



# 2021 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

April 16, 2021

## **GREAT NEWS!! GME funding passes House and Senate, headed to governor**

On April 12, the House took up SB 1175, the health education portion of the State Board of Education budget that provides \$900,000 of state funding for 15 new GME positions throughout the state in family practice and psychiatry. The bill was sponsored by Rep. Caroline Nilsson Troy (R-Genesee) and passed by a vote of 38-29 with three members absent. The absent members have all been solid supporters of graduate medical education. While the vote was not as strong as in past years, SB 1175 was one of the only higher education bills to pass so far this session, as the mood and politics have killed several higher education appropriations bills.

GME expansion is a top priority for the IMA, and we are grateful to sustain the success we have achieved in advocating for increased opportunities for Idaho physicians and patients. Thanks to all the medical students and residents who wrote to legislators in support of SB 1175. Strong advocacy makes a difference!

Status: Passed the Senate and House and now awaits the governor's signature

## **Contact your legislators – support the Medicaid budget, SB 1185**

One item of pending business before the House is SB 1185 which funds the Medicaid budget for fiscal year 2022. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and increased costs related to pent-up demand associated with Medicaid expansion, the cost of the Medicaid budget exceeds the Milliman cost projections by a significant amount. However, there is a solution to this problem as the federal government has provided increased funding specifically for Medicaid due to the harsh consequences of the pandemic. This budget has drawn opposition from many House members who have consistently opposed Medicaid expansion. Their concern with the “growth of government” threatens the success of Medicaid expansion and could result in the denial of care to Medicaid patients. This critical funding bill will be a tight vote which is why we encourage you to contact your representatives. **Please contact your legislator and tell them to vote YES on SB 1185.**

Status: Passed the Senate by a vote of 29-6 and awaits consideration before the full House

## **House continues to defeat budget bills, end of session remains unclear**

The end of the session remains unclear as the House continues to defeat appropriations bills which must be completed before legislators adjourn. Much of the holdup comes from the House which has defeated several appropriations bills related to education. The higher education budget failed on a vote of 13-57 over legislators’ concerns about the Boise State University curriculum as it relates to social justice and critical race theory. The House also defeated the K-12 public school budget for teachers by a tie vote of 34-34 over similar concerns. The Senate adjourned on April 14 after working through all their legislative business and will return on Monday, April 19. The House remains in session.

## **Mask mandate prohibition bill advances in House**

On April 14, the House passed HB 339, which would prohibit the state or a political subdivision (local governments) from requiring masks in response to an infectious disease outbreak. The bill passed by a vote of 47-22. While the legislation is opposed by the IMA, some progress has been made as an earlier version of the legislation did not exempt hospitals and health care facilities. The current version of the legislation now exempts hospitals and health care facilities. The amended version also includes a penalty in which a violation would result in termination of a disaster emergency or public health order. If you want to express your opposition to this legislation and similar bills related to the pandemic and emergency powers of the government, **you can contact your legislator here.**

Status: HB 339 was amended and passed by the House on a 47-22 vote and awaits further consideration by the Senate

## **Federal update**

### **U.S. House passes delay to Medicare sequester with Idaho support**

On April 13, the U.S. House passed H.R. 1868 which delays the Medicare sequester 2 percent reimbursement cut to physicians to Dec. 31, 2021. The legislation was supported by both Idaho Reps. Mike Simpson and Russ Fulcher. Rep. Simpson was a cosponsor of similar legislation to delay the

sequester. The bill had already passed the Senate with support from Sens. Mike Crapo and Jim Risch which solidified the entire delegation in support of delaying the Medicare sequester. President Biden signed the bill into law. Had no action been taken, physicians would have been impacted by an across-the-board 2 percent cut to all Medicare payments. IMA thanks Idaho's delegation for standing up for physicians at this critical time!

**To view a list of ALL healthcare-related bills and their statuses, visit the IMA Bill Tracker on the IMA website**

**IMA Bill Tracker**

**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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