



March 20, 2013

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GENERAL SESSION

March 13, 2013

General Session I

Program: *HB120 Information on Pharmaceutical Products*

**Presented by: Health & Human Services/
Retirement & Independent Entities**

Director: Rebecca Reese

Chair: Jean Madsen

**Speakers: Rep. Paul Ray (R) Dist. 13 (Davis County) – sponsor, HB120
Missy Duke - Pharmacist**

*Neither **Rep. Ray** nor **Missy Duke** was able to attend. In their absence, WSLC Pres. Elect Kari Malkovich presented some information relevant to **HB120 Information on Pharmaceutical Products**.*

HB120 expands the application of federal regulations that apply to pharmaceutical manufacturer's drug representatives (and other health care providers) who make educational statements about a prescription

drug. Essentially it allows them to refer to other “off label” uses for these drugs in addition to the use for which it received FDA approval.

*NOTE: **HB120** was passed by the House and the Senate. Governor Herbert signed it into law on 3/26/2013.*

*NOTE: The WSLC Health & Human Services study committee brought forward a Resolution in support of SB60 Abortion Statistics and Reporting Requirements. The **Resolution failed** to pass.*

Reported by Pam Grange

General Session II

Program: *HB58 Protection of Athletes with Head Injuries Act Amendments*

**Presented by: Health & Human Services/
Retirement & Independent Entities**

Director: Rebecca Reese

Chair: Jean Madsen

Speaker: Rep. Paul Ray (R) Dist 13 (Davis County) – sponsor, HB58

NOTE: Rep. Ray was unable to attend. General Session II was cancelled.

General Session III

Program: *HB157 Children's Hearing Aid Pilot Program*

**Presented by: Health & Human Services/
Retirement & Independent Entities**

Director: Rebecca Reese

Chair: Jean Madsen

Speaker: Rep. Becky Edwards (R) Dist. 20, Davis County (Bountiful, NSL, W. Bountiful, Woods Cross) – sponsor, HB157

Skip Reese – Former Instructor and Administrator, Utah School for the Deaf – Parent/Infant Program

Rep. Edwards first presented a general overview of her bill. It would create a two-year pilot program within the Department of Health to provide hearing aids to qualifying children with hearing loss. It would also establish the Children's Hearing Aid Advisory Committee to advise the Dept. of Health regarding qualification criteria.

Terms within the bill would direct the Department of Health to establish a process by which to identify eligible children throughout the state for the pilot program.

Additionally, it would create a restricted account within the General Fund. This would be known as the Children's Hearing Aid Pilot Program Account.

The appropriation from the general fund would be combined with donations from the public sector. They would be used for a pilot program to provide hearing aids for low income children, age 0-3, who are currently not served by Medicaid or the (CHIP).

HB157 passed out of committee with a unanimous vote. It has received a \$100,000 appropriation pending its passage. **HB157** also passed the House with a 70-0 vote. Sen. Aaron Osmond is the senate sponsor. Over the years, the Osmond Foundation has been particularly active with the issue of children's deafness.

Rep. Edwards stressed the fact that when infants are hearing-tested at birth and determined to have permanent hearing loss, immediate intervention is critical. Too often, she said, parents cannot afford the approximately \$4,000 needed for hearing aids and therapy. Hearing aids for newborns are not covered by insurance.

Responding to questions, Rep. Edwards said the pilot group would be selected from throughout the state. Subjects from rural areas may predominate, as residents there may not be as well covered by insurance. Opposition to **HB157** may include concerns regarding both government overreach and parental rights.

Skip Reese related the fact that, unfortunately, it is not uncommon for deafness in infants to go undiagnosed until

they are two years old. In response, Skip and Dr. Carly White developed an early intervention program for deaf infants. To illustrate the great need of that program, Skip recalled being approached by no less than three families who asked to be included in the program while she and Dr. White were still writing the curriculum and before it was released.

During the rest of her tenure at the Utah School for the Deaf, Skip routinely traveled throughout Utah in an ongoing effort to implement the program, which included intense parental training. She said the Osmonds, who have a deaf member of their family, were also very involved in supporting the program.

Skip also noted that tracking research indicates those deaf children who do not receive therapeutic intervention until age five typically continue to test five years behind until high school graduation. Also, although they are quite expensive, cochlear implants have since emerged as another potentially life-changing alternative for the deaf.

Reported by Pam Grange

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President:	Sylvia Rickard
Advisor:	Bette Voorhees
Editor:	Pam Grange
Assist. Editor:	Eileen Hallet Stone

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