



2021 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

April 30, 2021

This week the Idaho Legislature – the House in particular – addressed an enormously difficult situation. The entire process was managed with diligence to ensure a safe environment for everyone who works in the Statehouse, and with care for the rights of the victim as well as the accused. IMA extends our sincere gratitude to the House Ethics Committee, House leadership, and all those involved for their efforts in dealing with this situation in a fair and transparent manner.

Medicaid budget passes House (finally) – heads to governor's desk

SB 1185, which funds the Medicaid budget for fiscal year 2022, passed the House by a one-vote margin of 36-34 on April 26. The bill had previously passed the Senate and will now move to the governor's desk to be signed into law.

This legislative session saw increased challenges with the Medicaid program due to concerns with expansion and the “growth of government” due to costs that exceeded the initial projections. Thanks to your efforts in contacting legislators, the Medicaid budget passed the House in the most challenging of political environments. Advocacy works!

Status: Passed the House and Senate and will move to the governor's desk for consideration

Emergency Powers

The ongoing debate on the governor's authority to declare an emergency did not receive consideration this week. After sustaining the governor's veto last week on SB 1136, the Senate punted the veto override consideration on HB 135 that passed the House – it will be considered on May 3. The Senate and House adopted SJR 102, which is related legislation to allow the Idaho Legislature to call themselves back into session. Because this legislation requires an amendment to the Idaho Constitution, it will be placed on the November 2022 general election ballot for further voter consideration by Idahoans.

IMA is opposed to legislation to weaken the governor's ability to utilize emergency powers during times of crisis and the IMA lobby team has encouraged lawmakers to sustain the veto of HB 135. Limiting the emergency powers would severely impact the state's ability to implement common-sense health measures, distribute vaccinations and access federal relief funds. The lobby team is continuing to monitor additional legislation on this topic and encourages **IMA members to contact their legislators expressing concern with limiting Idaho's ability to respond to a crisis.**

Status: The veto override of HB 135 passed the House and awaits further consideration by the Senate

Legislation that changes CAT fund, health districts passes Senate

Earlier this session, HB 316 was introduced that would change the way the state Catastrophic Health Care Program (CAT fund), county indigent program, and public health districts are funded. The legislation states that if a U.S. citizen is eligible for health insurance, that individual would not be eligible for assistance from the CAT fund or indigent program. In addition, HB 316 changes the funding model for public health districts from the current state funding mechanism to county financial support.

IMA worked with the Idaho Hospital Association (IHA) to monitor the legislation, which quickly passed the House and recently passed the Senate with amendments. The Senate adopted a key amendment to push HB 316's effective date to March 1, 2022, rather than making it effective immediately upon being signed into law. While there are significant questions that remain to be answered, the delay in the effective date allows IMA to work alongside IHA to better understand the impacts of the bill and ensure the best outcomes for physicians and hospitals across the state.

Status: HB 316 as amended passed the Senate 35-0; the House concurred with the amendments.

End of the session inches closer to completion – currently third-longest of all time

The Idaho Legislature has reached the 110th day of business, which is currently the third-longest in history. How the legislative session wraps up remains to be seen with several options rumored. While the traditional sine die option would signal a permanent end, House leadership recently introduced legislation to extend the session to Sept. 1, 2021. However, this has raised several procedural questions about when laws and appropriations would take effect regarding the traditional July 1 date of the state fiscal year.

The IMA priorities have mostly been addressed by this point, with the lobby team continuing to monitor legislation that would impact physicians, specifically related to the pandemic.

Federal update

IMA meets with Idaho delegation to discuss key issues

On April 27-28, IMA representatives, led by President Dr. Joe Williams, had the opportunity to meet with members of the Idaho congressional delegation. Also in attendance were President-elect Dr. Steven Kohtz, AMA Delegate Dr. Patrice Burgess, IMA CEO Susie Keller, and IMA Director of Government Affairs Jamie Neill.

Normally, this meeting takes place in Washington, DC in February in conjunction with an AMA conference, but due to the pandemic restricting travel, the IMA team met with Sens. Mike Crapo and Jim Risch, and Rep. Mike Simpson via Zoom. A meeting with Rep. Russ Fulcher is pending.

IMA leaders thanked the entire congressional delegation for their support of averting a two percent Medicare cut this year, and asked for future consideration to be given to averting a six percent across the board cut that looms Jan. 1, 2022.

Another important topic of conversation was telehealth and how it has changed healthcare delivery in Idaho during the pandemic. All the delegation members expressed strong support for telehealth and the **Telehealth Modernization Act** supported by IMA and AMA.

IMA wrapped up the conversation by bringing the delegation up to speed on the continuing state-level efforts to advocate for graduate medical education (GME) funding. The delegation agreed to look for opportunities for the federal government to play a role in developing new residency training opportunities in Idaho.

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!

Donate to IMPAC today!

To subscribe additional emails to receive the IMA Legislative Reports, [click here](#).



Idaho Medical Association
P.O. Box 83701 | 208-344-7888
idmed.org | [Unsubscribe](#)

