



2021 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

March 5, 2021

Governor signs Idaho Patient Act delay

Great news! On March 1, Gov. Brad Little signed HB 42 which allows for a delay to the Idaho Patient Act until July 1, 2021, while maintaining some key protections to patients under the existing law. IMA thanks Sen. Kelly Anthon (R-Burley) and Rep. Jason Monks (R-Meridian) for their leadership in advancing the bill through the legislature and Gov. Little for signing it into law.

Now that the governor has signed the bill into law, it becomes effective immediately. To help physicians comply with the specific provisions of the delay, IMA has created a fact sheet on what this means for your practice. There is also a flow chart produced by Melaleuca that will help physicians understand how to treat services delivered before July 1, 2021 and after July 1, 2021. IMA highly recommends practice managers review this information linked below so they can accurately comply with HB 42 and the existing Idaho Patient Act statute.

[Click Here to View the Idaho Patient Act Delay Fact Sheet](#)

IMA and IHA will continue to engage with Melaleuca to seek improvements to the law to ensure that there are adequate protections for patients and no unnecessary burdens for physicians. For a list of the most common concerns with the Idaho Patient Act, please [click here](#). If you do not see an issue that you have encountered, please email IMA Director of Government Affairs, Jamie Neill (jamie@idmed.org).

Status: HB 42 was signed into law by Gov. Little on March 1, 2021

Funding for GME passes JFAC at the full amount of the governor's request

On March 3, The Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC) approved the health education portion of the State Board of Education budget. Thanks to strong outreach from students, residents, and program managers, in addition to the IMA lobby team working with committee members, the budget was approved at the full amount requested by the governor with only one no vote. The additional \$900,000 appropriation of state funds is for the fourth year of GME expansion and will increase residency positions by another 15 slots across Idaho. Thank you to everyone who wrote to JFAC with their support for GME!

Status: Awaiting consideration by the House and Senate

IMA-supported virtual care/telehealth bill passes Senate

SB 1126, the Idaho Virtual Care Access Act which is sponsored by Chairman Fred Martin (R-Boise) easily passed the Senate on March 2. The bill would improve and sustain telehealth utilization by modernizing definitions, upholding a high standard for establishing a provider-patient relationship, and creating a virtual care advisory board to make recommendations for increasing virtual care adoption and utilization in Idaho. IMA CEO Susie Keller, who was an appointed member the Telehealth Task Force (TTF) that created the recommendations for the text of SB 1126, testified in favor of the legislation during Senate Health and Welfare Committee consideration. She stated that the pandemic prompted increased utilization in telehealth which allowed the TTF to observe real-time changes and recommend necessary improvements to increase access to this emerging health care tool.

Status: SB 1126 passed the Senate by a vote of 30-5 and awaits consideration before the House Health and Welfare Committee

Brief delay announced for Medicaid expansion reimbursement

On March 1, Idaho Medicaid notified physicians that there will be a temporary delay to Medicaid expansion reimbursement. This is due to a technical provision in the Medicaid expansion legislation that prohibits a transfer of funds when the program goes over budget. The impacts of the pandemic along with pent-up demand from newly eligible Medicaid expansion participants drove up anticipated costs.

HB 216, which is the supplemental budget request to replenish the Medicaid program with increased federal funding, is swiftly making its way through the Legislature. Once the bill is signed into law, it will make the program whole and payments to physicians and other providers will resume. The delay will not impact claims for all other Medicaid participants, only the expansion population. For more information [click here](#).

Governor announces \$39 million for vaccine efforts

Thanks to the Gov. Little's Emergency Declaration, Idaho was eligible for \$39 million in funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The funds are distributed to the Idaho Office of Emergency Management (IOEM) to assist with vaccine distribution and administration throughout the state. IMA thanks the governor for this leadership, and we continue to oppose legislation that would restrict his ability to declare an emergency and access these vital funds for Idaho. You can write your legislator to urge support for a robust public health system and oppose legislation that would weaken Idaho's efforts to respond to COVID-19: [click here](#).

Federal update

In the early morning hours of Feb. 27, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation modeled after the Biden administration's proposal to fund \$1.9 trillion in various stimulus and relief efforts. The legislation passed on a party line vote and included funding for \$1,400 stimulus payments to individuals, \$350 billion in aid to states and local governments, and a \$15 minimum wage increase. However, the minimum wage increase appears certain to be stripped out after the Senate parliamentarian ruled the proposal does not meet the budgetary rules of reconciliation, the process Democrats are using to pass the stimulus legislation. The Senate will also likely lower the income threshold for the eligibility of stimulus checks, phasing out the eligibility of individuals at \$80,000 a year in annual income, as opposed to the \$99,000 level in past payments. Congress is attempting to have the bill on President Biden's desk prior to Mar. 14 when enhanced unemployment benefits expire.

To read about Idaho Senator Mike Crapo's policies with his new role on Senate Finance, [click here](#).

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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