



2026 Legislative Session Update - Week 5

The legislative session reached its halfway mark this week as the Senate held the final meetings of its policy committees and House committee and subcommittee agendas remained packed with bills. House subcommittee meetings are expected to conclude next week. Most importantly, this week was the point in session timing when the number of bills “in play” narrows. These deadlines are established in both Senate and House rules and represent standard operating procedure.

The budget process, however, has been anything but standard operating procedure. The initial rollout of the Senate and House budget proposals diverged from traditional practice. With only four weeks remaining in the legislative session, capitol observers hope these early bumps in the budget process will not lead to missing the Sine Die deadline of March 13.

FPTA Priority Legislation

Physical Therapy Treatment Plans – **SB 1262** by Sen. Nick DiCeglie (R-St. Petersburg) and **HB 869** by Rep. Adam Anderson (R-Tarpon Springs) exempt services for health promotion, injury prevention wellness, and fitness from the requirement that a physical therapist have a practitioner of record review and sign a plan of treatment. FPTA continues to educate legislators on the importance of physical therapy.

Legislation of Interest (listed alphabetically)

Acupuncture – **SB 672** by Sen. Alexis Calatayud (R-Miami) and **HB 169** by Rep. Jose Alvarez (D-Kissimmee) revise licensure requirements for acupuncturists including allowing for the order and

Health Care Patient Protection – **SB 68** by Sen. Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) and **HB 355** by Rep. Vanessa Oliver (R-Punta Gorda) require AHCA, in consultation with the Florida Emergency Medical Services

administration of herbs, homeopathic and other nutritional supplements.

HB 169 was approved by the House Health Professions and Programs Subcommittee on Tuesday, 2/3.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Autonomous Practice – SB 138 by Sen. Keith Truenow (R-Tavares) and **HB 301** by Rep. Jason Shoaf (R-Port St. Joe) authorize certain advanced practice registered nurses to engage in autonomous practice to provide mental health services as defined by the Board of Nursing.

HB 301 has now been received by the Senate.

Alzheimer's Disease Awareness

Initiative - SB 578 by Sen. Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee) and **HB 513** by Rep. Dean Black (R-Jacksonville) require the Department of Elderly Affairs to contract for the development and implementation of the Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Initiative.

HB 513 will be heard in the House Health Care Budget Subcommittee on Monday, 2/16.

Autonomous Practice by a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist – SB 462 by Sen. Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Doral) and **HB 375** by Rep. Mike Giallombardo (R-Cape Coral) authorize autonomous certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) to perform CRNA-specific acts without an established supervisory physician protocol.

HB 375 has been received by the Senate.

Background Screenings – SB 1168 by Sen. Erin Grall (R-Fort Pierce) and **HB 1069** by Rep. Dana Trabulsy (R-Fort Pierce) specify additional disqualifying offenses under the background screening requirements for certain persons, require AHCA to review and determine eligibility for all criminal history checks submitted to the Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse by specified agencies, provide that, beginning on a specified date, an independent sanctioning authority is considered a qualified entity for the purpose of participating in the clearinghouse, and require qualified

for Children State Partnership Program, to adopt rules that establish minimum standards for pediatric patient care in hospital emergency departments (ED). The bills require all hospitals with EDs to develop and implement policies and procedures for pediatric patient care in the ED, and to designate a physician, physician assistant, nurse, or paramedic to serve as the pediatric emergency care coordinator in the ED. Finally, the bills require all hospital EDs to conduct the National Pediatric Readiness Assessment in accordance with timelines established by the National Pediatric Readiness Project.

SB 68 was approved by the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee on Thursday, 2/12 and now goes to the Senate floor.

Medical Placement for High-acuity Children – SB 1560 by Sen. Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee) and **HB 475** by Rep. Michelle Salzman (R-Cantonment) require specific needs of high-acuity child to be considered when determining child's best interest, revise the role of and services provided by Child Protection Teams and multidisciplinary teams, require multidisciplinary team staffing for placement decisions of a high-acuity child, provide a process for if multidisciplinary team cannot reach consensus on plan for placement of high-acuity child, require licensed health care professionals to perform medical screening, require a judge to place a high-acuity child in a medical placement after the child is evaluated, require the court to set emergency evidentiary hearings under certain circumstances, provide requirements for medical placement, require the court to conduct periodic reviews during the duration of medical placements, prohibit medical placement from exceeding specified number of days, provide that high-acuity children are eligible for Children's Medical Services program and Children's Medical Services Safety Net program, and require that high-acuity children be placed in category 1 for priority purposes of Medicaid waiver services.

SB 1560 is pending withdrawal.

HB 475 was approved by the House Human Services Subcommittee on Thursday, 2/12.

entities conducting criminal background checks to designate a user administrator for a specified purpose.

SB 1168 will be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services on Wednesday, 2/18.

Department of Health – SB 902 by Sen. Ileana Garcia (R-Miami) and **HB 733** by Rep. Ann Gerwig (R-Wellington) broadens eligibility requirements for the dental student loan repayment program. The bills revise the definition of “low-THC cannabis,” require qualified physicians and medical directors of medical marijuana treatment centers to renew their training course certification biennially, prohibit medical marijuana treatment centers from being located within certain distance of specified areas, update DOH duties relating to the Early Steps Program and Early Steps Extended Option, revise eligibility requirements for developmental evaluation and early intervention services, revise transition to education requirements for children with disabilities, provide that committing criminal offense relating to murder is cause for immediate suspension of health care practitioner's license, and revise eligible individuals for University of Florida Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment's autism micro-credential.

SB 902 was approved by the Senate Health Policy Committee on Wednesday, 2/11 and will be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services on Wednesday, 2/18.

Dry Needling – SB 914 by Sen. Alexis Calatayud (R-Miami) and **HB 867** by Rep. Adam Anderson (R-Tarpon Springs) define the terms “dry needling” and “myofascial trigger point,” requiring the Board of Occupational Therapy to establish minimum standards of practice for the performance of dry needling by occupational therapists, including specified standards, and require the board, if it deems it necessary for patient safety, to adopt additional supervision and training requirements for occupational therapists to perform dry needling on specified areas.

HB 867 was approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee on

Motor Vehicle Insurance – SB 522 by Sen. Erin Grall (R-Fort Pierce) and **HB 769** by Rep. Meg Weinberger (R-West Palm Beach) repeal the existing no-fault statutes and references to personal injury protection coverage throughout the Florida Statutes. The bills establish mandatory bodily injury liability coverage requirements in place of personal injury protection and update insurance policy disclosure, coverage, and reporting requirements, replacing PIP-related language with bodily injury and property damage liability provisions.

Neither bill has received a committee hearing to date.

Parental Rights – SB 166 by Sen. Erin Grall (R-Fort Pierce) and **HB 173** by Rep. Kim Kendall (R-St. Johns) revise requirements for the provision of maternal health and contraceptive information and services to minors. The bills require consent from a parent or guardian for a minor's treatment for certain diseases, repeal a provision relating to minors' access to outpatient crisis intervention services and treatment, and require school districts to provide parents with specified information before the district administers certain questionnaires or forms to students. *HB 173 was approved by the House Judiciary Committee on Tuesday, 2/10 and will be heard in the Senate Education & Employment Committee on Wednesday, 2/18.*

Practice of Chiropractic Medicine – SB 1524 by Sen. Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee) and **HB 439** by Rep. Nan Cobb (R-Eustis) authorize board certified chiropractic physicians to possess, prescribe, and administer vitamins, nutrient preparations, homeopathic remedies, dietary supplements, and epinephrine and authorize licensed pharmacists to fill, compound, or dispense certain nutritional prescriptions prescribed by certified licensed chiropractic physicians.

HB 439 was approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee on Tuesday, 2/10.

Practice of the Profession of Pharmacy – SB 868 by Sen. Barbara Sharief (D-

Tuesday, 2/10 and now goes to the House floor.

SB 914 will be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services on Wednesday, 2/18.

Employment Eligibility – SB 1278 by Sen. Jonathan Martin (R-Fort Myers) and **HB 197** by Rep. Berny Jacques (R-Clearwater) require all private employers, rather than only those employing more than specified number of employees, to use E-Verify system to verify new employee's employment.

Enforcement of Protections for Minors – SB 1010 by Sen. Clay Yarborough (R-Jacksonville) and **HB 743** by Rep. Melo (R-Naples) provide criminal penalties for health care practitioners who willfully or actively aid or abet a minor in obtaining sex-reassignment prescriptions or procedures.

Health and Human Services - HB 693 by Rep. Mike Redondo (R-Miami) known as the “Big Beautiful Healthcare Frontier Act” and part of the Florida House’s “Florida’s New Frontier in Healthcare” proposal, aligns state rules with new federal requirements for Medicaid, CHIP and SNAP, tightens eligibility and verification standards, and deregulates certain aspects of healthcare delivery — including removing certificate-of-need requirements for long-term care providers, extending independent practice rights for advanced-practice nurses, creating interstate licensure compacts for physician assistants and EMS professionals, and broadening the scope of dental hygienists. **HB 695**, also by Rep. Redondo, provides exemptions from public meetings requirements for the Interstate Commission for EMS Personnel Practice and the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact Commission.

HB 695 was approved by the House Government Operations Subcommittee on Wednesday, 2/11.

Health Care – SB 1756 by Sen. Clay Yarborough (R-Jacksonville) and **HB 917** by Rep. Jeff Holcomb (R-Springhill) make changes to vaccination policy in Florida

(Davie) and **HB 1021** by Rep. RaShon Young (D-Orlando) authorize pharmacists who meet specified criteria to, at the direction of a licensed physician, administer medications at a Level I or Level II trauma center under certain circumstances and require trauma centers to retain certain documentation to employ pharmacists to perform such tasks.

HB 1021 was approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee on Tuesday, 2/10 and now goes to the House floor.

Public Assistance – SB 1758 by Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Pensacola) authorizes AHCA to conduct retrospective reviews and audits of certain claims under the state Medicaid program, requires the agency to seek federal approval to implement mandatory work and community engagement requirements for able-bodied adults as a condition of obtaining and maintaining Medicaid coverage, requires AHCA, in consultation with the Department of Children and Families, to develop a business plan to implement specified provisions, revises the purpose of the Medicaid Pharmaceutical and Therapeutics Committee to include creation of a Medicaid preferred physician-administered drug list, a Medicaid preferred product list, and a high-cost drug list, and requires the department to develop and implement a food assistance payment accuracy improvement plan. In the Senate, components of the package are addressed in separate bills **SB 1758** by Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Pensacola) and **SB 1760** by Sen. Jason Brodeur (R-Lake Mary).

Public Records/Uterine Fibroid Research Database – SB 864 by Sen. Barbara Sharief (D-Davie) and **HB 1515** by Rep. Lisa Dunkley (D-Lauderhill) provide an exemption from public records requirements for certain records and personal identifying information submitted to the Department of Health for inclusion in the uterine fibroid research database.

HB 1515 was approved by the House Government Operations Subcommittee on Wednesday, 2/11.

statutes including in public health advisories and public health emergencies, require licensed health care practitioners to inform a parent or legal guardian of a minor child of risks, benefits, safety, and efficacy of specified vaccines, obtain signatures from parents or legal guardians before the administration of a vaccine, and provide a parent or legal guardian with the option of alternative vaccination schedules. The bills authorize pharmacists to provide ivermectin without prescription and immunity from civil and criminal liability and disciplinary action. Finally, the bills authorize parents to exempt their children from health examinations or from administration of immunizing agents based on conscience grounds, and require DOH to make publicly available, by posting on its Internet website, exemption forms for parents and legal guardians. In addition, HB 917 contains provisions that creates liability for health care providers under the Florida Patient bill of rights and prohibits discrimination against a patient based on the patient's vaccination status.

Health Care Coverage - SB 1760 by Sen. Jason Brodeur (R-Lake Mary) establishes the Joint Legislative Committee on Medicaid Oversight, bill establishes the Joint Legislative Committee on Medicaid Oversight, creates additional Medicaid managed care plan reporting requirements for purposes of capitation rate setting and disclosure of financial relationships with affiliated entities, requires that a contract between AHCA and a Medicaid managed care plan must require that any third party administrative entity contracted by the plan must adhere to all pertinent requirements of the Medicaid program placed on the plan under the plan's contract with the AHCA, provides that payments made by a Medicaid managed care plan to affiliated entities in excess of market rates are excluded as an allowable expense when the AHCA calculates such plan's achieved savings rebate (ASR), revises ASR statutes to alter the amount of profit that a managed care plan may retain versus how much of such profit must be shared with the state, amends statutes relating to Medicaid managed care plan medical loss ratios (MLR) to correct a reference to

SB 864 was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services on Thursday, 2/12.

Recovery of Damages for Medical Negligence Resulting in Death – SB 1700 by Sen. Erin Grall (R-Fort Pierce) and **HB 6003** by Rep. Dana Trabulsky (R-Fort Peirce) and Rep. Anna Eskamani (D-Orlando) delete a provision prohibiting the recovery of certain damages by specified parties related to the decedent in wrongful death proceedings.

Respiratory Care Interstate Compact – SB 970 by Sen. Tom Wright (R-Port Orange) and **HB 1235** by Rep. Bill Conerly (R-Lakewood Ranch) enact the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact and require member states to meet certain requirements to join and participate in the compact. The bills provide criteria that a respiratory therapist licensee must satisfy to practice under the compact, authorize a certain licensing authority or government agency to establish the scope of practice for a licensee providing therapy in a remote state, authorize member states to participate with other member states in joint investigations of licensees under certain circumstances, and establish the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact Commission. **SB 972**, also by Sen. Wright, and **HB 1237**, by Rep. Conerly provide a public records exemption for the Commission.

HB 1235 was approved by the House Health Care Budget Subcommittee on Thursday, 2/12.

Statewide Provider and Health Plan Claim Dispute Resolution Program – SB 1082 by Sen. Erin Grall (R-Fort Pierce) and **HB 1449** by Rep. Demi Busatta (R-Coral Gables) specify additional circumstances under which a disputed claim is not subject to review under the statewide provider and health plan claim dispute resolution program.

Temporary Certificates for Practice in Areas of Critical Need – SB 1480 by Sen. Colleen Burton (R-Winter Haven) and **HB 809** by Rep. Benarroch (R-Naples) authorize a certificate holder to continue

federal regulations and to specify that MLRs must be calculated for each plan separately for each component of Statewide Medicaid Managed Care and for each plan in the aggregate, amends the Insurance Code relating to the oversight of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), creates prohibitions against PBM behavior relating to contracting with and reimbursing Pharmacies, prohibits a PBM from maintaining any ownership or investment interest in an affiliated manufacturer.

SB 1760 was approved by the Senate Health Policy Committee on Wednesday, 2/11.

providing primary care services to patients in an area of critical need after the area has lost its designation if the practitioner maintains an active primary care treatment relationship in the area with at least one patient and satisfies all other applicable requirements.

SB 1480 will be heard in the Senate Rules Committee on Tuesday, 2/17.

Use of Professional Nursing Titles - SB 36 by Sen. Barbara Sharief (D-Davie) and **HB 237** by Rep. Michelle Salzman (R-Cantonment) authorize certain nurses the title Doctor of Nursing Practice and the abbreviation D.N.P., and the title of Doctor of Philosophy and the abbreviation PhD. The bills also require doctoral degree holders to specify their profession when using the term “doctor.”

HB 237 has been received by the Senate. SB 36 was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services on Thursday, 2/12.

We hope this summary is helpful. We look forward to working with you during the 2026 Legislative Session. Please contact us if you have any questions.

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