

**WELL NOW, LET'S SEE.** IT'S JULY AND THE WHOLE WORLD OF THE TAHU LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAS JUMPED UP AND TURNED OVER. ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE YOUR LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATION	CAROLYN GOODWIN
DIRECTOR OF FEDERAL AFFAIRS	GARY WALDRON
DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES	JULIE HULSEY
DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS	CHERYL CLARK
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## Postcards From the Ledge

July  
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**Carolyn Goodwin**  
Director, Legislative Affairs

WHILE THE NEWBIES ARE GETTING THEIR FEET WET, THIS IS A WONDERFUL TIME TO UPDATE YOU ON LEGISLATIVELY RELATED ACTIVITIES AROUND THE STATE, IN LOCAL CHAPTER MEETINGS.

**SMALL GROUP CERTIFICATION (SB79)** – A COURSE THAT IS THE RESULT OF TAHU'S ENCOURAGEMENT TO ALLOW (NOT REQUIRE) A CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOR AGENTS WHO SPECIALIZE IN SMALL GROUP BENEFITS AND WANT TO BE ABLE TO BRAG ABOUT IT. THE COURSE WAS FIRST PRESENTED AT OUR TAHU CONVENTION ON MAY 1, WITH NEAR 100 ATTENDEES, IF NOT MORE. WE HAVE AUSTIN'S OWN MISTY BAKER TO THANK FOR THE DESIGN, NEGOTIATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE COURSE, NOT ONLY IN HOUSTON, BUT TO SEVERAL LOCAL CHAPTERS ACROSS TEXAS. AT SOME POINT SOON, MISTY WILL COORDINATE A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS ALSO INTERESTED IN BECOMING CERTIFIED TO TEACH THIS 8 HOUR C.E. ONCE INITIALLY CERTIFIED, THE CERTIFICATION WILL REQUIRE 5 HOURS OF RELATED CONTINUING EDUCATION EVERY RENEWAL CYCLE, AND THE FACT THAT YOUR LICENSE IS GRANDFATHERED DOES NOT EXEMPT YOU FROM TAKING THE COURSE IF YOU WANT THE CERTIFICATION.

**CHIP/CHILDREN'S MEDICAID OUTREACH** – WITH SUMMER UPON US, THERE IS NOT A LOT OF ACTIVITY TO BE SEEN, BUT THERE IS MUCH ACTIVITY BEHIND THE SCENES. A FLURRY OF PLANNING IS GOING ON IN SEVERAL LOCAL CHAPTERS, INCLUDING HEART OF TEXAS, HOUSTON AND LUBBOCK. RETURN EVENTS HAVE ALREADY OCCURRED IN DALLAS COUNTY AND ARE BEING PLANNED IN TARRANT COUNTY. WE NEED TO BE GEARED UP FOR THE "BACK TO SCHOOL" RUSH, AS THAT IS ONE OF THE MOST OPPORTUNE TIMES TO IMPACT THE KIDS IN TEXAS. WITH THE HELP OF STATE LEGISLATORS, HHSC, LOCAL CHIP COALITIONS, Y'S AND CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE (NOT TO MENTION THE VARIOUS HEALTH PLANS) TAHU IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE NUMBER OF UNINSURED CHILDREN IN OUR STATE. THIS IS GREAT FOR OUR STATE, AND GREAT FOR TAHU, AS OUR EFFORTS ARE RECOGNIZED UP AND DOWN THE HALLS OF THAT BIG BUILDING WITH THE DOME ON TOP IN AUSTIN.

**WHAT'S UP?** - WELL, CERTAINLY WE HAVE THE NOVEMBER MID-TERM ELECTIONS TO NAVIGATE, AS DOES THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. NOBODY CAN ACCURATELY PREDICT HOW THOSE ELECTIONS WILL GO OR HOW THEY MIGHT AFFECT THE NATIONAL POLITICAL LANDSCAPE. BUT, IN OUR STATE THE OUTCOME OF THOSE ELECTIONS COULD BE DRAMATICALLY CHANGED COME THE NEXT TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION BEGINNING ON THE 2<sup>ND</sup> TUESDAY OF JANUARY, 2011. AT THE TOP OF THE LIST WILL BE REDISTRICTING, A PROCESS THAT GOES ON EVERY TEN YEARS TO DETERMINE THE BOUNDARIES AND MAKEUP OF EACH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT IN THE U.S. HOUSE. BASED ON EARLY CENSUS ESTIMATES, TEXANS WILL SEND 4 MORE REPRESENTATIVES TO CONGRESS.

THEN OF COURSE THERE IS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FEDERAL HEALTHCARE REFORM. THE STATE IS EXPECTED TO BE ON THE HOOK FOR SEVERAL HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ON THE BASIS OF THE LAW AS IT STANDS TODAY, SO REGULATORS AND LEGISLATORS ARE GOING TO BE FORCED TO FIND WAYS TO PAY FOR THE NEW REQUIREMENTS. WE NEED TO BE HELPING THEM EVERY STEP OF THE WAY. This will be a great opportunity for you Key Contacts out there to offer up your knowledge as a resource.

SPEAKING OF MONEY...TEXAS HAS A LOOMING DEFICIT ALREADY. ADDING THE COST OF CERTAIN HEALTHCARE REFORM INITIATIVES IS LIKELY TO ADD TO THAT DEFICIT, SO LEGISLATORS WILL HAVE THAT TO CONTEND WITH DURING THE SESSION, AND;

NOT TO FORGET – THE LAST SESSION ENDED WITH A TEMPORARY EXTENSION "IN PLACE" OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE. SO, AGAIN THE 2011 SESSION AGENDA WILL INCLUDE EVALUATION OF THE SUNSET PROVISIONS, NOT ONLY FOR TDI, BUT FOR OTHER AGENCIES AS WELL. THESE AGENCIES AND TDI SPECIFICALLY ARE THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF REGULATORY COMPLIANCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY. WE MIGHT NOT ALWAYS AGREE IN THE BEGINNING, BUT WE CERTAINLY HAVE A DISTINCT INTEREST IN THE PRESERVATION OF THE DEPARTMENT.

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW. WE'LL WRITE AGAIN NEXT MONTH.