



2022 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Governor's State of the State address



On Jan. 10, Gov. Brad Little gave his fourth State of the State address which officially kicked off the 2022 legislative session. The governor began his speech by highlighting pandemic heroes, including IMA members Dr. Joseph Williams and Dr. Laura McGeorge who were in attendance. They received a well-earned standing ovation alongside nurses, police officers, guardsmen and teachers.

During the speech, the governor highlighted priorities in his budget request with an emphasis on education, infrastructure and tax cuts. Thanks to a \$1.9 billion budget surplus, significant investments will be made in those three areas and others through the governor's Leading Idaho initiative.

The governor is also focused on health care investments including the State Board of Education's request to fund 14 new residency positions as part of the 10-year Graduate Medical Education plan. With revenue in Idaho at record highs, the IMA lobby team will explore ways to bolster this request to make up for some past funding shortfalls in leaner years.

Another notable health care initiative in the governor's budget is the \$50 million proposed investment in mental health. The funding will be used for new community behavioral health clinics, psychiatric residential treatment facilities, youth crisis centers and other recommendations from the Idaho Behavioral Health Council.

The governor's budget does recommend rate increases in Medicaid for home-based care and providers who will be covered for the foreseeable future by increased federal funds. However, the Legislature will closely look at a longer-term vision for Medicaid; IMA will be directly involved with partners in those conversations to ensure that if there are changes to Medicaid, they don't harm patients, physicians or practices.

Things will start heating up in the Capitol next week so stay tuned for more updates on the budget and other health care issues that the Legislature will discuss.

Senate Health and Welfare to hold hearing with IMA members, focus on the pandemic

On Tuesday, Jan. 18, IMA members Dr. Ann Huntington and Dr. Marcia Witte will present a COVID-19 update to the Senate Health and Welfare Committee at 3 PM MT.

Specifically, Dr. Huntington will share her experience during COVID-19 in her facility and the impacts it has had on her and others in the health care workforce. This hearing was requested by Chairman Fred Martin (R-Boise) who attended the ACMS Legislative Night and was compelled by **Dr. Huntington's powerful presentation.**

You can watch the hearing in-person at the Statehouse or [online here](#).

First week updates

The first week of the legislative session typically focuses on process-related items. However, there was a large tax cut bill proposed in the House Revenue and Tax Committee that appears to have strong support from Republican leaders in the House and Senate and the governor's blessing as it relates to his State of the State speech supporting tax cuts.

The Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee was also busy this week. The committee received presentations on the governor's budget request and federal funding that is available to Idaho. State Affairs also previewed bills on election process which will be a continuing topic this year.

In the coming weeks, look for IMA's bill tracker and opportunities to write your legislators about future legislation that could impact the practice of medicine.

Federal update

Supreme Court blocks Biden's OSHA vaccine mandate, upholds CMS requirement

On Thursday, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Biden administration's rule under the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) that would have required employers with 100 or more employees to get vaccinated or agree to regular testing. This was estimated to impact more than 80 million people. The court ruled against the Biden order 6-3, with the majority opinion stating that Congress did not give OSHA the right to regulate public health that broadly.

However, the Court upheld the rule under the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) which will require employers who receive Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement to require vaccinations for their employees. This rule will impact more than 10 million people. The court ruled 5-4 in favor of upholding the Biden rule. The majority opinion stated that the Constitution allows the federal government to require conditions on federal funding.

IMA Public Health Committee meets with Rep. Mike Simpson

On Tuesday, Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho Falls) met with IMA Public Health Committee (PHC) representatives at his request to get an update on COVID-19 in Idaho. In attendance were IMA PHC Chair Laura McGeorge, MD; Christine Hahn, MD; David Pate, MD/JD; Ted Epperly, MD and IMA staff Susie Keller and Jamie Neill.

The meeting focused on the need to ensure adequate funding and capacity to increase COVID-19 treatments, testing and encourage vaccination. Simpson is a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee and is a key decision-maker for funding bills in Congress. The congressman also thanked the physician community for their tremendous work during COVID-19 and pledged to work with IMA on physician burnout and telehealth policies this year.

Support IMPAC the IMA's Political Action Committee!



The IMA Political Action Committee (IMPAC) Board uses your contributions to support a variety of bi-partisan candidates based on the best interests of Idaho physicians and their patients.

With the pandemic and constantly changing health care policies, it is more important now than ever that IMA has the resources to support legislators who will listen to our concerns. IMPAC needs your contributions now to support the house of medicine in Idaho!

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