

Idaho Academy of Family Physicians 2018 Legislative Report Week 6 February 12 – February 16

New Legislation Introduced this week:

SB 1311: Direct Primary Care Pilot Program

Senator Steven Thayne introduced a proposal this week that would allow three of Idaho's Health Districts to participate in a pilot program that provides Primary Care services to individuals for a period of ten months IF they also participate in financial literacy classes/programs.

UPDATES on previous legislation:

Earlier this week, Blue Cross of Idaho submitted new state-based insurance plans to the Department of Insurance for approval. This follows the recent executive order permitting the sale of non-ACA compliant plans in Idaho. These plans are not required to offer a comprehensive benefit package and insurers can charge more based on pre-existing conditions, age, gender and geographic location. This issue has garnered a great deal of national interest, since Idaho's actions may be illegal. We have been contacted by a legal team looking for physician plaintiffs in a suit. Please contact me if you would like more information.

SB 1255: Tobacco Age of Possession Killed in Senate State Affairs Committee

UPDATE: After a few hours of debate the Senate State Affairs Committee voted 6-3 to Hold this bill in committee. The basic arguments against it ran along the lines of "if we can ask our 18-year-olds to go to war, should we limit their ability to purchase certain products?"

This bill would change the age of purchase for tobacco products and electronic cigarettes from 18 – 21 years of age.

HB 495: Health Care Billing Equity Act HELD in House H & W Committee

UPDATE: This bill was held in Committee after much debate and opposition from health care groups. It is expected that the stakeholders shall get together over the interim to come up with a solution.

Rep Luker's bill 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

UPDATE: This bill passed the full House 42-27 this week. It now goes to the Senate Local Government and Taxation Committee for action.

Rep. Clark Kauffman's bill 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.

HB 464: Dual Waiver "Idaho Health Care Plan" House floor vote postponed for two weeks

UPDATE: The House postponed the floor vote on this measure for a two-week period. It had previously passed committee on a vote of 7-5. There are two possible reasons for this

delay: one is there may not be enough yes votes for passage; the second is that it would cost money out of the general fund and they need to let JFAC do some work to determine the cost issue (especially in light of a parallel discussion of granting some form of tax relief to the citizens). It's 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 passed out of House Health and Welfare Committee on Thursday this week and now awaits action on the House floor.

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 the full House on Monday on a 36-32 vote, and now awaits action by the Senate Health and Welfare Committee.

This bill would restore preventative dental care services for a certain population of Medicaid recipients. This program was cut during the recessionary years and the 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 Senate Health and Welfare Committee on Wednesday and is awaiting action by the full Senate. It has already passed the House.

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.

HB 451: Medical Residency Charitable Tax deduction

This bill passed out of Senate Local Government and Taxation Committee and awaits action by the full Senate. It has already passed the House.

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 there remains plenty of behind the scenes work 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 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 and others are working hard to convince those legislators of the value of this first, important step.

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, if you would like 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
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