

ROLL CALL

K Street Files: Lobbyist, On Call

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Roll Call Staff

Dr. Hal Scherz, a pediatric urologist in Atlanta, has launched a group called Docs 4 Patient Care to give Members working on health care reform a dose of his lobbying message.



Scherz and more than 100 of his physician colleagues oppose a public plan option and are working to raise enough cash to run ads against any legislation that calls for one. He said that existing physician lobbying organizations, such as the American Medical Association, aren't doing enough to put the breaks on reform efforts that could devastate his profession.

"They are more interested with their political station than actually representing the rank-and-file doctors who actually take care of patients," Scherz said. "Our goal is to have a health care reform plan that makes sense."

Scherz said that a fellow doctor, Rep. Tom Price (R-Ga.), provided "inspiration" for the Docs 4 effort and has "supercharged the environment."

A government option, Scherz said, would ultimately lead to a single-payer system, and "that would just absolutely destroy our health care system. ... It will mean that doctors will leave the field."

Scherz added that he and his allies in Docs 4 Patient Care feel a sense of urgency about getting doctors and patients together to fight the public plan idea.

An In-Kind Contribution. Wisconsin Democratic Rep. Ron Kind's longtime chief of staff, Cindy Brown, is trading in cheese country for K Street's Mehlman Vogel Castagnetti.

Brown, who has been Kind's chief of staff for the past 10 years, was also an aide to Rep. Bart Stupak (D-Mich.).

In addition to having a strong background in health care, tax and trade issues, Brown is especially tight with the New Democratic Coalition, says name partner David Castagnetti. "She fits in with our client base really well," he said.

The addition of Brown also strengthens the firm's reach on the House Ways and Means Committee.

Builders Bulk Up. The Homes for America Alliance, a group of about 75 builders, has inked lobbying contracts with Patton Boggs and the C2 Group.

The alliance is focused on passing a net operating loss measure that would help its members write off billions of dollars in losses.

The provision was included in the House and Senate stimulus packages earlier this year but was removed in conference.

C2 Group's Tom Crawford is leading the firm's efforts. Crawford has been lobbying on behalf of a number of big builders trying to get this provision passed for more than a year.

Patton Boggs registered Tom Boggs and Don Moorehead for the client.

Driving the Debate. The Coalition for Transportation Productivity, a group of more than 100 associations and corporations, is kicking into gear this week.

The group, which includes such members as International Paper, Kraft Foods and MillerCoors, is ramping up its lobbying and PR efforts to raise the federal vehicle weight limit on U.S. interstate highways.

The coalition is backing the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act, a bill introduced by Rep. Mike Michaud (D-Maine) that would allow states to increase their interstate vehicle weight limits to 97,000 pounds — allowing trucks to carry more paper products, Kraft foods, MillerCoors beer and other products.

“There are a lot of major players from a wide variety of industries,” said John Runyan, the coalition’s co-chairman and senior manager for federal government relations at International Paper.

Runyan said the coalition came together last year but is only now officially launching. “We’ve now formalized the group and are beginning a fundraising campaign. We are trying to develop a full-scale advocacy effort to get the issue accomplished.”

He declined to reveal any budget information on the group.

Search On. The National Association of Broadcasters has hired search firm Russell Reynolds Associates to help the group find a new president and CEO. The NAB’s most recent chief, Republican David Rehr, resigned last month. The NAB has been on defense on several key issues, including legislation that would compel broadcasters to pay performance royalties to artists and record labels.

K Street Moves. Bill Anaya, a former vice president of government affairs for Motorola who opened his own consulting business earlier this year, has joined Alston & Bird as counsel in the firm’s legislative and public policy group. Anaya will focus on telecommunications, energy and health care issues. “I am very excited to serve as part of such a dynamite organization with such extraordinary people,” Anaya said, noting that the firm’s roster includes two former Senate Majority Leaders, Bob Dole (R-Kan.) and Tom Daschle (D-S.D.). Anaya will continue to represent Verizon, a client from his solo business.

• McKenna Long & Aldridge has added Frank Micciche, most recently managing director for the New America Foundation and a one-time lobbyist for Sallie Mae, to its government affairs practice as a senior adviser.

David M. Drucker contributed to this report.

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