

AMITA Health End of Year Advocacy Update

Before moving to next year, we wanted to take a moment to update you on recent legislative activity and preview next steps.

The [Health Care Right of Conscious Act](#) was amended during the Fall Veto Session in late October. The language states it is not a violation of the Act to impose or enforce requirements related to healthcare services intended to prevent contraction or transmission of COVID-19 or subsequent iterations.

Other activity of note during the Veto Session: the legislature approved and the Governor signed new Congressional maps, the new maps can be found [here](#). Public Act [102-0674](#) is a trailer bill to the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus Healthcare Pillar bill approved last spring and provides clarity to Community Health Worker provisions and extends several deadlines contained in the underlying bill. [SB 1040](#), approved by both Chambers and the Governor, is designed to help reopen closed hospitals in underserved communities by allowing a new hospital to access the Medicaid rates of the closed hospital until new patient data and volumes can be established. [HB 3401](#) creates the Licensed Certified Professional Midwife Practice Act, the bill was recently sent to the Governor for action.

An increased per diem rate for inpatient psychiatric services at safety net hospitals was approved by CMS and went into effect retroactive to January 1, 2021.

Last week Congress passed the Protecting Medicare and American Farmers from Sequester Cuts Act ([S. 610](#)) which addresses three separate sets of payment cuts that were scheduled to go into effect January 1: Medicare sequestration, Statutory PAYGO cuts, and cuts from the 2022 Physician Fee Schedule (PFS). The legislation now goes to President Biden.

Looking ahead to 2022, the General Assembly is scheduled to convene January 4 for the start of the Spring Legislative Session. The primary election was moved from March to June and as a result the 2022 session is condensed, comprised of the usual amount of session days but in a shorter period, with adjournment scheduled for April 8. The 2021 session was packed, and it is widely expected that the upcoming session will be light in comparison.

Negotiations for reauthorization of the Hospital Assessment program are underway and likely to occur during the upcoming, truncated, legislative session. The current HAP will sunset Dec. 31, 2022 and ensuring the continuation of the program is a top priority.

In light of the prejudgment interest bill and an increasingly hostile medical malpractice environment, short and long term solutions for reform are on the table for discussion. Proactive issues that did not gain traction last session will be revisited, including advocating for the [Nurse Compact Licensure](#) and additional alternatives aimed at alleviating staffing shortages. Protecting 340B is also a priority and language is currently being drafted to ensure 340b program discounts are protected and applied as intended.

I want to thank our Leaders and associates who partnered with us to keep key legislators informed of AMITA positions and abreast of changes within our ministries and systemwide. In the past year we have welcomed lawmakers to our ministries for informational sessions and ceremonial events. These opportunities are very valuable to let lawmakers see firsthand our commitment to patients and the communities we serve as well as the quality of services and dedication of our frontline workers.

In a previous update it was reported that AMITA Health will convene an Advocacy Affinity group, which will provide more formal opportunities for our associates and leaders to help us engage in the legislative and policy process. More information on the Advocacy Affinity group will follow the unwinding.

Please contact Julie Mirostaw, Director of Government Relations at Julie.Mirostaw@amitahealth.org with questions.

Have a safe, happy and health holiday season!