

**Idaho Academy of Family Physicians  
2018 Legislative Report  
Week 5 February 5 – February 9**

**New Legislation Introduced this week:**

**[SB 1255: Tobacco Age of Possession](#)**

This bill, introduced by Sen. Fred Martin in the Senate Health and Welfare Committee would change the age of purchase for tobacco products and electronic cigarettes from 18 – 21 years of age (This was actually introduced last week but I failed to include it in last week's report – sorry)

**[HB 495: Health Care Billing Equity Act](#)**

Rep. Luker introduced this bill this week in House Health and Welfare Committee. It places strict controls on billing for patients who seek care for certain out of network services.

**[HB 513: Sales and Use Tax Exemption for free clinics](#)**

Rep. Clark Kauffman introduced this bill in Revenue and Taxation Committee this week. It would provide tax exemption of sales tax for clinics that are members of the Idaho Association of Free and Charitable Clinics, of which there are ten members, and whose average sales tax obligation over the last three years is \$10,000. Rep. Kauffman introduced a similar bill last year that did not progress through the legislative process.

**UPDATES on previous legislation:**

**[HB 464: Dual Waiver "Idaho Health Care Plan"](#)**

*UPDATE: The House Health and Welfare Committee passed this measure to the House floor by a vote of 7-5. It now awaits floor debate and action. Given the close House Committee vote and the proclivities of the House membership, its prospects of passing the House are anyone's guess.*

The waiver being pursued by the Department of Insurance would allow an estimated 35,000 people who currently don't qualify, to receive subsidies for the purchase of health insurance through the Idaho exchange. A concurrent federal waiver being sought by the Department of Health and Welfare would allow some of the more chronically ill individuals to be moved to Medicaid for their coverage options. The Department estimates between 2500-3500 individuals could qualify in this scenario.

Assuming the waivers are indeed granted, the estimated cost for this program is about \$29 million (Governor Otter recommended utilizing \$17.4 million of general fund money and \$11.4 million from the Millennium Fund to cover this cost).

**[HB 472: Rural Physician Incentive Program \(RPIP\) matching funds](#)**

***UPDATE: This bill is scheduled for hearing by the House Health and Welfare Committee on February 12.*** The bill would allow for the state to provide a financial match to the RPIP program in the amount of \$640,000, subject to an appropriation by the Joint Finance and Appropriation Committee.

The Idaho Medical Association is taking the lead on this initiative. Their original concept was to use this session to introduce the concept and pursue the matching funds in the 2019 legislative session, but a number of legislators would like to pursue those matching funds in this year's session.

Currently RPIP is funded through fees paid by students through the WWAMI and University of Utah students. It is a debt repayment program for physicians who practice primary care in a federally designated health profession shortage area. Up to \$100,000 of repayment over a four-year period can be allowed.

#### **HB 465: Medicaid Dental Care**

*UPDATE: This bill passed out of House Health and Welfare Committee this week and is awaiting action by the full House.* This bill would restore preventative dental care services for a certain population of Medicaid recipients. This program was cut during the recessionary years and her goal is to reinstate it. The expected cost for the program is \$1.2 million.

#### **HB 353: Immunity for Physician Volunteers**

*UPDATE: This bill passed the House overwhelmingly last week and is still awaiting action by the Senate Health and welfare Committee.*

This bill will provide additional immunity for physicians and other healthcare providers who volunteer at community screening events. Currently, many physicians' professional liability insurance does not cover them for volunteer screening events offsite from their regular practice. To encourage more volunteerism, IMA is seeking limited immunity for volunteer activities.

#### **HB 451: Medical Residency Charitable Tax deduction**

*This bill passed the full House this week on a 51-19 vote. It is now awaiting action by the Senate Local Government and Taxation Committee.*

Rep. Mat Erpelding introduced this bill that would provide an income tax credit for charitable contributions made to accredited Idaho-based medical residency programs.

#### **Graduate Medical Education Ten-Year Plan:**

***Update: No new formal legislative action occurred this week, but Dr. Epperly and Susie Puliot conducted presentations to both Senate and House Health and Welfare Committees on the matter this week. There remains plenty of work behind the scenes with JFAC members to fund the first year of the plan.***

A total additional funding request of \$5.2 million this year would be used to expand the Boise Internal Medicine Residency Program; Expand the Psychiatry Residency Program; and enhance the salaries paid to those residents and the Family Medicine residents in Idaho; additional funds would be used to lay the foundation for new residency programs at Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center and Bingham Memorial Hospital.

Governor Otter did not include full funding of the first year of the plan in his budget – including only a total of \$1.1 million toward the plan in his recommendation. The JFAC committee members now hold the key to determining the level of funding for this first year of the plan in FY19. Dr. Epperly, the Idaho Medical Association, and others are working hard to convince those legislators of the value of his first, important step.

#### **Millennium Fund Update:**

The Millennium Fund Committee met this week and voted to leave about \$12 million of the distributable fund unspent. This fund is money paid to the state from the Master Tobacco Settlement Agreement with tobacco companies. The State elected to create a fund for those payments and utilize the interest from the fund to pay for certain tobacco cessation programs, but last year chose to not fund most of those projects. The IAFP has received some of those funds to pay for its TAR WARS program. The Committee has chosen to hold funds again this year for the prospect of using the money to partially fund the dual waiver health care proposal (if it passes the legislature).

## **Bills signed into Law**

### **Unemployment Insurance Tax reduction**

*UPDATE: Governor Otter signed this bill into law on January 31.*

Anyone who pays unemployment insurance taxes will see a reduction in that tax beginning January 1, 2018. It is estimated to reduce employer's unemployment taxes approximately 30% over a three-year period beginning in 2018.

If at any point you would like to have more detail on any of these items, beyond these short descriptions, we would be happy to provide those for you.

We will continue to track issues that directly affect IAFF.

Ken Burgess  
Veritas Advisors, LLP