



# 2021 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

May 14, 2021

## Governor signs emergency powers legislation

On May 11, Gov. Little signed four pieces of legislation that would revise the emergency statutes regarding the authorities of the executive and legislative branches. Three of the bills (HB 391, 392, and 393) are various individual elements of HB135, which was vetoed by the governor and sustained in the legislature. The modifications give the legislature an expanded role in the decision-making process when an emergency is declared but also allows the governor to quickly and effectively respond. Specifically, those three bills clarify that during an emergency, constitutional rights cannot be suspended, the governor cannot change the law, and narrows the restrictions that can be placed on workers.

The fourth piece of legislation the governor signed was SB 1217 that replaced SB 1136, which was vetoed and sustained by the legislature. SB 1217 would require that emergencies lasting more than 90 days be revoked unless the legislature is in session or the governor calls the two chambers back to consider extending the emergency declaration. It also protects constitutional rights to bear arms and exercise religion, declares all Idaho workers essential, and prevents the governor from altering statutes during an emergency. The governor stated that this legislation would still allow the executive branch to respond in a timely manner during future emergencies.

Status: HB 391, 392, 393, and SB 1217 were signed into law by the governor

## 2021 session over, subject to the call of the Speaker

On May 12, The House and Senate both returned to finalize several housekeeping items, including a technical correction to allow for the traditional effective dates of July 1 for new statutes and appropriations bills that became law this session.

The Senate voted to adjourn sine die (with no appointed date for resumption) while the House voted to recess, meaning the Speaker can call the House back later this year if necessary. The House can also vote to bring the Senate back into session. The Speaker indicated that the legislature's interest to return would be to appropriate any new federal funds that may come to the state.

The 122nd legislative day marks the longest session in Idaho's history. Stay tuned for a final report next week on the issues IMA covered this year that impact you and your practice.

## **Idaho Patient Act negotiations ongoing, feedback requested**

Following the passage of HB 42, which delays certain provisions of the Idaho Patient Act to July 1, 2021, IMA and other groups have engaged in ongoing discussions with Melaleuca to improve the law based on issues IMA members have encountered. IMA has created a survey geared towards practice managers and asks for your feedback on the process of implementing the Idaho Patient Act. **Please fill out the survey [HERE](#)**. If you would like to share additional areas of concern with IMA, contact Director of Government Affairs Jamie Neill at [jamie@idmed.org](mailto:jamie@idmed.org).

For information on implementing the Idaho Patient Act, visit the [IMA fact sheet](#).

## **IDHW and IMA want your feedback on COVID-19 vaccine distribution**

As the supply of the COVID-19 vaccine has outpaced demand in Idaho, the Department of Health & Welfare (DHW) has turned to IMA to seek feedback from physicians on the barriers that exist when administering the vaccine. In partnership with DHW, IMA is urging participation in the following survey to collect feedback on the challenges physicians face when administering the COVID-19 vaccine and identifying resources that could help.

IMA and DHW encourage all providers to fill out the survey below by **May 17**, even if you do not administer the COVID-19 vaccine. Your feedback is much needed and appreciated.

To fill out the survey, [please click here](#).

## **Federal update**

### **Rep. Mike Simpson cosponsors Telehealth Modernization Act**

Following the IMA meetings with the Idaho Congressional Delegation, Rep. Mike Simpson agreed to cosponsor the Telehealth Modernization Act which is supported by the IMA and AMA. The legislation would make certain telehealth restrictions that were temporarily waived during the pandemic, permanent.

For example, the “geographic and originating site” restrictions under Medicare would be permanently waived to ensure patients can access telehealth anywhere.

On behalf of IMA, thank you Rep. Simpson!

## IMA delegation meets with Rep. Russ Fulcher

The final meeting with the Idaho Congressional Delegation was with Rep. Russ Fulcher on May 4. The IMA attendees included President Dr. Joe Williams, President-Elect Dr. Steven Kohtz, AMA Delegate Dr. Patrice Burgess, AMA Alternate-Delegate Dr. Keith Davis, IMA CEO Susie Keller, and IMA Director of Government Affairs Jamie Neill.

IMA thanked Rep. Fulcher for his vote to delay the Medicare sequester, encouraged his support for telehealth, and discussed the need for more medical residency positions in Idaho. Rep. Fulcher was eager to learn more about the medical profession and will continue to work in Washington to represent the interest of IMA physicians. Thank you, Rep. Fulcher!

**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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