

IMS Advocate

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Key legislation post-2nd funnel

HF 2494 – Licenses direct-entry lay midwives and establishes state midwifery board. IMS opposes; died in second funnel.

HF 234 – Requires insurance coverage for mental health conditions and substance abuse treatment. IMS supports; died in second funnel.

HF 2329 – Provides payment for medication therapy management activities. IMS is monitoring; died in second funnel.

SF 153 – Allows PAs to form limited liability companies and professional corporations. IMS opposes; still viable.

SF 2150 – Establishes teen graduated driver licensing program. IMS supports; still viable.

SF 2333 – Relates to hospital inspectors and dependent adult abuse. IMS is monitoring; still viable.

SF 2312 – Licenses naturopathic physicians. IMS opposes; died in second funnel.

SF 2352 – Establishes involuntary hospitalization protocol. IMS is monitoring; still viable.

HF 2410 – Restricts pharmacist drug product selection relative to anti-epileptic drugs. IMS is monitoring; died in second funnel.

HF 758 – Relates to damages recoverable for wrongful death of a person. IMS opposes; still viable.

SF 2349 – Mandates that certain group health insurance for state employees cover autism disorders. IMS is monitoring; still viable.

Medicare payment cut briefly delayed

On March 2, 2010, President Obama signed into law the "Temporary Extension Act of 2010." Among other things, this law extends through March 31, 2010, the zero percent update to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule that was in effect for claims with dates of service January 1, 2010, through February 28, 2010. Consequently, claims with dates of service March 1 and later that were being held by Medicare contractors will be released for processing and payment. Both Senators Grassley and Harkin voted for the bill.

Discussions are still underway in the House and Senate on the next steps to address the Medicare payment crisis. Proposals are being circulated that would implement still another short-term patch to the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula, including proposals that would postpone cuts for 90 days, 7 months, or through the end of 2010. The AMA, IMS, and others continue to press for permanent repeal of the SGR, rather than repeating the pattern of short-term remedies that make future payment cuts more severe and increase the cost of permanent Medicare payment reform.

The Senate is currently debating a bill that extends the freeze on Medicare physician payments until Sept. 30, 2010. It also provides extensions to the therapy cap exception process and the 1.0 floor for the work geographic practice cost index through Dec. 31, 2010. If passed, the bill would have to be approved by the House before it could be reviewed by the President. For updates, visit www.iowamedical.org.

Many bills no longer viable after second funnel deadline

The legislature wrapped up its second funnel week on Thursday, March 4. By this date, all bills introduced in one chamber needed to be voted out of committee in the other chamber in order to remain viable. Some bills of interest to IMS failed to receive a vote and are therefore considered "dead" for the session. Of course, there is always the possibility that an issue could get tacked onto the standing appropriations bill. This "standings bill" is normally the last bill passed during the session and often becomes the vehicle for items that have not previously received a vote.

Review the listing to the left to learn about the fate of various bills. Of note, **HF 2494**, which would have licensed direct-entry lay midwives, failed to meet the second funnel deadline. IMS is grateful to the many physicians and friends of medicine who responded to IMS Advocacy Alerts over recent weeks and voiced their opposition to this bill. This is truly a win for the safety of Iowa mothers and children. Also, the legislature continues to discuss elements of state health reform in **SF 2356** that would provide an expansion in IowaCare coverage as well as payment to UIHC physicians.

Iowa's Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) will meet next week and release the state general fund revenue estimates. By law, the legislature bases the state budget on the REC's estimates. This will have particular significance for areas of the state budget such as Medicaid. Stay tuned!



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Governor nominates members to IBM

Gov. Chet Culver has announced four appointments to the Iowa Board of Medicine (IBM). The appointees will begin their three-year terms effective May 1, pending confirmation by the Iowa Senate. Tom Drew of Des Moines; Jeffrey Snyder, MD, of Crescent; and Colleen Stockdale, MD, of Muscatine were reappointed for a second term.

Joyce Vista-Wayne, MD, of Ottumwa was appointed to the IBM to fill the seat being vacated by Yasyn Lee, MD, of Dubuque. Dr. Vista-Wayne is board certified in child, adolescent, and adult psychiatry. She practices at the Ottumwa Regional Health Center. An IMS member, she also serves as chair of the IMS Committee on Medical Services.

Iowa Rep. Mark Smith receives AMA's Dr. Nathan Davis Award

State Representative Mark Smith (D-Marshalltown) was honored with the American Medical Association's top government service award for a member of a state legislature.

"This award honors Rep. Smith's dedication to improving the well-being of Iowa's citizens with mental health and substance abuse disorders," said AMA Board Chair Rebecca J. Patchin, MD. "He has championed solutions for health care access and affordability and the promotion of public health to benefit all the citizens of Iowa."

Rep. Smith is one of nine honorees chosen this year to receive the Dr. Nathan Davis Award for Outstanding Government Service. The award, named for the founding father of the AMA, recognizes elected and career officials in federal, state, or municipal service whose outstanding contributions have promoted the art and science of medicine and the betterment of public health.

Rep. Smith stated that he was both humbled and honored to receive this award. He thanked the AMA for the award, but emphasized that physicians deserved a large thanks for providing services to the people of Iowa and the U.S. so that lives are longer and better.

This year marks the 21st anniversary of the Dr. Nathan Davis Awards. Others being honored this year include Governor John F. Baldacci of Maine and Donna Christensen, MD, delegate to Congress from the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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