



2020 LEGISLATURE: IMA STATUS REPORT

Week of March 9 – March 13, 2020

Idaho's Response to Coronavirus:

Due to concerns about the coronavirus, the 2020 Idaho Legislative session is speedily approaching adjournment sooner than the projected date of March 20. House and Senate leaders will try to wrap up business early next week.

On Friday morning, Gov. Brad Little issued an executive order to aid in Idaho's response and preparedness for the coronavirus. As we send this report, Idaho has no identified cases of the virus, but confirmed cases are expected to show up soon in our state.

"With no confirmed cases in Idaho at this time, we are in the best position to be proactive and get ahead of the impact coronavirus could have here," Gov. Little said. "The concern, of course, is the wellbeing of our vulnerable population – the elderly with chronic underlying health conditions and others with compromised immune systems. But another big reason we are getting in front of it is to minimize the impact on our healthcare system. We need to slow down the spread of coronavirus so healthcare facilities are not overwhelmed with too many patients at once." Watch the address [here](#).

Please visit [the IMA website](#) for trusted resources that provide continually updated information about the coronavirus pandemic.

Top Priority Issues:

SB 1395: Graduate Medical Education (GME) - *SUPPORT*

SUCCESS!! The Legislature has approved funding to expand GME opportunities in Idaho! This marks the third year of expansion under the State Board of Education's (SBOE) Ten-Year Plan to Expand GME. The new funding allocation of \$1.25M builds out 25 residency positions and keeps the amount of funding for existing programs at current levels.

The build-out of 25 positions will be implemented as follows:

Ten Internal Medicine residents in Idaho Falls

Six Family Medicine residents in Idaho Falls

Four Psychiatry residents in Boise
Three Psychiatry residents in Pocatello
One Family Medicine Rural Training Track resident in Rexburg
One Internal Medicine resident in Boise

The SBOE's GME Committee – of which IMA is a member – will continue to meet to monitor existing growth and plan legislative budget requests for future years.

Status: *SB 1395 passed the Senate and House and will now go to the Governor for signature into law.*

HB 392: Liability Protection for Volunteer Healthcare Providers - *SUPPORT*

Great News!! IMA was successful in advocating for this bill to expand existing laws to protect certain types of healthcare professionals from liability when they volunteer to provide free medical care. Some providers who are not covered by existing statutes include counselors, social workers, psychologists, physical therapists, pharmacists and dieticians.

The new law provides immunity from liability for all properly licensed, certified and registered healthcare professionals while they are volunteering their services in free clinics. The change will also include students in these same professional fields, provided they are supervised by one of the previously mentioned professionals who is present in the facility while they provide care.

Status: *LAW*

HB 506: Balance Billing Legislation – *OPPOSE*

Because the session is coming to a close, we can finally safely say that this troubling balance billing legislation is dead. However, this issue isn't solved. IMA physicians will need to remain willing to come to the negotiating table with insurers and hospitals to find a collaborative solution; other states have had great success by requiring doctors and health insurance companies to use an independent dispute resolution (IDR) process to work out differences.

In addition to model state solutions, Congress is also considering several pieces of legislation that would address this issue. One of these, HR 5826: the Consumer Protections Against Surprise Medical Bills Act, looks to be the most fair and balanced approach.

Thank you to all IMA members who took the time to fight this bill and responded to IMA's requests for participation, your efforts have made a substantial difference.

Status: *Will not proceed in 2020.*

HB 515: Idaho Patient Act (Melaleuca Legislation) - *NEUTRAL*

This legislation is an ambitious effort to revamp physician and hospital billing processes in response to concerns about medical debt collection practices. IMA spent extensive time and effort to work with Melaleuca to remove the most burdensome provisions from the legislation. Most of IMA's concerns have been addressed, but some have not. Because of IMA's desire to stay at the table for these negotiations, our Board has officially taken a neutral position on the bill.

However, IMA continues to hear from physician practice managers about two key areas of concern:

1. HB 515 takes away the current ability for practices to immediately address bounced checks that are written at the time of service (for copays, etc.). It is a standard, generally accepted practice by medical office managers to send bounced checks to collections sooner than 60 days – which is the soonest HB 515 allows. This will cause unnecessary delay in recouping rightfully owed payment for services, since time is of the essence in these situations.
2. Even more importantly, practices are informing IMA that the requirement to add so many new elements to billing statements will potentially cost tens of thousands of dollars in order to make changes to practice management and billing software.

With the imminent adjournment of the Legislature only days away, IMA doesn't have a path forward this year to push for a trailer bill to address the problems caused by HB 515. We were very fortunate to have the effective date of the bill moved to January 1, 2021, this will allow some time to continue to gather more data in an attempt to convince Melaleuca that changes need to be made.

IMA urges physicians and their medical practice managers to carefully assess the provisions of the legislation to determine how compliance can occur, and to document situations of significant added expense, if any. Please continue to bring specific issues of concern to our attention.

Status: *HB 515 passed the House and the Senate and will go to the Governor for signature into law.*

HB 582: Definition of “Recklessness” - *SUPPORT*

This legislation is sponsored by the Idaho Liability Reform Coalition (ILRC), which is a broad-based group of business, healthcare and industry organizations. ILRC's main goal is to uphold Idaho's existing tort reform laws.

As an ILRC Board member, IMA strongly supports HB 582 to provide a definition of “recklessness” in the law to ensure that a recent faulty Idaho Supreme Court jury instruction does not weaken Idaho's cap on noneconomic damages.

Status: *This legislation passed the House and is awaiting a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee.*

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

[Click Here to View the IMA Bill Tracker](#)

Support IMPAC the IMA's Political Action Committee!



Give \$220 to Make a Difference in 2020

Or become a Diamond Club member! There are three membership levels—Silver/\$250; Gold/\$500; and Gem/\$1,000. Diamond Club members receive special IMA recognition.

Gem members also receive a special IMA gift

Make your IMPAC donation [HERE](#)

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. The 2020 election year is going to be interesting and, as the voice of medicine in Idaho, it is critical 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!

If you would like to update your email address or subscribe an additional email to receive these reports, please send your information to membership@idmed.org or call us at (208) 344-7888. For more frequent legislative updates, follow the IMA on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)!