



2021 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

April 23, 2021

Governor signs GME funding into law

On April 16, the governor signed SB 1175 into law. This legislation is 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. This represents a critical step forward in building more residency programs in Idaho and signals that GME is a priority even during the challenging political environment at the Idaho Legislature.

Thanks to all the medical students and residents who wrote to legislators in support of SB 1175. Strong advocacy makes a difference! Stay tuned for more opportunities this year to raise awareness about GME and the need to build more residencies in Idaho.

Status: LAW

Governor vetoes emergency powers legislation

Lingering over the 2021 legislative session has been a fierce debate regarding the emergency authority of the governor during disasters. Front and center to the debate has been the pandemic, but also the unintended consequences of how limiting the governor's authority could impact response to weather events like floods and natural disasters. On April 16, Gov. Little issued his intent to veto HB 135 and SB 1136, stating that they threaten the safety of Idahoans during future emergencies and jeopardize federal funding assistance. All four former living Idaho governors issued their support for Gov. Little's veto and

recalled specific scenarios where these powers allowed them to effectively respond during disasters such as wildfires, floods, and droughts. You can [view the announcement here](#).

On April 19, the Senate failed to override the veto of SB 1136 by a vote of 23-12 which was one vote short of the two-thirds majority needed. SB 1136 will not move forward. However, the House voted to override the veto of the governor on HB 135 and the Senate could vote as early as Monday on whether or not to override the veto. To contact your legislators with concerns about HB 135, [please visit this link](#).

IMA has opposed legislation to weaken the governor's ability to utilize his emergency powers during times of crisis and the IMA lobby team has encouraged lawmakers to sustain the veto of HB 135 and SB 1136. 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.

REMINDER: Value-based care deadlines rapidly approaching

Idaho is continuing to move quickly towards value-based care due to legislation passed in 2017 and 2020 directing the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) Division of Medicaid to expand value-based payments. The Division of Medicaid is undertaking this effort to better control the Medicaid budget which has increased each of the last 3 years. The effort is being led by the Healthy Connections Value Care (HCVC) program.

The strategy is to create Value Care Organizations (VCO) that are partnerships between provider groups that share in the savings or losses, depending on how well VCOs perform against cost and quality targets established by Medicaid and meeting statewide budget neutrality requirements. A medical practice can contract directly with IDHW as a VCO itself, or partner with an already established VCO.

Idaho Medicaid primary care providers that participate in the Healthy Connections Program are mandated to partner with or become a VCO. The following timelines are important to be aware of:

- May 5 – VCO's should sign and return contracts to Medicaid with the final list of affiliates
- May 31 - Healthy Connections coordinated care agreement deadline
- July 1 – Value-based care contracts will go into effect as mandated by current law

If you have any questions about the upcoming timelines, details related to specific VCOs, or any questions regarding value-based care, you can contact IDHW directly (MedicaidValueCare@dhw.idaho.gov) or IMA Director of Government of Affairs Jamie Neill (jamie@idmed.org).

You can also find more information [here](#) or review the timelines from IDHW [here](#).

Message from IDHW Division of Medicaid – COVID-19

Funding Opportunity

The Division of Medicaid was awarded \$38 million from Idaho’s Coronavirus Financial Advisory Committee (CFAC) funding in September 2020 to assist in stabilizing the healthcare provider community for their prevention, preparation, and response to COVID-19. The Division of Medicaid has provided targeted funding opportunities to certain provider specialties since then. A new round will open, starting April 22, 2021, to all Idaho Medicaid provider types. Applicants may receive up to \$1,800 per Medicaid participant, less other federal/state COVID-19 assistance, if they meet the requirements. [Click here for the Information Release](#) sent to in-state providers with more details.

Please direct your questions to the Medicaid CFAC inbox, MedicaidCFAC@dhw.idaho.gov.

Medicaid remains to be considered by the House – ask your legislators to support SB 1185

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and increased costs related to pent-up demand associated with Medicaid expansion, the cost of the Medicaid budget exceeds 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 effects of the pandemic.

SB 1185, which funds the Medicaid budget for fiscal year 2022, has passed the Senate but is still awaiting consideration by the House. 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 ask them to vote YES on SB 1185.**

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

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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