for example, a Florida business owner was sentenced in a Missouri federal court for his role in a conspiracy to sell $42 million in counterfeit, misbranded and illegally imported Lipitor, the world’s top-selling prescription drug.

In February, two North Carolina men pleaded guilty to federal charges stemming from a scheme that netted them $19 million from the sale of counterfeit prescription drugs over the Internet.

Global Problem

As big as the problem has grown in the U.S., it’s grown even larger worldwide.

The World Health Organization in February issued a report estimating that 10 percent of the medications sold globally are counterfeit. However, the report said the number is lower in developed countries, such as the U.S., where the number of fake drugs is estimated at 1 percent.

But that 1 percent has been enough to increase the FDA’s caseload on counterfeit drugs tenfold since the 1990s. In 1997, the FDA Office of Criminal Investigations handled six cases involving fraudulent prescription drugs. In 2006, the unit handled 53 cases.

Various Schemes

The global problem has implications for the U.S. because some counterfeit drugs made overseas are entering the U.S. market. In the case of the Florida man who was sentenced in Missouri, prosecutors said the fraudulent Lipitor was purchased in South America and smuggled into this country, where the fake drugs were sold at prices lower than real Lipitor.

In the North Carolina case, the U.S. Attorney’s office reported that the men purchased drugs in Belize then marketed them as Canadian through unsolicited e-mails. The drugs, which prosecutors said had little or no medicinal value, were sold as Ambien, Calium, Viagra, Lipitor and Vioxx.

There are other methods counterfeiters use to push their counterfeit drugs through the U.S. distribution system. One common scheme is to “up-label” a drug. The counterfeiters import a shipment of a 20 mg. dose, repackage the drug and label the same drug as a 40 mg. dose. The result is high profits.

Public Health Concerns

“There’s so much money to be made and it’s so easy to enter the game,” said Bryan Liang, professor of law and executive director of the Institute of Health Law Studies at California Western School of Law.

Liang, who has written extensively about the problem and is on the board of trustees of SafeMedicines.org, said 90 percent of the prescription drugs manufactured in the United States go directly from the manufacturer to the wholesaler then to the pharmacies.

It’s that 10 percent that go through the secondary wholesaler supply chain, where fake drugs enter the system.

“There are 3.5 billion prescriptions filled in the United States each year. Just 10 percent of that is still 350 million and those are usually 90 day supplies so you’re back up to nearly a billion,” said Liang. “The gray market is where the system is so vulnerable.”

The vulnerability poses a growing public health challenge.

In 2002, for example, counterfeiters watered-down the prescription drug Procrit, a drug used by cancer and AIDS patients to fight fatigue and anemia. According to the FDA, counterfeiters used tap water to weaken the strength of the drug to one-twentieth of what was listed on the label. Not only were already weak patients getting a less effective dose of their medicine, but the non-sterile tap water posed a risk of infection.

Liang said many former illicit drug sales are getting into the licit drug counterfeit trade.

“Cocaine distribution is complicated,” said Liang. “You need scientists. You have the DEA on your back and the borders are tightly controlled. You can manufacture fake pills for a penny each and sell them for 30 cents, which is still cheaper than what the legitimate pill costs.”

“It’s also a national security issue,” said Liang. “Terrorists can easily put poisoned drugs in the system and do it state-by-state.”

That’s one reason Liang opposes the sale of prescription drugs through the Internet. As the FDA study showed, most of the Web sites that market themselves as Canadian are not. In fact, the study shows, 85 percent of the drugs came from 27 different countries including Costa Rica and Vanuatu.

State Solutions

Indiana and other states are taking a broad-based approach to tackle the counterfeit drug industry.

The bill approved in Indiana, and subsequently in at least 12 other states, establishes criminal penalties for counterfeiting; increases the regulation of wholesale distributors in the states; and requires that a pedigree, or tracking system, be used.

Meanwhile, Liang and others are advocating that the FDA adopt universal licensing and pedigree requirements and urges states to promote consumer education.

Drug companies, for example, have patient assistance programs aimed at providing low cost or no cost drugs to low-income families and the uninsured.

Consumers also need to be vigilant about the taste, feel and smell of their prescription drugs.

“Several years ago 18 million Lipitor pills were recalled when it was discovered they were counterfeit,” said Liang. “How was the fraud discovered? A Lipitor patient who noticed his pills were crumbling when he took them out of the container.”

—Jack Penchoff is associate director of communications for CSG and senior editor of State News.

Resources to Combat Counterfeit Drugs

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Counterfeit Drug Task Force
www.fda.gov/counterfeit/

National Consumers League
On the Loose: Protect Yourself from Counterfeit Drugs
www.fraud.org/fakedrugs/

FDA Counterfeit Drugs Questions and Answers
www.fda.gov/ohiorelations/counterfeitqa.html

A System Overwhelmed:
Transcript of a Session of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce
State leaders say health care is the most important challenge facing state governments today. And they’re ready to take action. Not only are states addressing the need to lower the number of uninsured residents, they are also developing initiatives that address poor diet and tobacco use.

By Sean Slone

Health care is the most important challenge facing state governments today, according to a recent state trends survey of state leaders by The Council of State Governments.

States, spurred by the urgency of rising health care costs, aren’t waiting for Washington to take action. Many states are serving as policy laboratories for innovative plans to reduce the number of uninsured. States are also developing initiatives to encourage healthier living by addressing poor diet and tobacco use, two factors that continue to threaten overall improvements in the nation’s health over the last two decades.

Insurance Coverage Innovations

On the health insurance reform front, a number of states have stepped forward with bold initiatives. Massachusetts was the trailblazer in 2006, becoming the first state to require residents to buy health insurance or face tax penalties, and to fine firms that don’t offer health care benefits to employees.

“Massachusetts has a long history of health policy innovation,” said Michael Miller, policy director for Community Catalyst, a Boston-based health policy advocacy group. “That past record provided a substantive foundation for reform.”
Vermont was hot on the heels of its New England neighbor with a similar plan that provides premium assistance for the working uninsured.

Of course, a much larger state has also been making noise on this front. California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed a plan that would require all Californians to have insurance, require insurers to guarantee coverage, and encourage personal responsibility for health and wellness with an incentives and rewards program.

But big, comprehensive reforms aren’t the only innovations states are offering. Prior to the 2007 legislative sessions, seven states had experimented with public-private partnerships to help cover some individuals who have lost coverage and help small businesses offer coverage. Other states have instituted incremental reforms that seek to increase coverage for specific uninsured groups. Illinois and Pennsylvania, for example, have rolled out programs to provide health coverage to all children. Governors in states like New York, Wisconsin and New Hampshire promised to do the same in their State of the State addresses this year.

Catalysts of State Action

So what’s spurring this state action?

In Massachusetts’ case, the state stood to lose significant Medicaid funds if it did not pass a reform plan. But other motivation for states’ actions may include increases in the number of uninsured, declines in employer-sponsored health insurance, improved state economies with increased tax revenues, and greater political will in state capitals.

“In general there needs to be some kind of catalyst, but it can be political as well as financial or economic,” Miller said. “I think that the growing number of uninsured and the rising cost pressure from cost-shifting plays a role but political leadership and active organizing among the citizenry is crucial.”

It’s estimated that close to 46 million people nationwide are without health insurance. As a result, they’re unable to take advantage of preventive services such as health screenings. The uninsured often don’t receive early diagnoses and treatment of debilitating and preventable chronic diseases or get counseling about the unhealthy lifestyles that can cause these conditions. Delays in treatment can lead to poor health throughout their lifespans, costly emergency room visits and premature deaths.

The uninsured received about $41 billion in uncompensated care in 2004. Most of that care was provided by the so-called “safety net,” an informal network of health facilities supported by federal, state and local government funding. Funding levels have not kept pace with the rising number of uninsured and increasing medical costs, and safety net providers are unable to meet all the needs of the uninsured. Government spending available to pay for the care of the uninsured in 2004 was only $34.6 billion or about 85 percent of the total uncompensated care bill.

One Size Doesn’t Fit All

Although the states seem to be inspiring each other to take action, variations among the state plans may make transferability difficult, Miller said.

“There are some ideas from Massachusetts that are in play in other states,” he said. “Any state that moves forward is going to have to grapple with the same concerns Massachusetts did and will use some of the same approaches, but each state will put the pieces together in own way in response to unique environmental and political circumstances.”

Generally though, analysts say such experimentation with increasing coverage is most possible for states like Massachusetts with existing uninsured populations of less than 15 percent—for Massachusetts it was 11 percent, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

A few states have uninsured populations that are close to a quarter of their population. Having fewer uninsured also makes mandating individual coverage more feasible, particularly if a state is able to provide subsidies to address the problem of affordability. Massachusetts would shift more than $600 million from its uncompensated care pool to subsidize premiums for low-income workers over time.

Miller said Massachusetts’ example shows that any state can become a leader on health care.

“It’s been somewhat surprising how much interest the Massachusetts law has generated, largely I think because it was a real ideological blend so the reflexive response that Massachusetts is too liberal to be a model for other states was avoided,” he said. “Having said that, I think that a significant move forward in California would have great significance, as much for what it would mean at the federal level as for any inspiration it would give other states.”

The Federal Role

Indeed it may ultimately fall to the federal government to evaluate the various state models over a period of years, to learn from the implementation challenges they face, and to incorporate the best solutions into a federal universal health care initiative, Miller said.

“Although states have a role to play in reducing the number of uninsured, including acting as a laboratory and a spur to federal action, in the end federal support is needed because states have more revenue constraints and are also subject to federal law, such as [the Employee Retirement Income Security Act], that makes state-level reform more difficult,” he said.

“Although universal or near universal coverage might be a competitive advantage for states, in some cases you could imagine cross-state challenges that wouldn’t occur if there was a federal solution or at least a federal framework and financial support for reform,” Miller added.

Public Health Efforts: Trans Fat

Insurance coverage reforms aren’t the only health care initiatives that states have been advancing. They have also been innovating on the public health front. Inherent in these efforts is a desire to address the root causes of chronic diseases and the costs that result. Poor diet, lack of physical activity and tobacco use are risk factors for many chronic conditions. Seventy percent of all deaths in the U.S. annually are due to chronic diseases. Experts believe policymakers need to continue to adjust health care budgets to promote wellness and prevention and move away from focusing so heavily on treatment of acute illness.
Massachusetts is one of many states where legislators this year are following the lead of New York City in introducing legislation designed to give consumers healthier choices at restaurants.

New York City’s Board of Health voted late last year to require restaurants to print calorie information on menus and to phase in a ban on trans fats in all restaurants in the city. Trans fats raise levels of LDL (bad cholesterol) and lowers levels of HDL (good cholesterol), which can cause clogged arteries and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke.

State Rep. Peter Koutoujian sponsored the trans fat legislation in Massachusetts.

“When New York City announced it was banning trans fats in all its restaurants, I felt that the timing was finally right to try something similar in Massachusetts,” he said. “The reaction has been generally positive. The Massachusetts Restaurant Association, which represents many of the state’s 13,000 eating establishments, has said it supports a statewide policy as opposed to a patchwork system where different communities have different rules.”

Koutoujian pointed out that a lot of restaurants are already going trans fat free. Even McDonald’s recently announced its selection of a trans fat free oil.

“I feel that once the public is educated to the fact that eliminating trans fats will not adversely affect the taste of their food, there will not be concern over their absence,” he said.

And, Koutoujian said, the legislation can make a big difference in improving the health of his state’s citizens.

“I think we have an opportunity here to eliminate an extremely unhealthy substance without affecting the enjoyability of the food. Trans fats possess no nutritional value. The body cannot process them and essentially keeps them as part of the body,” he said.

There is also a disparities issue to consider with trans fat, Koutoujian said.

“A lot of poorer families rely heavily on less-expensive restaurant food. If these restaurants, such as fast food chains, are heavy on trans fats, then a significant portion of the population is more likely to be consuming more trans fats than individuals who have more access to healthier foods,” he said.

Efforts to improve the diets of Americans have become critically important in recent years. In 1994, no states reported obesity rates at or above 20 percent. In 2005, 46 states reported obesity rates of more than 20 percent, and three states reported obesity rates of more than 30 percent.

Obesity has been linked to increased risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, osteoarthritis and several types of cancer. In 2000, the total cost of obesity in the United States was estimated to be $117 billion, of which $61 billion was for direct medical costs and $56 billion was for indirect costs.

Tobacco Prevention Programs and Settlement Funding

Smoking bans and comprehensive tobacco prevention and cessation programs are two other ways states are trying to improve public health.

Smoking results in an estimated 438,000 deaths and $167 billion in health care costs and lost productivity each year, making it the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. Stopping tobacco use has been shown to be the most cost-effective method of preventing disease among adults.

Comprehensive state tobacco prevention and cessation programs, when properly funded, have been proven to reduce smoking, save lives and cut health care costs. Unfortunately only a handful of states this year are funding these programs at the level recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Though states this year will collect more than $21 billion from tobacco taxes and the 1998 settlement with tobacco companies, only 2.8 percent of that money will be spent on tobacco-use pre-

continued on page 35
Nearly one year after approved use of the first cervical cancer vaccine, lawmakers still struggle with difficult public health questions. How far should state governments go in promoting abstinence, Pap tests and vaccines? Scientific trends show these questions will be more common as other cancer vaccines are developed in coming decades. At stake are thousands of lives and a potential savings of millions of public dollars in long-term and end-of-life care.

By Julia Nienaber Hurst

Gardasil, the first cervical cancer vaccine, has been on the market since June 8, 2006. A second cervical cancer vaccine, Cervarix, begins its approval process this month.

Combined, these vaccines protect against at least four types of human papillomavirus (HPV), two of which are known to cause 70 percent of cervical cancer cases. According to the American Cancer Society, 3,700 American women are likely to die this year from cervical cancer, underscoring the vaccine’s potential to significantly reduce the economic burden to states and save lives.

States may experience savings in other ways as well. The U.S. National Cancer Institute reported in December 2006 that approximately 3.5 million women per year—6 percent of those receiving Pap tests—require follow-up tests for an abnormal Pap result. The second test may range from a repeat Pap test or HPV test to biopsy.

This vaccine could make significant changes.

“You would expect to see a huge decrease in the number of abnormal Pap tests,” Dr. Kevin Ault of the Emory University School of Medicine told the health Web site Healthology in November 2005.

By reducing HPV infection rates, the number of abnormal Pap tests goes down, saving the states money. Ault added, though, the vaccines only eliminate the biggest cause of cervical cancer—not all causes.

Public Health Campaign

In August 2006, the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) launched “Ending Cervical Cancer in our Lifetime,” a public health education campaign designed to share with constituents the medical facts related to cervical cancer, without advocating specific action. The campaign is funded by two separate independent public policy grants from Merck & Co. Inc., which makes Gardasil, a corporate contribution from GlaxoSmithKline and the National Lieutenant Governors Association.

“Cervical cancer is a scary disease because it’s hidden, mysterious and deadly,” said Minnesota Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau. “It thrives on ignorance, and we (are going) to make people aware of it. No one should die because of cervical cancer.”

The first statement in NLGA materials reads, “The surest prevention of HPV infection, and possibly cervical cancer, is abstinence.” HPV is the most common sexually transmitted virus, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

HPV can be spread through skin to skin contact in the genital area, and most sexually active adults will be infected with HPV at some point in their lives. HPV causes no symptoms and usually goes away on its own, according to the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals. However, high-risk HPV, which stays in the body for years, can cause cervical cancer. Abnormal cells caused by HPV in a woman’s cervix can be detected by a Pap test. Cervical cancer can be prevented or cured by removing these abnormal cells early, so Pap tests are recommended regularly.

The vaccines are shown to prevent 70 percent of the cases of this cancer and, correspondingly, to reduce both death and HPV infection rates. However, only abstinence is wholly effective for prevention of the infection. These facts were laid out in the NLGA public education campaign.

The campaign also promoted the free- and reduced-cost Pap tests available in states and encouraged constituents to pass
on the cervical cancer information to others. Lieutenant governors were joined by abstinence advocates, cancer survivors, university presidents, heads of health departments and Olympian Jackie Joyner-Kersee. 

“In Illinois, my home state, more than 640 women will be diagnosed with cervical cancer this year and 190 will die from it,” said Joyner-Kersee. “Cervical cancer affects women of all ages, races, and backgrounds—and it’s time we join together and work toward ending this disease.”

“Cervical cancer is detectable, treatable and curable if found at an early stage,” said Illinois Lt. Gov. Patrick Quinn. “I urge every woman in our state to visit her health care provider and be screened for cervical cancer.”

Public Policy Questions

With the first cancer vaccine now available, state officials grapple with difficult public policy questions. Should states:

■ Mandate vaccination? If so, at what age, for which gender, and what provision should be made for parents to opt out of the vaccination?

■ Help finance availability of the vaccine?

■ Establish or increase Pap test funding and education?

■ Establish or increase abstinence education?

Women in Government (WIG), a bipartisan group of female state legislators, reported 45 states considered some type of cervical cancer action already this year. Since September 2006, WIG supported mandatory school-age vaccination and funding for low-income individuals to receive the vaccine.

Mandatory Vaccines

Texas Gov. Rick Perry is engaged in legal debate following his Feb. 2 executive order mandating cervical cancer vaccination of age-appropriate females. With the order, Texas became the first state to mandate vaccination. Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine said in March that he would sign legislation passed by that General Assembly to mandate the vaccine, with an opt-out, for girls entering the sixth grade, beginning in 2008.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Gardasil for females ages 9 to 26. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for the CDC later voted unanimously to recommend that girls ages 11 and 12 receive the vaccine. However, Dr. Jon Abramson, ACIP chair, told The Washington Times on Feb. 27 that he personally opposes mandatory vaccination for school attendance. To date, mandatory vaccinations have been for childhood diseases easily transmitted in a classroom setting, such as measles, mumps and whooping cough.

“A child in school is not at an increased risk for HPV like he is measles,” said Abramson.

“The decision to make this mandatory this early has created significant controversy over things that have nothing to do with the vaccine,” said Dr. Joseph Bocchini, chairman of the committee on infectious diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Some Christian groups such as Focus on the Family support widespread availability of the vaccine, but question whether mandated use at an early age may force parents to discuss sexuality earlier than they planned, and if use will give children a “false sense of security” leading to promiscuity.

“While most of us have welcomed the HPV vaccine with open arms as a tool to mitigate the effects of a sexually transmitted disease that can lead to cervical cancer, we must also recognize that vaccine mandates hold the potential for undermining civil rights, and parental rights in particular,” the Christian Medical and Dental Associations states in a position paper.

The age at which one gets the vaccination, voluntarily or by mandate, “is a delicate balancing act,” said Debbie Saslow of the American Cancer Society. “If the vaccine is given too young, it may wear off. Yet, if given too late, it won’t work.”

The American Medical Association (AMA) reports Cervarix is effective for more than four years, according to presentations made in February to the CDC. Merck, the maker of Gardasil, reports it is testing longevity but know it is effective for five years. Booster vaccines are in development and boosters vary in longevity. A hepatitis B booster is required every 10 years, while others provide lifelong immunity.

Most debate on the vaccine has focused on women because the vaccine is approved for female use. However, testing is underway for potential future approval for males.

“I think vaccinating all sixth graders—boys and girls—is a good idea. It might save their lives someday,” said Dr. Albert Jenson, a member of the research team that perfected the vaccine. In addition, most states have opt-out provisions for vaccinations, but these vary widely. (See resources box)

Financing Vaccines

Gardasil is administered in a series of three shots given over six months and costs $360. State officials may mandate that insurers
cover the cost of the shots. This is being considered in New Jersey, New Mexico, Nevada, Rhode Island and other states. States may also review state employee health plans to determine if they cover the cost of vaccination. Some point out, though, that these types of mandates ultimately drive up the cost of insurance.

In their budget addresses, Kentucky Gov. Ernie Fletcher asked for $4 million for voluntary vaccinations, and Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick asked for $24.8 million to provide universal state coverage for three new immunizations, including optional HPV vaccination. Likewise, South Dakota Gov. Mike Rounds has Senate approval for $9.2 million to fund voluntary HPV vaccinations at no cost to females ages 11 to 18. Other states are debating making funding available for the vaccine to Medicaid populations.

Pap Tests
More than half the women who develop cervical cancer have either rarely or never had a Pap test, according to the CDC. Yet, every state offers low cost or free Pap tests. Nationally, though, these programs are only reaching about 20 percent of the women between the ages of 50 and 64 who are eligible, according to the CDC. The average cervical cancer patient is 47, according to the American Cancer Society.

Missouri Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder stressed the need for Pap tests as part of his campaign. “Women should commit to get a regular Pap test and follow up on results. Informed sexual decisions and regular screenings can rid us of cervical cancer,” he said.

Funding for and promotion of Pap tests are additional questions lawmakers face regarding cervical cancer.

Abstinence Education
Some officials say the issues of abstinence and vaccination are not mutually exclusive.

House Bill 358, passed by Utah lawmakers, directed health officials to educate women about the causes, risks and possible prevention of cervical cancer. The legislation would require the Utah Department of Health to conduct an annual public awareness campaign for health care providers, parents and women of all ages.

The language says the campaign must emphasize “abstinence before and fidelity after marriage” as the most effective way to prevent transmission of HPV. This legislative model shows how cervical cancer health education can include both abstinence and vaccination information, much like the NLGA campaign. In Texas, debate surrounding the governor’s executive order focuses on the fact that that state has abstinence-only sex education policies.

Trends
Even if state officials reach a consensus on the difficult questions surrounding the HPV vaccine and cervical cancer, it is unlikely to end the debate. Scientific trends indicate the opposite. Vaccines for other cancers with viral causes are likely on the way. Dozens of studies dating from the 1990s indicate approximately 15 percent of the worldwide cancer burden is caused by viruses.

“Nasopharyngeal cancer, for instance, certain gastric cancers are viral related, liver cancer is linked with the Hepatitis B virus,” Dr. Elizabeth Garner, a gynecological oncologist, told PBS.

HPV itself is already known to be the cause of other cancers.

“Cervical cancer is not the only cancer caused by HPV,” said Garner. “Certain vaginal cancers and vulva cancers are also caused by HPV. In men, certain penile cancers are caused by HPV; there are some oral cancers that seem to be related, so these (existing HPV) vaccines have the potential to prevent all these cancers.”

A 2002 study by KJ Syrjanen published at the National Center for Biotechnology Information reports that HPV DNA was found in more than 20 percent of the lung cancer cases studied.

“With this knowledge that it’s possible to accomplish protection against a cancer that’s caused by a virus, there definitely is going to be much more research going into that area,” said Dr. Garner.

The result will likely be more cancer vaccines to market in the future.

—Julia Nienaber Hurst is executive director of the National Lieutenant Governors Association, an affiliate of The Council of State Governments.
Idaho Lawmakers Experience Research Firsthand

Idaho’s efforts to stimulate research involve a program that brings legislators into the laboratory. The program truly is helping Idaho’s policymakers to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the benefits of academic research.

By Rick Schumaker and Jean’ne M. Shreeve

Several years ago academic researchers asked an important question: How can they do a better job of informing state leaders about what researchers do and why research is so important to the state and nation?

The answer seemed simple enough: Invite legislators to work with researchers in laboratories and at research sites.

The Legislator in the Laboratory program, which allows university professors and students to get acquainted through full-immersion, hands-on research visits, allows legislators to see how education lays the groundwork for discoveries that contribute to our nation’s quality of life and economy.

This idea was a natural fit for the National Science Foundation’s Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). EPSCoR’s mission is to assist the National Science Foundation in its statutory function “to strengthen research and education in science and engineering throughout the United States and to avoid undue concentration of such research and education.” EPSCoR goals are to provide strategic programs and opportunities for EPSCoR participants that stimulate sustainable improvements in their R&D capacity and competitiveness; and to advance science and engineering capabilities in EPSCoR jurisdictions for discovery, innovation and overall knowledge-based prosperity.

Our first task was to find professors who were willing to involve legislators in their research. Some of the first faculty members we turned to were Dr. Ron Hardy, director of the University of Idaho Fish Culture Experiment Station, and Dr. Lisette Waits, a molecular geneticist at the University of Idaho, then assistant professor of conservation biology. Hardy is recognized for his research on fish nutrition, an issue vital to the aquaculture industry in both Idaho and the nation. Waits has gained national and international attention as a result of her efforts in tracking the genetic history of grizzly bears in Glacier and Yellowstone national parks. She participated in one of Idaho’s NSF EPSCoR programs as a new faculty member in the late 1990s.

We try to match each guest with a professor whose research piques his or her interest. Even then, a particular research group may be working on multiple projects. For example, Waits’ group studies black bears in Alaska, brown bears in Kamchatka, parrots in Peru, cougars and wolverines in Idaho and Montana, wolves and gazelles in Mongolia, and ground squirrels, pygmy rabbits, spotted frogs, and long-toed salamanders in Idaho.

With such a variety of projects to choose from, we try to give legislators an opportunity to select specific projects that relate to issues they face in their own communities. Idaho’s three public universities—the University of Idaho, Boise State University and Idaho State University—with their active and growing research programs readily provide a fit. More than 20 professors, whose range of experience includes chemistry, environmental engineering, hydrology, nanoscience and microbiology, have volunteered to be “on call.”

These professors and others were eager for the opportunity to spend time with legislators.

“I was interested because I think it’s important that faculty and students clearly convey why their research is important, not only as a training vehicle for our nation’s future scientists but in solving many of today’s problems,” Waits said. “That can be a challenge for us because we are used to communi-
An opportunity to also see what the needs are in the areas of research was also observed. I would certainly recommend the ‘Legislator in the Laboratory program’ to any legislator. It is an opportunity which, in my opinion, is one that any legislator should welcome.

—Idaho Rep. Darrell Bolz

Inviting the press has resulted in local and national exposure for the program. For example, after a day with University of Idaho chemistry professor Pam Shapiro last November, USA Today, The Washington Post and CBS News and 60 other venues reported her team’s work to devise a new form of solar cell.

Like EPSCoR, the Legislator in the Laboratory program is really about people and their research ideas. Since winning the first EPSCoR grant in 1989, Idaho has won more than $125 million from NSF EPSCoR and other agency EPSCoR programs. Those EPSCoR awards alone represent an 11-to-1 direct return on the state’s EPSCoR match investment, not including the competitive, follow-on awards that result directly or indirectly from the EPSCoR investment in Idaho’s research infrastructure. The return on investment is more than 18-to-1 when additional competitive grants are included.

The ultimate goal of the program—to establish a rapport among professors and legislators and increase dialogue about research education and policymaking—is becoming reality.

“Last time I attended an event at the capital I found that I spent most of my time talking to legislators who had spent time with us in the laboratory,” said Waits.

The Legislator in the Laboratory program truly is helping Idaho’s policymakers to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the benefits of academic research. As participation increases, the program will reach out to more policymakers and offer comprehensive examples of the need for research, and its integration with education, and grant legislators a hands-on way to understand how scientific research is actualized in the laboratory.

—Rick Schumaker is the project administrator for Idaho EPSCoR, and Jean’ne M. Shreeve is the project director for Idaho EPSCoR/IDeA.
When faced with a work plan that proposes to use an innovative environmental technology application or approach, many state regulators have turned to resources produced by the Interstate Technology and Regulatory Council.

By Mavis D. Kent, George Nicholas and Michael B. Smith

Lynda Provencher, a Vermont project manager, received a proposal to inject 10 percent to 15 percent hydrogen peroxide into the subsurface of groundwater to initiate a reaction with contaminants.

She had limited experience with this technology—in situ chemical oxidation (ISCO)—but still, she questioned the technical basis of the proposal. She turned to the Interstate Technology and Regulatory Council (ITRC) for help.

“The ITRC guidance gave me background information on ISCO, and it informed me of the questions to ask and the issues to be concerned about with this technology at this site,” she said.

Her concerns led to a third-party review, which confirmed her concerns.

“The ITRC guidance was valuable because it started me on a process that ultimately led to a better decision—in this case, a decision to reject the proposal,” she said.

Vermont is just one state to benefit from the expertise at the ITRC.

About the ITRC

ITRC is affiliated with the Environmental Research Institute of the States, a 501(c)3 nonprofit educational subsidiary of the Environmental Council of the States.

With free guidance documents and online training courses on a broad range of topics, the ITRC strives to empower state regulators...
to make informed decisions, helping states improve protection of the environment and human health while lowering training costs.

ITRC’s documents and training are developed through a unique and proven collaborative process. For more than 10 years, ITRC has brought state environmental regulators and other members of the national environmental community together to research technologies and approaches to solve tough environmental problems. ITRC technical teams include members representing 48 state environmental agencies, and a diverse mix of regulators, industry consultants and representatives from federal agencies, universities and public stakeholder groups. The teams seek common ground as they collaborate on projects to streamline decision-making and approval processes for using new environmental technologies and innovative approaches.

The diverse teams work toward consensus on the technical and regulatory issues involved in applying technologies/approaches at sites. This helps ensure that ITRC’s documents and training apply across a broad-based environmental community of states, industry consultants, site owners and federal agencies.

ITRC technical teams are formed to address projects related to specific environmental contaminants and/or the decision framework for applying innovative remediation technologies and approaches. They’ve produced documents ranging from technical overviews of innovative technologies to case studies of their application and technical/regulatory guidance documents for applying technologies. In all, ITRC has published nearly 80 documents in 30 topic areas, including 36 technical/regulatory guidance documents on 18 topics.

**Overcome the Learning Curve**

Michael Behrens, an environmental engineer in Nebraska, needed to know about alternative landfill covers. Nebraska’s Department of Environmental Quality received a proposal to use an alternative cover for a large landfill that was closing.


“I needed to evaluate the facility’s Construction Quality Assurance (CQA) Plan for documenting, and eventually certifying, that the alternative cover would be constructed as described in the permit application,” Behrens said. “During my initial review, I recommended that the facility use the ITRC guidance to refine their CQA Plan. I believe that the ITRC guidance helped us as we agreed on not only a good CQA Plan, but also the best way to construct a high-quality, high-performing landfill cover.”

**Cut the Cost of Doing Business**

John Mellow, who oversees munitions response cleanup activities at the former Tobyhanna Artillery Range and the Tobyhanna Army Depot in eastern Pennsylvania, had no experience with geophysical prove-outs at unexploded ordnance (UXO) sites.

Mellow got the guidance he needed from ITRC. He and other staff members in the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection learned how geophysical prove-outs can be used to evaluate technologies for identifying and locating buried munitions.

“Using the guidance as my primary resource, I shortened my research time as I gained an understanding of the purpose and scope of prove-outs,” he said.

**Streamline Decisions**

ITRC guidance can help responsible parties and regulators find common understanding, thereby streamlining the approval process and cutting costs.

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division is reviewing a former training range at Fort Gordon to determine the site characterization and sampling goals for the site, according to Chris Hurst, formerly with the division. He said the state is using an ITRC product, Characterization and Remediation of Soils at Closed Small Arms Firing Ranges (SMART-1).
With free guidance documents and online training courses on a broad range of topics, the ITRC strives to empower state regulators to make informed decisions, helping states improve protection of the environment and human health while lowering training costs.

“Sharing this guidance with the Fort Gordon project manager established a common understanding of the state’s expectations for this site and will, therefore, accelerate the investigative process,” he said.

**Online Training**

ITRC technical teams also develop and present free online training courses based on specific technical/regulatory guidance documents. ITRC documents and training can help state regulators accelerate their learning curve and cut research time so they can make technically sound decisions that result in better environmental protection. The ITRC Web site, www.itrcweb.org, provides instructions for downloading and ordering documents; registering for its free interactive, online training courses; and viewing archives of past training courses.

Since 1999, more than 35,000 participants have tuned in for live, real-time training on 35 different topics. ITRC online courses are interactive. They reach a geographically dispersed audience of regulators, consultants, site owners and others, creating a unique forum for the exchange of technical and regulatory information. Because the courses are based on ITRC guidance documents, they reflect the consensus opinion of a broad-based environmental community drawn from states, federal agencies, the private sector and citizen stakeholders. The online courses are accessible and convenient, and they help state environmental agencies save on training costs.

Order or download copies of ITRC documents at www.itrcweb.org, under “Guidance Documents.” To learn more about ITRC’s live online courses and to register, visit the “Internet-Based Training” page. Registration opens four to six weeks in advance of a course offering.

Through the cooperation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Technology Innovation Program, ITRC presents its online courses, which last about two hours, at no cost to participants; however, registration is required. If you have questions after completing the online registration, call the ITRC at (402) 201-2419, or send an e-mail to training@itrcweb.org.

—Mavis D. Kent is a senior hydrogeologist with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the state engagement liaison on the ITRC Board of Advisors. George Nicholas is a project manager with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the team leader liaison on the ITRC Board of Advisors. Michael B. Smith is a project manager with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and the training liaison on the ITRC Board of Advisors.
“I can remember the time in the hospital when I used to follow doctors around with an ashtray to catch their ashes as they made rounds. I think that the societal change that we’ve seen towards smoking is remarkable and that the bans are just the next step … Smoking is one of the easiest things we can tackle to work on health promotion.”

—Washington State Rep. Eileen Cody

vention and cessation. If every state were to spend just 7.3 percent, they all could fund tobacco programs at the CDC-recommended minimum levels.

Some states will soon have another chance to adequately fund these programs. A provision in the tobacco settlement calls for the 46 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories that were party to the settlement to receive bonus payments totaling almost a billion dollars per year beginning next April and continuing for at least 10 years.

Some states won’t be able to take advantage of this new money because they previously sold at least a portion of their future tobacco settlement payments to investors. If states were to commit this additional revenue to tobacco prevention and cessation, it would nearly equal the difference between what they currently spend and what they need to spend to meet the CDC recommendations.

Legislators may have the opportunity in the coming months to vote to commit the new settlement dollars to smoking cessation programs.

Smoking Bans

Besides trying to fund programs to get people to quit smoking and discourage others from starting, states are also seeking to protect their citizens from secondhand smoke.

The Surgeon General reported last June that children exposed to secondhand smoke suffer an increased risk of respiratory ailments and sudden infant death syndrome. As of Jan. 1, Texas restricts smoking in foster parents’ homes at all times and in cars when children are present. Arkansas and Louisiana also passed laws last year forbidding smoking in cars that carry young children. Vermont, Washington and other states have enacted similar bans in recent years.

Add to these efforts ballot initiatives to establish strong smoke-free laws approved by voters last November in three states—Arizona, Nevada and Ohio. CDC’s State Tobacco Activities Tracking and Evaluation System reports that 12 other states had also approved bans on smoking in public places, including bars and restaurants, prior to October of last year. Washington state’s comprehensive smokefree air laws rated an “A” in the American Lung Association’s latest report on the state of tobacco control. Seattle area state Rep. Eileen Cody, who chairs the Health Care Committee in the state’s House of Representatives, says it was a long time coming.

“But states are proving they’re willing to work on the tough issues in health care as well, and in doing so, they may be providing examples for all lawmakers.”

—Sean Slone is a health policy analyst at The Council of State Governments.
State Leaders Collaborate on Timely Issues Related to Agriculture, Rural Policy Leadership

More than 200 members met on Jan. 26–28 for the fifth annual summit, coordinated by the State Agriculture and Rural Leaders Association (SARL). The event brought together state legislative agriculture chairs and Canadian provincial ministers of agriculture and provided a unique opportunity to develop understanding and unity among state and provincial officials as they discussed agricultural and rural issues.

With the 2007 Farm Bill looming, attendees heard from Agriculture Secretary Mike Johannes, Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Tom Harkin (Iowa), as well as ranking member Sen. Saxby Chambliss (Georgia). From the House side, Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro (Connecticut) provided insights into her goals for the Farm Bill as chair of the House Subcommittee on Ag Appropriations.

“The success of these meetings is due to the opportunity to understand the commonalities among the states and bring home real time solutions to our state’s issues,” said Iowa state Sen. David Johnson.

The Northeast delegation, which also met at the Summit, included members from eight states, Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands. They convened before and after the regular sessions to discuss dairy issues and the 2007 Farm Bill. The following actions occurred:

SARL is an independent organization that brings together The Council of State Governments, National Conference of State Legislatures and the Rural Policy Research Institute to represent state legislative agriculture leaders in a collaborative fashion. SARL promotes policy solutions and innovation to serve the agricultural and rural communities of the U.S. and Canada. It works closely with CSG’s regional offices, most noticeably in the publication of Ag Clips, the weekly e-newsletter and other projects.

SARL’s president is Johnson, and vice president is Maine state Rep. Nancy Smith.

Guardian of Federalism Awards Presented


Beginning this year, the award is named in honor of Sen. Douglas Henry of Tennessee. Henry has been a stalwart supporter of state’s rights, and remains a consistent opponent of federal pre-emption and the imposition of unfunded federal mandates. Henry has contributed many years of expertise and experience to the leadership of CSG by serving on the Executive Committee, the Governing Board, as chairman of the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee and as an essential member of the Legal Task Force.

Recipients of the Guardian of Federalism Award must be a United States senator or a United States representative, and must be responsible for introducing federal legislation to preserve and further states’ rights. CSG’s Washington office is responsible for the coordination of the award program.

Nelson was honored for his efforts to protect states’ rights, including his introduction of S.980, the Sexual Predator Effective Monitoring Act of 2005, which authorizes the attorney general to award grants to state and local governments to implement programs that outfit sex offenders with electronic monitoring units, and also ensures that state and local governments receive a proportional share of funding for the program.

Wilson was honored for her efforts to protect states’ rights, including her sponsorship of H.R. 5010, the Renewable Energy Credit Extension Act of 2006, which allows state and local governments to obtain a tax credit for electricity produced from renewable sources through 2012.

Agricultural trade, food security, market development and industry profitability were just some of the issues highlighted in Washington, D.C., at the Legislative Agricultural Chairs Summit serving the agricultural and rural communities of the U.S. and Canada.
The Council of State Governments leadership previewed 10 major forces shaping states’ futures during a presentation Feb. 24 at the CSG Leaders meeting in Washington, D.C.

“We tend to focus on the problems associated with these trends,” CSG Executive Director Daniel M. Sprague told the group. “But what opportunities do these trends present for your states? How can public and private sector representatives work together to solve the problems and maximize opportunities?”

Sprague and Martha McKinney, CSG associate director for research, used a PowerPoint presentation to outline the 10 forces of changes states can’t ignore. The changes were compiled through membership surveys completed during the CSG Annual State Trends and Leadership Forum held in Phoenix in December.

The CSG research staff will use some of the comments gathered at the meeting in a publication on trends that will be released at CSG’s annual spring meeting scheduled for June in Puerto Rico.

The trends that will be outlined in the upcoming publication are:

- Demographic Change
- Chasing the American Dream
- Environmental Gluttony
- Health Care: Paying More, Getting Less
- Tech Revolution
- Economic Transformation
- Educating for Outcomes
- Critical Infrastructure: Cracks in the Foundation
- Balance of Power
- America, the Safe and Secure?

CSG-WEST Publishes Ethics, Media and Annual Reports

A new report from The Council of State Governments-WEST provides a sample framework for ethical decision-making. “Beyond the Law” also includes ethics case studies based on real-world legislative dilemmas.

Also newly released from CSG-WEST is a look at new vs. old media, designed for elected officials who want to communicate more effectively with the public. “Getting the Statehouse Story Out” advises lawmakers to add the Internet and other electronic media to their communications toolbox, but not to discard more traditional media like newspapers and TV. The report provides practical tips for using new and old media to stay in contact with constituents.

The colorful and easy-to-read “2006 Year in Review” is also available for anyone wanting a quick summary of what policymaking and professional development activities are on the menu for the Western region.

The three new publications from the CSG-WEST are now available by clicking on www.csgwest.org or by calling (916) 553-4423.

ERC’s Education Program Plans Early Childhood Conference

The Council of State Governments’ Eastern Regional Conference’s newly established Education Policy Program is entering an exciting period of growth. The program has recently expanded its Steering Committee increasing its size and diversity.


The Education Steering Committee is exploring ways in which CSG/ERC can collaborate with education efforts of the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Education Commission of the States. The committee is also working with CSG National on No Child Left Behind reauthorization engagements. CSG/ERC’s Education Update newsletter has moved to a monthly format and now includes guest articles written by active ERC members including Massachusetts state Sen. Stan Rosenberg. The newsletter accepts similar articles of interest from other members.

The Education Steering Committee, chaired by Sen. Bob Martin of New Jersey, is planning panel presentations at the CSG/ERC Annual Meeting in August in Quebec City.

The issue of “early education and care” remains at the forefront of the Education Policy Program. A two-day conference—Powerless People Need Powerful Friends: A Policymaker’s Conference on Early Education and Care—Using the Data—scheduled for Sept. 6–7 at the University of Massachusetts/Boston Campus, will feature Sen. Edward Kennedy as the keynote speaker.

The offices of Connecticut Gov. M. Jodi Rell, Delaware Gov. Ruth Ann Minner, Vermont Gov. Jim Douglas and Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick have been invited to participate, along with Nobel prize-winning economist James Heckman and Harvard pediatric researcher Dr. Jack Shonkoff. This is an invitation-only event for top policymakers.

Please contact Dave Magnani at dmagnan@csg.org for more information.
Report Identifies Passenger Rail as Underutilized Resource

A report released by the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission has identified passenger rail as a critical and underutilized resource in planning for possible emergencies in the Midwest.

Responding Regionally: The Role of Passenger Rail in Midwestern Emergency Planning concludes that if improvements are made to the region’s passenger rail system, rail can play a vital role in emergency evacuations and supply delivery in the event of a disaster.

Using case studies from the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the Gulf Coast hurricanes, the report highlights the critical transportation role passenger rail can play during an emergency. Currently in the Midwest, passenger rail usually doesn’t factor into emergency plans, largely because the region’s passenger rail system is in need of improvements before it can play a pivotal part in a large-scale evacuation, the report states.

The MIPRC is a coalition of Midwestern states working toward an efficient, safe passenger rail system for the region. Created by compact legislation in 2000, the organization has eight member states: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and Ohio.


Wyoming Hosts CSG-WEST Annual Meeting in Grand Teton National Park

Legislators, family and friends of CSG-WEST will gather this fall in Jackson Hole, Wyo., to take part in the organization’s 60th annual meeting. “Energizing the West” is the meeting theme, and Wyoming legislative hosts promise a high energy meeting.

In addition to tours and sessions with energy experts, the meeting will feature forums covering such topics as transportation, trade, water, fiscal issues, legislative institutions and K–12 education. The Annual Legislative Training Assembly (ALTA), a special day of continuing education for lawmakers, is open to everyone.

The fall meeting, scheduled for Sept. 16–19, takes place amid the spectacular mountain scenery of Grand Teton National Park. Visit www.csgwest.org to register.
This calendar lists meetings as designated by CSG’s Annual Meeting Committee. For details of a meeting, call the number listed. “CSG” denotes affiliate organizations of CSG. Visit www.csg.org for updates and more extensive listings.

**April 2007**


April 13-15 | CSG/Southern Legislative Conference—LSA Directors’ Spring Meeting—Atlanta, GA—The Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead. Contact Ken Fern at (404) 633-1866 or kferen@csg.org.


**May 2007**

May 5 | CSG/NASTD—Technology Professionals Serving State Government—2007 Executive Board Meeting—Baltimore, MD—Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel. Contact Pamela Johnson at (859) 244-8184 or pjjohnson@csg.org.

May 5-8 | CSG/NASTD—Technology Professionals Serving State Government—2007 Eastern Region Seminar—Baltimore, MD—Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel. Contact Pamela Johnson at (859) 244-8184 or pjjohnson@csg.org.

May 17-19 | CSG Healthy States Policy Development Workshop—Atlanta, GA—Westin Buckhead and Global Communications Center/CDC. Invitational event for legislators working in the areas of aging, health disparities, and community approaches to wellness. Contact Pam Goins at pgoins@csg.org.

May 20-23 | CSG/NASTD—Technology Professionals Serving State Government—2007 Midwest Seminar—Ashland, NE—Eugene T. Honey State Park. Contact Pamela Johnson at (859) 244-8184 or pjjohnson@csg.org or visit www.nast.org.

**June 2007**

June 2-6 | CSG/NASTD—Technology Professionals Serving State Government—2007 Western Region Seminar—Albuquerque, NM—Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town. Contact Pamela Johnson at (859) 244-8184 or pjjohnson@csg.org or visit www.nast.org.

June 10-13 | CSG Spring National Committee and Task Force Meetings—San Juan, Puerto Rico. Contact Gladys Parks at (859) 244-8108 or gparks@csg.org.

June 10-14 | CSG/National Association of State Chief Administrators (NASCA) & National Association of State Facilities Administrators (NASFA)—NASCA & NASFA National Conference and Resource Expo—Lake Tahoe, NV—Montbleu Hotel. Contact Marcia Stone at (859) 244-8181 or mstone@csrg.org or visit www.nasco.org or www.nasfa.net.

June 16-20 | CSG/NASTD—Technology Professionals Serving State Government—2007 Southern Region Summer Seminar—Mobile, AL—The Battle House Renaissance Hotel. Contact Pamela Johnson at (859) 244-8184 or pjjohnson@csg.org.

**July 2007**


July 13-17 | CSG/Midwestern Legislative Conference—13th Annual Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development Program (BILLD)—Madison, WI—Fumo Center of Executive Education. Contact Laura Tomaka at (630) 925-1922 or ltomaka@csg.org, or visit http://www.csgmidwest.org for more information.

July 14-18 | CSG/Southern Legislative Conference—Williamsburg, VA. Contact Nai Hallman at the Southern Legislative Committee at (404) 633-1866 or visit www.csgatlanta.org for additional information.

July 15-17 | CSG/National Association of State Treasurers—NAST Issues Conference—New York, NY—Barclay InterContinental Hotel. Contact Adnee Hamilton at (859) 244-8174 or ahamilton@csg.org or visit www.nast.org.

July 21-25 | CSG/National Association of State Personnel Executives—2007 Annual Meeting—Williamsburg, VA. Contact Lisa Collins at (859) 244-8179 or lcollins@csg.org or visit www.vaspenet.net.


**August 2007**

Aug. 4-8 | CSG/National Association of Government Labor Officials—2007 Annual Meeting—Savannah, GA—The Westin Savannah Harbor. Contact Leslie Scott, Association Manager at (859) 244-8182 or lscott@csg.org or visit www.naglo.org.


Aug. 11-15 | CSG/Eastern Regional Conference—47th Annual Meeting and Regional Policy Forum—Quebec City, Quebec—Hilton Hotel. Contact Pamela Stanley at (646) 383-5711 or pstanley@csg.org or visit www.csegov.org.


Aug. 25-27 | CSG/Southern Governors’ Association (SGA)—73rd Annual Meeting—Biloxi, MS. Contact Liz Purdy at (202) 624-5897 or sgasog.org or visit www.southerngovernors.org.

Aug. 25-30 | CSG/NASTD—Technology Professionals Serving State Government—30th Annual Conference and Technology Showcase—Minneapolis, MN—Hyatt Regency. Contact Pamela Johnson at (859) 244-8184 or pjjohnson@csg.org or visit www.nast.org.

Aug. 26-29 | CSG/Midwestern Legislative Conference—62nd Annual Meeting—Traverse City MI—Grand Traverse Resort and Spa. Contact Cindy Andrews at (630) 925-1922 or candews@csg.org or visit http://www.csgmidwest.org for more information.

**September 2007**

Sept. 16-19 | CSG/CWG WEST—Annual Meeting—Jackson Lake Lodge, WY. Contact Lolita Urmaj at (916) 533-4423 or cwgwest@csg.org.

Sept. 16-19 | CSG/National Association of State Treasurers—NAST Annual Conference—Surfside OR—Surfside Lodge. Contact Adnee Hamilton at (859) 244-8174 or ahamilton@csg.org or visit www.nast.org.

**November 2007**

Nov. 5-8 | CSG/CWG WEST—Western Legislative Academy—Colorado Springs, CO. Contact Mary Lou Cooper at (859) 533-4423 or cwgwest@csg.org.

Nov. 11-14 | CSG Annual State Trends and Leadership Forum—Oklahoma City, OK. Contact Gladys Parks at (859) 244-8108 or gparks@csg.org.

**December 2007**

Dec. 2-5 | CSG/National Association of State Treasurers—NAST Treasury Management Conference—San Antonio, TX—Hyatt Regency Hill Country. Contact Adnee Hamilton at (859) 244-8174 or ahamilton@csg.org.

**February 2008**

Although the federal government tends to get more attention, state officials are often on the front lines of cutting-edge trends and issues. On the other hand, sometimes in the community of state governments, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

In print since 1958, State News (formerly State Government News) has chronicled many of the changes … and continuities.

Here’s what we reported on:

40 Years Ago—April 1967
Time Passes, Time Changes

The April 1967 State Government News included a brief article about the U.S. Uniform Time Act, which became effective April 1, 1967. The law required states to be on daylight savings time from the last Sunday in April to the last Sunday in October. A provision allowed states to exempt themselves on a statewide basis through legislative veto action.

Before 1967, 18 states participated in daylight savings time, while 20 states were partly on daylight savings and partly on standard time. At that time, 12 states remained on standard time all year.

Update

Forty-eight states now participate in daylight-saving time. Indiana was the latest state to join the rest to “spring forward” and “fall back.” Only Hawaii and Arizona stick with standard time throughout the year.

The time to change clocks moved a little earlier this year, as daylight-saving time began the second Sunday in March. It’ll stretch to the first Sunday in November.

25 Years Ago—April 1982
Tennessee Hosts the World

The April 1982 State Government News featured an article about the 1982 World’s Fair in Knoxville May 1 to Oct. 31. It was the first World’s Fair to be held in the southeastern United States, and the first anywhere since 1975. State officials were gearing up for the event, and expected exhibits from several nearby states, as well as from international corporations.

The “theme” structure for the 1982 event was the 266-foot-high Sunsphere, topped by a giant globe encased in glass manufactured with 24-karat gold dust. The U.S. Pavilion, which cost $20.8 million, was the major centerpoint for the fair.

Officials were expecting the World’s Fair to have an economic impact of more than $400 million for Knoxville and Tennessee, with $85 million in new tax revenues. They also expected 20,000 new jobs—12,000 of them permanent—to be created with the fair.

Update

The World’s Fair was held in the southeastern U.S. again in 1984, this time in New Orleans. It has been held in subsequent years in Japan, Australia, Spain, Italy, South Korea, Portugal and Germany. The next World’s Fair will be held in Zaragoza, Spain, in 2008, followed by Shanghai, China in 2010. Other future sites have not been decided.

10 Years Ago—April 1997
Electric Deregulation Grows, Then Slows

Several states began looking at deregulation of the electric industry in 1996 after California and a few Northeastern states introduced competition into the market, according to a story in the April 1997 State Government News. But several state officials expected the deregulation would not take hold in the South.

California’s Energy Commission, public utility commission and other agencies began holding hearings on deregulation and related issues. In addition, Montana, Idaho and California were part of a Western effort to deregulate electricity. Northeastern states, too, were pushing for competition. They were led by New Hampshire, where the Supreme Court ruled there is no guarantee of monopoly rights for power companies, and the Rhode Island legislature, which passed legislation calling for competition to begin by 1998. States in the Midwest were addressing electric restructuring and implementing small-scale projects. The South, where costs were below the national average, had less to gain from electric industry restructuring.

Update

By 2000, 23 states and the District of Columbia had taken action to deregulate electricity. Then came the California energy crisis of 2000-01, the financial scandals of Enron and the Northeastern blackout in 2003. Several states changed course on electricity deregulation, and industry experts claimed nobody benefited from the actions. According to a 1995 stateline.org story, Arkansas, California, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico and Oklahoma changed course on deregulation, and Oregon maintained only limited electricity competition to large industrial customers. As of July 2005, Illinois and Michigan faced pressure to pull back from utility restructuring.