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# Kent Hampton's Capitol Report March 10, 2014

MARCH 10TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

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*Submitted by  
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

As our world is divided on many items, one thing is for sure; we in the **Bootheel of Missouri** can all agree we have truly experienced winter. A week at a time of school closings, and a slow-down in the business environment, has been felt by many and made others home bound based on safety and accessibility concerns.

This last week in your Missouri house SB 668 which will make Missouri the 29th state to enact a **law to ensure cancer patients have affordable access to life-saving oral chemotherapy medications**. The Missouri House gave final approval this week to legislation that would eliminate the co-payment cost disparity that currently exists between orally and intravenously-administered chemotherapies.

Given the fact that orally-administered treatments are actually cheaper than those administered by IV, it is hard to rationalize how oral medications are far more costly for many patients here in Missouri. When you also factor in that many cancer treatments currently under development are oral in nature, it becomes even clearer that something must be done to ensure access to these treatments. The bill we passed this week will bring insurance coverage parity to both forms of chemotherapy – intravenous (IV) and pill form – by simply requiring plans that already cover traditional chemotherapies to also cover oral chemotherapy

products.

This is a simple change that will have a huge impact on the lives of Missourians battling cancer who want nothing more than affordable access to these life-saving treatment options. We also know the requirement will not cause the cost of insurance premiums to increase significantly based on an actuarial study that was done.

The bill now moves to the governor's desk where it will become law with his signature.

One of the bills approved by the House this week, HB 2014, would provide much-needed funding to our public education system. The supplemental budget bill addresses some of the funding shortfalls for various state services so that these programs can make it through the end of the fiscal year with adequate appropriations. While supplemental budget bills aren't always necessary, lower-than-expected revenues from the tax our state has on casinos has contributed to the need to shore up funding for our K-12 education system.

The bill we approved would dedicate another \$22 million in funding for the foundation formula that provides basic state aid to our schools. The bill also includes a \$5 million payment to the Normandy School District. As you may know, the district is currently unaccredited and teetering on the edge of insolvency because of a state law that requires the district to pay for students who transfer to neighboring districts. The additional funds will help the district to make it through the school year.

The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration.

Missouri's System of Education to Receive Funding Boost under Spending Plan Introduced by House Budget Chairman Rick Stream

Also this week, House Budget Chairman Rick Stream unveiled a proposed spending plan that would take funding for K-12 education to record levels, provide a significant funding boost to all public universities and community colleges, and dramatically increase financial assistance to Missouri students who seek a college education in the state.

The spending plan introduced in the House includes a \$278 million increase for the school foundation formula, which would make the K-12 education budget the

largest in state history. Under the plan, \$122 million of the increase would come from General Revenue with another \$156 million from a Surplus Revenue Fund that will be created to hold any revenues above the estimates agreed upon by the House and Senate. Monies placed in the fund would have to be used for education and one-time projects.

The plan also calls for a 2 percent increase in core funding for every public university and community college in the state, and another \$10 million in equity funding for community colleges. In addition, it includes approximately \$63 million in funding for the backlog of capital improvement projects at higher education institutions around the state.

The House Budget Committee is expected to consider the appropriations bills this week and next. The goal is to have the bills to the House floor for discussion the week after the Legislative Spring Break, which runs from Mar. 13 – 24.

As we have moved our clocks forward for day light savings time, our thoughts about outdoor activities increases with anticipation. Start out slow, think of your body as an engine, it needs to warm up before getting up to speed.

As always, it is an honor to serve you in the Missouri House. If you would like to discuss any issue, please call 573-751-3629. You can also email me at [kent.hampton@house.mo.gov](mailto:kent.hampton@house.mo.gov) . I look forward to hearing from you.

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