

Assembly
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
MARCH 21, 1973

MEMBERS PRESENT: CHAIRMAN DINI
VICE-CHAIRMAN ULLOM
ASSEMBLYMAN MAY
ASSEMBLYMAN SMITH
ASSEMBLYMAN GETTO
ASSEMBLYMAN GOJACK
ASSEMBLYMAN FORD

MEMBERS ABSENT: ASSEMBLYMAN YOUNG
ASSEMBLYMAN BROOKMAN

ALSO PRESENT: ASSEMBLYMAN BROADBENT
DR. MILES
DR. R. CAVELL
ROBERT BRUCE, WASHOE COUNTY
BARBARA JONES, CLARK COUNTY WELFARE
DR. CARL SAULS
SHARON GREENE, N.H.A.
JOHN MEDER, NCCA
MR. REVERLY, ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Ullom.

AB 239 - Requires counties to compensate physicians on staff for care of indigents and deletes requirement for rotation of staff.

Assemblyman Broadbent told the committee that he introduced this bill because he felt it was wrong of counties to require doctors to treat indigents without compensation; he explained that in the past a doctor was able to treat a whole family and not worry about being paid. Today this is impossible. The amount of office work and office staff plus insurance costs make it impossible for a doctor to do this. The State of Nevada requires that doctors take turns caring for indigents. This leads to poor medical care for these people as one doctor will see a patient and then turn the patient over to another doctor which does not provide for continuity in medical care. The county pays for hospital care for the patients but not for doctor's fees. Everyone pays a share of the cost of patient care by paying taxes, but the doctors pay with services plus taxes. Because of the change of doctors the hospital stay is longer and costs more. This bill would apply to the two larger counties only.

Dr. Miles told the committee that at present the patient can not select his own doctor.

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Dr. Miles also stated that criminals are provided with a public defender, who is paid by the state.

Assemblyman Ullom stated that the criminal has no choice in the selection of the lawyer.

Mr. Miles stated that there has been an Attorney General's opinion that the doctors must rotate.

Assemblyman Ullom asked for the date of the opinion.

Dr. Miles stated that he was not sure of the date, but that he could find out.

Assemblyman May asked if there would be a danger in the area that only new doctors would be treating the patients.

Dr. Miles said he did not think so as most doctors have full patient schedules.

Dr. Sargent told the committee that the law was passed in 1929 because the Elko General Hospital needed money and agreed to provide free medical care in exchange for the money it needed.

Dr. Cavell quoted the Hippocratic Oath which he pointed out did not say that doctors should not receive pay for the work they do. He stated that the attitude of the public has changed in the last few years and that there are many people who will not pay their medical bills. He pointed out that his office costs are fixed and he must make a certain amount of money to cover these costs.

Assemblyman Getto asked if in the recent past the passage of Medicare and Medical had not reduced the number of patients unable to pay.

Dr. Sauls told the committee that Washoe County had paid a total of \$75,950 in hospital fees for indigent care and the total amount of unpaid doctors' fees were about \$9,285 for the month of October, 1972; November, 1972 the hospital costs were \$78,000; December, 1972 the hospital costs were \$85,00 and the doctors' fees were \$15,790. He stated that the doctors' fees were about 12% of the hospital fees. He stated that the hospital costs would be cut by having one doctor on a case and better medical care would be given.

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Assemblyman Ullom asked if indigents were given second class medical care.

Dr. Cavell told the committee that they were not intentionally given second class care, but naturally if a doctor had a private patient he scheduled his surgery in advance and also other medical tests; with an indigent patient under the care of different doctors this type of care is not available.

Mr. Riverly offered an amendment to the bill which would include private, non-profit hospitals in the payments made for indigent care.

Sharon Greene told the committee that the Nevada Hospital Association favored the bill.

Assemblyman Ford told the committee that in Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital rotation was not used.

Assemblyman May pointed out that provisions were in the law to pay doctors.

Ms. Greene stated that none do.

Dr. Cavell told the committee that the cost to him as a physician for malpractice insurance was costly. If the counties were to pay for the insurance it would cost about \$100,000 per year. If the doctors were allowed to bill the county for services, the insurance would be taken care of by the policy they already have.

Barbara Jones told the committee that she thought that the Welfare Departments would not be able to bear the additional cost of paying the doctors' fees. In Clark County only about 10 to 12 indigent cases are handled by each doctor. She also pointed out there would be problems in eligibility determination which could delay treatment to the indigent.

John Meder told the committee that he favored a study of the problem so the cost could be determined. The County Commissioners' Association opposed this bill.

Assemblyman May stated that the law seems to be unclear in the definition of what a indigent was.

Robert Bruce told the committee that Washoe County could not bear the cost of this legislation.

A sub-committee of Assemblyman Gojack and Broadbent and Mr. Bruce and Mr. Meder was appointed to study this problem.

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AB 618 - Requires that certain number of rooms in health and care facilities and county and district hospitals be designated "No Smoking Allowed" rooms.

Mrs. Tumbleson told the committee that as a patient she had experienced various unpleasant experiences by being in a room with people and visitors who smoke. She urged something be done to solve this problem.

Sharon Greene told the committee that the Hospital Association did not feel that this was a matter for legislation. She explained that the members had agreed to post "NO SMOKING" signs in rooms for visitors and that the allocation of beds was an administrative matter and should be handled by each hospital.

ASSEMBLY

AGENDA FOR COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Date 3/21

Time 1:15 PM

Room 214

Bills or Resolutions
to be considered

Subject

Counsel
requested*

AB 239

Requires counties to compensate physicians on staff for care of indigents and deletes requirement for rotation of staff.

AB 618

Requires that certain number of rooms in health and care facilities and county and district hospitals be designated "No Smoking Allowed" rooms.

ASSEMBLY

H E A R I N G

ADDITION TO:
J O I N T

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Date 3/21 Time p.m. Room 345
Adjournment

Bill or Resolution
to be considered

Subject

- | | |
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| AB 599 | Permits employee organizations to be represented by a licensed attorney in negotiations under Local Government Employee-Management Relations Act. |
| AB 600 | Limits right of local government to administer its employees. |
| AB 433 | Makes certain changes in Local Government Employee-Management Relations Act. |
| * AB 418 | Enacts State Employee-Management Relations Act. |
| * AB 548 | Establishes collective bargaining provisions for State employees. |
| AB 633 | Enables certain employee organizations to sue and be sued. |
| | |
| * SB 466 | - Establishes collective bargaining provisions for state employees. |
| * SB 453 | Regulates relations between the University of Nevada System and its employees. |
| * SB 499 | |

* For additional minutes see - Joint Meeting Minutes
of 3-21, 26, & 29 1973
(in separate can)