

## TENNESSEE GOVERNMENT UPDATE

NEWS FOR THE CLIENTS AND FRIENDS OF BASS, BERRY & SIMS PLC

**Friday, February 19, 2010**

The Tennessee Senate adopted the "Tennessee Health Freedom Act" by a vote of 26-1-5. The bill states:

"It is declared that the public policy of this state, consistent with our constitutionally-recognized and inalienable rights of liberty, is that every person within this state is and shall be free to choose or decline to choose any mode of securing health care services without penalty or threat of penalty by the federal government of the United States of America."

The attorney general is directed to "take such action ... as expeditiously as possible ... in defense or prosecution of rights protected under this [law]." Tom Humphrey with the *Knoxville News Sentinel* [has this story and other legislative vignettes](#).

Governor Bredesen was personally involved this week in the discussions about the financing and future of the Regional Medical Center in Memphis. Following conversations with Memphis Mayor A. C. Wharton, Bredesen commented,

"I'm very concerned about how do we make sure that people without insurance in Shelby County and West Tennessee get medical services they need. That to me is a lot more important than the survival of any one institution or any one particular approach to doing that."

Rick Locker at *The Commercial Appeal* [has the story](#).

Darin Gordon, the deputy commissioner for TennCare [gave a rather detailed](#) budget presentation to the House Health and Human Resources Committee on Tuesday.

Scrambling to offset the severe cuts to healthcare benefits for Medicaid recipients and limitations on reimbursement to providers, the Tennessee Hospital Association has been developing a "coverage fee" proposal to raise additional state revenue to match additional federal funds. The details are expected to be released in mid-March.

And, what would a week in Tennessee be without [further elucidation of the distinction between bars and restaurants](#) in the Volunteer State?

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