

Florida Academy of Family Physicians
2026 Legislative Session Interim Legislative Update – Week 5
December 5, 2025

The Legislature returned to Tallahassee this week to begin two more weeks of committee meetings before the start of the 2026 Legislative Session on January 13th. It was a lighter committee week in the Senate compared to the House, where members tackled a range of issues from the minimum age to purchase a firearm and state-run health insurance, to sovereign immunity caps and four property tax proposals. The House also held the first committee meeting of the Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting. While the House is taking steps towards a potential mid-decade redistricting of the state's congressional map, Senate President Albritton announced on Thursday "there is no ongoing work regarding redistricting taking place in the Senate at this time." Governor DeSantis announced earlier this week his intention to call a special session on congressional redistricting in the spring of 2026.

Governor DeSantis will also release the details of his proposed budget in the coming days. This budget will be the last budget he submits prior to leaving office in early January 2027. The Legislature often uses the Governor's budget recommendations as a starting point for its own budget deliberations. In addition to his budget priorities, Governor DeSantis will likely propose several policies for legislative consideration, including property tax reduction proposals, limitations on mandatory vaccines for children, puppy mill crackdowns, and congressional redistricting. On Thursday, Governor DeSantis announced his proposal for a Citizen Bill of Rights for Artificial Intelligence. The Legislature will respond to the proposals and will also address hundreds of their own policy proposals in the upcoming legislative session.

AI Bill of Rights

On Thursday Governor DeSantis [proposed legislation](#) to establish an "Artificial Intelligence Bill of Rights" for Floridians. The bill would prohibit certain uses of AI — such as deepfakes, exploitation of individuals' name/image/likeness without consent, "AI therapy," and unconsented data-sharing — require notice when people interact with AI systems, extend parental controls over minors' AI usage, and bar insurance companies from using AI as the sole basis to deny or adjust claims. It also seeks to restrict the development of hyperscale AI data centers by prohibiting taxpayer subsidies, preventing utility-cost pass-through to residents, preserving water resources and natural land, and allowing local governments to block data-center construction if they choose.

Legislation of Interest to Family Medicine (listed alphabetically)

Acupuncture – [SB 672](#) by Sen. Alexis Calatayud (R-Miami) and [HB 169](#) by Rep. Jose Alvarez (D-Kissimmee) revise licensure requirements for acupuncturists including allowing for the order and administration of herbs, homeopathic and other nutritional supplements.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Autonomous Practice – [SB 138](#) by Sen. Keith Truenow (R-Tavares) and [HB 301](#) by Rep. Jason Shoaf (R-Port St. Joe) authorize certain advanced practice registered nurses to engage in autonomous practice to provide mental health services as defined by the Board of Nursing.

Advertisement of a Harmful Vaccine – [SB 408](#) by Sen. Erin Grall (R-Fort Pierce) and [HB 339](#) by Rep. Monique Miller (R-Palm Bay) authorize an individual to file a cause of action against a vaccine manufacturer for harm or injury to an individual. The bills provide that the prevailing party is entitled to actual damages, court costs, and reasonable attorney fees.

Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Initiative - [SB 578](#) by Sen. Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee) and [HB 513](#) by Rep. Dean Black (R-Jacksonville) require the Department of Elderly Affairs to contract for the development and implementation of the Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Initiative.

Autonomous Practice by a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist – [SB 462](#) by Sen. Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Doral) and [HB 375](#) by Rep. Mike Giallombardo (R-Cape Coral) authorize autonomous CRNAs to perform CRNA-specific acts, such as conducting a pre-anesthesia evaluation, ordering and administering the anesthetic as determined appropriate, monitoring and interpreting patient's vital signs, and managing the patient during surgery and in recovery, without an established supervisory protocol.

Child Welfare – [SB 560](#) by Sen. Ileana Garcia (R-Miami) provides that a new medical report relating to the provision of psychotropic medication to a child in the legal custody of DCF is only required for changes in dosage, medication type, administration method, or prescribing physician or psychiatric nurse. The bill also expands qualified evaluators for residential treatment to include licensed clinical social workers and licensed marriage and family therapists with comparable experience and no potential conflicts of interest and requires a physician to provide to a pharmacy a copy the express and informed consent documentation, rather than a signed attestation, when prescribing psychotropic medication to Medicaid-covered children.

Civil Liability for the Wrongful Death of an Unborn Child – [SB 164](#) by Sen. Erin Grall (R-Fort Pierce) and [HB 289](#) by Rep. Sam Greco (R-Palm Coast) expand Florida's Wrongful Death Act to allow the parents of an unborn child to recover damages pursuant to the Act from a person who committed a negligent act that caused the death of the unborn child.

HB 289 was approved by the House Judiciary Committee on Tuesday, 12/2 and now goes to the House floor.

Comprehensive Health Care for Residents - [SB 740](#) by Sen. Rosalind Osgood (D-Tamarac) creates the Florida Health Board to promote the delivery of high-quality, coordinated health care services and administer the Florida Health Plan to all residents regardless of immigration status. The bill prohibits enrollees from incurring copayments, deductibles, coinsurance, or other point-of-service costs, creates the Florida Health Board with authority to set budgets, negotiate rates, and oversee compliance and quality standards, and creates the Office of Health Quality and Planning and Ombudsman Office for Patient Advocacy.

Connecting to Care Act – [SB 294](#) by Sen. Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Doral) and [HB 407](#) by Rep. Jose Alvarez (D-Kissimmee) create the "Connecting to Care Act" and authorize a pharmacist to administer medication for the treatment of opiate addiction.

Continuity of Care in Health Insurance Contracts – [SB 114](#) by Sen. Shevrin Jones (D-Miami Gardens) and [HB 577](#) by Rep. Marie Woodson (D-Pembroke Pines) require health insurers and contracted health care practitioners to provide 60 days' notice to policyholders before contract termination and allows certain policyholders to continue coverage and care for a specified timeframe.

Cost-sharing Requirements for Diabetes Management – [SB 222](#) by Sen. Carlos Guillermo Smith (D-Orlando) and [HB 367](#) by Rep. Rita Harris (D-Orlando) prohibit health insurance policies from imposing a cost-sharing requirement exceeding a certain amount for a 30-day supply of insulin or any diabetes device or diabetic ketoacidosis device.

Coverage for Mammograms and Supplemental Breast Cancer Screenings – [HB 137](#) by Rep. Dianne Hart (D-Tampa) requires AHCA to provide coverage for yearly mammograms and yearly supplemental breast cancer screenings to certain Medicaid women and revises coverages for mammograms and supplemental breast cancer screenings under certain individual accident and health insurance policies.

Drowning Prevention Education – [SB 606](#) by Sen. Carlos Guillermo Smith (D-Orlando) and [HB 503](#) by Rep. Anna Eskamani (D-Orlando) require DOH to develop educational materials on drowning prevention safety measures and safe bathing practices and require hospitals, birth centers, and home birth providers to provide the educational materials to new parents and caregivers as part of their postpartum education and care.

Doula Support for Healthy Births Pilot Program – [SB 514](#) by Sen. Rosalind Osgood (D-Tamarac) and [HB 515](#) by Rep. Daryl Campbell (D-Fort Lauderdale) establish The Doula Support for Healthy Births pilot program in Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach Counties and require DOH, in collaboration with its maternal and child health section, to implement and oversee the pilot program.

Employment Eligibility – [HB 197](#) by Rep. Berny Jacques (R-Clearwater) requires all private employers, rather than only those employing more than specified number of employees, use E-Verify system to verify new employee's employment.

[HB 197 will be heard in the House Commerce Committee on Thursday, 12/11.](#)

Florida Health Choices Program – [SB 440](#) by Sen. Tom Leek (R-St. Augustine) and [HB 141](#) by Rep. Taylor Yarkosky (R-Clermont) rename the "Florida Health Choices Program" as "Florida Employee Health Choices Program" and revise purposes and components of the program. The bills revise eligibility and participation requirements for vendors under the program, the types of health insurance products that are available for purchase through program, removes certain pricing transparency requirements, revise the structure of the insurance marketplace process under the program, remove the option for risk pooling under the program, and remove exemptions from certain requirements of Florida Insurance Code under the program.

[HB 141 was approved by the House Health Care Facilities and Systems Subcommittee on Tuesday, 12/2.](#)

Health Care Patient Protection – [SB 68](#) by Sen. Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) and [HB 355](#) by Rep. Vanessa Oliver (R-Punta Gorda) require AHCA, in consultation with the Florida Emergency Medical Services for Children State Partnership Program, to adopt rules that establish minimum standards for pediatric patient care in hospital emergency departments (ED). The bills require all hospitals with EDs to develop and implement policies and procedures for pediatric patient care in the ED, and to designate a physician, physician assistant, nurse, or paramedic to serve as the pediatric emergency care coordinator in the ED. Finally, the bills require all hospital EDs to conduct the National Pediatric Readiness Assessment in accordance with timelines established by the National Pediatric Readiness Project.

[HB 355](#) was approved by the House Health Care Facilities and Systems Subcommittee on Tuesday, 12/2 and will be heard in the House Health Care Committee on Thursday, 12/11.

[SB 68](#) was approved by the Senate Health Policy Committee on Tuesday, 11/18.

Impact of Perimenopause and Menopause on Women’s Health – [SB 190](#) by Sen. Barbara Sharief (D-Davie) and [HB 161](#) by Rep. Yvonne Hayes Hinson (D-Gainesville) require the DOH to establish a perimenopause and menopause policy workgroup. The bills also require the department, in collaboration with the workgroup, to develop and make publicly available on its website information relating to perimenopause and menopause.

Interactions with Artificial Intelligence – [HB 659](#) by Rep. Christine Hunschofsky (D-Coconut Creek) requires operators of companion chatbot platforms to display specified information on any application, browser, or format used to access companion chatbots on platform and implements protocols protecting users, especially minors, from harm and misleading content. The bill requires anonymous or standard age verification and additional safeguards for known minors, including break reminders and blocking explicit sexual content, requires such operators to file specified annual reports with Department of Legal Affairs, and provides that violation constitutes unfair or deceptive act or practice.

Managed Care Plans – [SB 568](#) by Sen. Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) and [HB 531](#) by Rep. Webster Barnaby (R-Deland) revise Medicaid managed care contract requirements to prohibit managed care plans from reviewing certain prior authorization claims for medical necessity, and require that managed care plans provide coverage for durable medical equipment and complex rehabilitation technology from a qualified provider within the network of the enrollees choosing.

Mandatory Human Reviews of Insurance Claim Denials – [SB 202](#) by Sen. Jennifer Bradley (R-Flemming Island) and [HB 527](#) by Rep. Hillary Cassel (R-Hollywood) require that insurers’ decisions to deny a claim or any portion of a claim be made by qualified human professionals and prohibit the use of algorithms, artificial intelligence, or machine learning systems as the sole basis for determining whether to adjust or deny a claim.

[HB 527](#) will be heard in the House Insurance and Banking Subcommittee on Tuesday, 12/9.

Medicaid Coverage of Blood Pressure Monitoring Devices – [SB 736](#) by Sen. Danny Burgess (R-Zephyrhills) defines the terms “blood pressure cuff” and “validated at-home blood pressure monitor,” requires AHCA to provide coverage for validated at-home blood pressure monitors and blood pressure cuffs for certain Medicaid recipients who have a prescription for a validated at-home blood pressure monitor, and provides requirements for follow-up care for Medicaid recipients to continue receiving coverage.

Medicaid Providers - [SB 40](#) by Sen. Barbara Sharief (D-Davie) and [HB 163](#) by Rep. Felicia Robinson (D-Miami Gardens) require the AHCA to establish standards to ensure that Medicaid enrollees have access to network providers during state holidays and outside of regular business hours.

SB 40 was approved by the Senate Health Policy Committee on Tuesday, 11/18.

Medical Review Committees - [SB 64](#) by Sen. Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) and [HB 587](#) by Rep. Webster Barnaby (R-Deland) revise the definition of the term “medical review committee” to include managing entities for purposes of immunity under the medical malpractice statute.

Naturopathic Medicine – [SB 542](#) by Sen. Ileana Garcia (R-Miami) and [HB 223](#) by Rep. David Smith (R-Winter Springs) reestablishes licensure and regulation of naturopathic physicians, and establishes new standards for the practice. The bill provides licensure authority over naturopathic physicians to DOH and creates the Board of Naturopathic Medicine to assist DOH in the regulation of naturopathic physicians.

Parental Rights – [SB 166](#) by Sen. Erin Grall (R-Fort Pierce) and [HB 173](#) by Rep. Kim Kendall (R-St. Johns) revise requirements for the provision of maternal health and contraceptive information and services to minors. The bills require consent from a parent or guardian for a minor’s treatment for certain diseases, repeal a provision relating to minors’ access to outpatient crisis intervention services and treatment, and require school districts to provide parents with specified information before the district administers certain questionnaires or forms to students.

Patient-directed Medical Orders - [SB 312](#) by Sen. Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Doral) and [HB 369](#) by Rep. Susan Plasencia (R-Winter Park) revise the definitions and defining of the term “patient-directed medical order.” The bills authorize the execution of a patient-directed medical order for a specified purpose.

SB 312 will be heard in the Senate Health Policy Committee on Tuesday, 12/9.

Physician Assistants – [SB 668](#) by Sen. Keith Truenow (R-Tavares) provides for the registration of physician assistants to engage in practice without physician supervision, provides financial responsibility requirements for registered physician assistants, specifies activities registered physician assistants may engage in without physician supervision while prohibiting surgical procedures deeper than subcutaneous tissue, and requires registered physician assistants to provide new patients with specified information either before or during the initial patient encounter.

Practice of Chiropractic Medicine – [HB 439](#) by Rep. Nan Cobb (R-Eustis) authorizes board certified chiropractic physicians to possess, prescribe, and administer vitamins, nutrient preparations, homeopathic remedies, dietary supplements, and epinephrine and authorizes licensed pharmacists to fill, compound, or dispense certain nutritional prescriptions prescribed by certified licensed chiropractic physicians.

Prescribing Authority – [SB 374](#) by Sen. Jay Trumbull (R-Panama City) deletes the requirement that a supervising physician notify DOH in writing of any delegation of prescribing authority to a PA, deletes the requirement that a supervising physician’s name be included in the prescription issued by a PA, and revises requirements for the drug formulary for PAs and APRNs. The bill also allows PAs and APRNs to practice independently under a state of emergency.

Protection from Surgical Smoke – [SB 162](#) by Sen. Tracie Davis (D-Jacksonville) and [HB 93](#) by Rep. Marie Paule Woodson (D-Pembroke Pines) require hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers to adopt and implement policies requiring the use of smoke evacuation systems during certain surgical procedures.

[HB 93 was approved unanimously by the House Health Care Facilities and Systems Subcommittee on Tuesday, 12/2.](#)

Public Records/Emergency Physicians - [SB 268](#) by Sen. Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Doral) and [HB 251](#) by Rep. Tiffany Esposito (R-Fort Myers) define the term “emergency physician” and provide for exemptions from public records requirements for the personal identifying and location information of current or former emergency physicians and their spouses and children.

Recovery of Damages for Medical Negligence Resulting in Death – [HB 6003](#) by Rep. Dana Tabulsky (R-Fort Peirce) and Rep. Dr. Anna Eskamani (D-Orlando) deletes a provision prohibiting the recovery of certain damages by specified parties related to the decedent in wrongful death proceedings.

[HB 6003 was approved by the House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, 10/19 and now goes to the House floor.](#)

Right of Medical Conscience of Health Care Providers and Health Care Payors – [SB 670](#) by Sen. Clay Yarborough (R-Jacksonville) and [HB 551](#) by Rep. Dean Black (R-Jacksonville) authorize a health care provider or health care payor to commence a civil action if the Attorney General fails to do so after 180 days for an alleged violation of the provider’s or payor’s medical conscience rights

Rural Communities – [SB 250](#) by Sen. Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee) is a comprehensive package of legislative proposals to create opportunities for rural communities to expand education offerings, increase health care services, and modernize commerce. The bill invests in farm-to-market roads, requires the state land planning agency to give preference for technical assistance funding to local governments located in a rural area of opportunity, revises the conditions required for a county to be considered a fiscally constrained county, creates the Office of Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce, requires the Office of Rural Prosperity to administer the Renaissance Grants Program to provide block grants to eligible communities, creates the Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant Program within the Office of Rural Prosperity, expands the existing FRAME program to include medical doctors or osteopathic doctors who are board certified or board eligible in emergency medicine, establishes the Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric Response and Education (SCORE) Grant Program, appropriates additional funding to enhance Medicaid payments to reimburse rural hospitals similar to Medicare reimbursement, and creates the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program within the Department of Transportation. More information [here](#).

[SB 250 will be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on Wednesday, 12/10.](#)

Sale and Purchase of Ivermectin – [HB 29](#) by Rep. Jeff Holcomb (R-Springhill) authorizes the sale and purchase of ivermectin suitable for human use as over-the-counter medication without prescription or consultation with a health care provider.

[HB 29 has been withdrawn.](#)

School Attendance Immunizations – [SB 626](#) by Sen. Carlos Guillermo Smith (D-Orlando) adds hepatitis B, chickenpox, Haemophilus influenzae type b, and pneumococcal disease to the list of immunizations in statute that are required for school attendance.

Step-therapy Protocols – [SB 70](#) by Sen. Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) requires AHCA to approve certain drug products for Medicaid recipients for treatment of serious mental illness without step-therapy prior authorization.

Terminology Associated with Autism – [HB 411](#) by Rep. Randy Maggard (R-Zephyrhills) revises the definition of Autism to include autism spectrum disorder and clarify that both are a condition as defined by the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association.

Transparency in Health Care – [SB 596](#) by Sen. Ileana Garcia (R-Miami) defines the term “personal benefit,” requires health care practitioners to report any personal benefit received from a pharmaceutical company to DOH, requires the department to establish uniform reporting procedures and a publicly accessible online database for the reports, and requires the department to establish certain guidelines for health care practitioners.

Use of Professional Nursing Titles - [SB 36](#) by Sen. Barbara Sharief (D-Davie) and [HB 237](#) by Rep. Michelle Salzman (R-Cantonment) authorize certain nurses the title Doctor of Nursing Practice and the abbreviation D.N.P., and the title of Doctor of Philosophy and the abbreviation PhD. The bills also require doctoral degree holders to specify their profession when using the term “doctor.”

Uterine Fibroid Research Database – [SB 196](#) by Sen. Barbara Sharief (D-Davie) and [HB 327](#) by Rep. Lisa Dunkley (D-Lauderhill) require the DOH to include uterine fibroids in a specified list of diseases it may conduct studies on and delete a prohibition on the inclusion of personal identifying information in the database.