

## Western Massachusetts

# Health Access Network Notes

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Jones Library – Amherst, MA

## STATE PROGRAMS & POLICY NEWS

*Stacey Auger, Health Care For All*

### New administration appointments

Secretary of Health and Human Services – Dr. JudyAnn Bigby

Commissioner of Department of Public Health – John Auerbach

Commissioner of Division of Health Care Finance and Policy – Sarah Iselin

New Senate President – Sen. Therese Murray, first woman to hold the position in Massachusetts

### FY08 budget

- The governor's budget was released in March. Funding for the mini-grants to provide education and enrollment assistance was cut dramatically from \$3.5 million to \$500,000. Advocates have been working hard to get funds increased. The next step in the process is House Ways and Means budget, which is due out Wednesday April 11.
- Health care reform is one year old. In its honor – and to provide momentum for this year's advocacy – Health Care For All has been providing information to state representatives on a range of health care access issues. Representatives will have until Friday, April 13 to make amendments to the Ways and Means budget released on the 11<sup>th</sup>.
- The Senate budget will be released in mid-May, with amendments due a few days later.
- With Sen. Murray leaving her post as Chair, positions on the Ways and Means Committee are in flux. This is good news for Western Massachusetts because our Senator Stephen Brewer is now the Assistant Vice Chair.

### Legislation

All the bills for the current legislative session have been assigned an official bill number and sent to the appropriate committees for consideration. Work on legislation is expected to begin in earnest in the next few weeks. If you have any questions about bills, contact staff at Health Care For All through [www.hcfama.org](http://www.hcfama.org).