



2026 Legislative Session Update - Week 8

The Florida Legislature will not complete its work on time. As legislators conclude week eight of the scheduled nine-week legislative session, legislative leaders failed to reach consensus on a starting point for budget negotiations. House Speaker Perez summed up the impasse as a “fundamental disagreement” over state spending.

The Legislature will spend its final week debating legislation unrelated to the budget while also contemplating plans for when to return to Tallahassee. As of today, only approximately 60 bills passed the legislature, of the 1,758 total bills filed.

Governor DeSantis already called a Special Session to address Congressional Redistricting beginning April 20 and signaled an additional special session is likely to address property tax reform. The end of the 2026 legislative session feels much like 2025, and legislators are bracing for another long spring, and potentially summer, in Tallahassee.

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. While this legislation will not pass this year, the FPTA continues to educate legislators on the importance of physical therapy.

Legislation of Interest (listed alphabetically)

Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Initiative - **SB 578** by Sen. Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee) and **HB 513** by Rep. Dean

Health Care Coverage - **SB 1760** by Sen. Jason Brodeur (R-Lake Mary) establishes the Joint Legislative Committee on

Black (R-Jacksonville) require the Department of Elderly Affairs to contract for the development and implementation of the Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Initiative. *SB 578 passed the Senate 38-0 on 2/4 and is available to be heard in the House. HB 513 is on the House Calendar.*

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 entities conducting background criminal history checks to designate a user administrator for a specified purpose. *SB 1168 was approved by the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee on Monday, 3/2 and will be heard on the Senate Special Order Calendar on Monday, 3/9. HB 1069 passed the House 104-0 on Tuesday, 3/3 and is available to be heard in the Senate.*

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

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 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 Appropriations Committee on Monday, 3/2 and was temporarily postponed on the Senate floor on Friday, 3/6.*

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 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,

of health care practitioner's license, and revise eligible individuals for University of Florida Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment's autism micro-credential.

HB 733 passed the House 84-24 on Wednesday, 3/4 and is available to be heard in the Senate.

SB 902 was temporarily postponed on the Senate Special Order Calendar on Friday, 3/6.

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 passed the House 112-2 on 2/25, passed the Senate 37-0 on Thursday, 3/5 and will be sent to the Governor for approval.

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.

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 is on the Senate Calendar.

HB 355 passed the House 109-0 on 1/15 and is available to be heard in the Senate.

Parkinson's Disease Registry –

SB 1684 by Sen. Alexis Calatayud (R-Miami) and **HB 1443** by Rep. Demi Busatta (R-Coral Gables) require the Florida Institute for Parkinson’s Disease within the University of South Florida to establish a statewide Parkinson’s disease registry. The bills require physicians and advanced practice registered nurses who diagnose or treat a patient with Parkinson’s disease or atypical parkinsonism to report nationally recognized performance measures to the registry beginning January 1, 2027, and grant them liability protection for doing so. The Parkinson’s Disease Research Board (Board) must submit annual reports on the registry data to the Governor, President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives beginning October 15, 2028. **SB 1686** and **HB 1445** provide public records exemptions for specified patient information for Parkinson's disease registry.

HB 1443 passed the House 115-0 on 2/25, was amended and passed the Senate 32-0 on Friday, 3/6 and has been sent back to the House in returning messages.

HB 1445 passed the House 115-0 on 2/25, passed the Senate 32-1 on Friday, 3/6 and will be sent to the Governor for approval.

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

HB 693 passed the House 79-30 on Tuesday, 3/3 and is available to be heard in the Senate.

HB 695 passed the House 87-19 on Tuesday, 3/3 and is available to be heard in the Senate.

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 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.

SB 1756 was approved by the Senate Rules Committee on Tuesday, 3/3 and is awaiting a vote on the Senate floor. HB 917 has not been heard.

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.

SB 1758 was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on Monday, 3/2 and was discussed on the Senate floor on Friday 3/6 with a possible final vote on Monday, 3/9.

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 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.

HB 809 passed the House 110-0 on Tuesday, 3/3, passed the Senate 34-0 on Friday, 3/6 and will be sent to the Governor for approval.

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 passed the House 111-0 on 2/4 and is available to be heard in the Senate. SB 36 was temporarily postponed in the Senate Rules Committee on 2/26 and is unlikely to pass.

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