

**Florida Academy of Family Physicians**  
**2025 Legislative Session Interim Legislative Update – Week 3**  
February 7, 2025

FAFP leaders were in Tallahassee attending several fundraisers held to support both Republicans and Democrats serving in the Florida legislature. Rep. Sam Garrison was awarded the FAFP Excellence in Advocacy Award. FAFP Past President and FSU College of Medicine Dean, Dr. Alma Littles was joined by FAFP board member and resident, Dr. Del Carter (far right), and FAFP EVP, Jay Millson, and personally thanked Rep. Garrison for his support of legislative appropriations that have promoted medical education loan repayment, expanding graduate medicine education, increased Medicaid reimbursement, and more.



Over at the Capital, legislators discussed employment of persons with disabilities, mental health and substance abuse, KidCare eligibility, rural public education, domestic security, the future of transportation, and thoroughbred racing, and heard agency budget presentations and program reviews. As required by the state Constitution, Governor DeSantis released his 2025-26 state budget recommendations 30 days before the start of session. Details of the “Focus on Fiscal Responsibility” Budget will be presented to the Legislature in the coming days. Adding to the week are a number of changes in the Executive Branch’s leadership. Florida’s Attorney General has officially been sworn into the US Senate, there is a new Attorney General (formerly the Governor’s Chief of Staff), a new Governor’s Chief of Staff (formerly the Secretary of ACHA), and the Lieutenant Governor is stepping down to serve as president of FIU.

***Major Personnel Moves at the Capital***

Attorney General Ashley Moody is now officially US Senator Ashley Moody. Moody was appointed by Governor DeSantis to replace Florida senior Senator Marco Rubio, who was confirmed this week as the United States Secretary of State. James Uthmeier, the Governor’s former Chief of Staff, has been appointed Florida’s Attorney General replacing Ashley Moody, and Jason Weida, the Secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration, will be the Governor’s new Chief of Staff. Florida Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez is expected to resign this week to assume the role of Interim President at FIU on February 17, 2025. Nuñez, a former legislator who has served as Governor Ron DeSantis’ second-in-command since 2019, will step into the position following the departure of FIU’s current interim president Kenneth Jessell.

***Governor’s Budget recommendations***

Governor Ron DeSantis released his [budget recommendations](#) this week. The Governor’s proposed “Focus on Fiscal Responsibility” budget for Florida’s Fiscal Year 2025-2026, totals \$115.6 billion, which is \$3 billion less than the current fiscal year. The budget emphasizes tax relief, infrastructure development, education, public safety, and healthcare, while aiming to streamline government operations by reducing a net 741 positions. The budget recommendations include \$2.2 billion in tax relief measures, including the permanent repeal of the business rent tax, the creation of a new venture tax credit program, the renewal of four traditional sales tax holidays, and the introduction of two additional tax holidays.

In healthcare, the Governor's budget proposal emphasizes investments aiming to modernize service delivery, support medical professionals, and enhance public health outcomes. To address the critical shortage of nursing professionals, the budget allocates \$130 million to nursing education programs. The budget dedicates over \$151.4 million to support behavioral health initiatives, with a focus on mental health and substance abuse treatment. The Governor's budget also proposes \$36 million to increase access to obstetric care, particularly in underserved areas and more than \$114.2 million is allocated to support children, foster families, and adoptive parents.

An additional \$506.9 million is proposed for public safety initiatives, including \$329.9 million for the Department of Corrections to improve officer retention, inmate programming, facility safety, and mental health services. The Department of Law Enforcement is allocated \$10 million to combat the opioid epidemic by expanding the State Assistance for Fentanyl Eradication (S.A.F.E.) program. \$14.8 billion is allocated for infrastructure projects, focusing on \$5.7 billion for highway maintenance and construction, adding 169 new lane miles, \$1.6 billion to resurface 2,647 lane miles, and \$954.7 million to repair or replace 64 bridges. Additionally, \$1.7 billion is advanced in the current fiscal year to expedite congestion relief along Interstate-4. We expect formal presentations of the Governor's budget recommendations to legislative committees later this month.

### ***Florida Health Care Connections Program***

On Wednesday in the [House Information Technology Policy and Budget Subcommittee](#), Brian Meyer, AHCA Deputy Secretary of Medicaid, and Mike Magnuson, FX Program Director, provided an update on AHCA's Florida Health Care Connections (FX) Program. The FX Program complies with the federal government requirement to have a Medicaid Managed System. Florida began the transition to FX in 2014. FX replaces individual outdated systems with an interoperable, unified platform where modules, processes, and subsystems work seamlessly together to support Florida Medicaid. You can find the full presentation [here](#).

### **FAFP Legislative Priority**

**Invalid Restrictive Covenants with Physicians** – [HB 485](#) by Rep. Kelly Skidmore (D-Delray Beach) provides that restrictive covenants which prohibit physician from practicing medicine within specified area for certain period of time are void and unenforceable.

### **Legislation of Interest (listed alphabetically)**

**Cardiac Emergencies** – [SB 104](#) by Sen. Danny Burgess (R-Zephyrhills) and Sen. Jay Collins (R-Tampa) revises a requirement for instruction on cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of an automated external defibrillator, requires each public school to develop a cardiac emergency response plan (CERP), requires school officials to work with local emergency service providers to integrate the CERP into emergency responder protocols, and provides a requirement for automated external defibrillator placement.

**Child Abuse Investigations** – [SB 304](#) by Sen. Barbara Sharief (D-Davie) creates "Patterson's Law" and requires child protective investigators to inform subjects of their investigations of the right to request specified examinations of the alleged victim, authorizes an alleged perpetrator of child abuse to request that the alleged victim be examined by the licensed physician or APRN who did not perform the initial examination.

**Collaborative Pharmacy Practice for Chronic Health Conditions** – [SB 294](#) by Sen. Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) revises the definition of the term “chronic health condition” to exclude specified heart conditions for purposes of collaborative pharmacy practice for chronic health conditions.

**Damages Recoverable in Wrongful Death Actions** – [HB 25](#) by Rep. Johanna Lopez (D-Orlando) removes the provision that prohibits adult children and parents of adult children from recovering certain damages in medical negligence suits.

**End-of-life Options** – [HB 471](#) by Rep. Joe Casello (D-Boynton Beach) establishes procedures to allow an adult who has mental capacity and who has terminal condition to obtain medication to end his or her life. The bill also provides requirements for health care providers, health care facilities and the Department of Health.

**Health Insurance Coverage for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities** – [HB 377](#) by Rep. Allison Tant (D-Tallahassee) revises the definition of term "autism spectrum disorder" to have the same meaning as defined in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association. The bill also revises the definition of term "eligible individual" to mean a person of any age who has been diagnosed as having developmental disability, thus removing any age restrictions.

**Health Screenings For K-12 Students** – [HB 219](#) by Rep. Kelly Skidmore (D-Delray Beach) and [SB 370](#) by Sen. Barbara Sharief (D-Davie) authorize specified screening services to be performed on K-12 students after written parental notification of such services is provided and student's parents are given the opportunity to deny consent or opt his or her student out of such services.

**Heat Illness Prevention** – [HB 35](#) by Rep. Mike Gottlieb (D-Plantation) requires certain employers to implement an outdoor heat exposure safety program. The bill also specifies requirements for the safety program, provides responsibilities for certain employers and employees and requires annual training on heat illness.

**International Health Organization Policies** – [HB 6011](#) by Rep. Ryan Chamberlin (R-Ocala) and [SB 340](#) by Sen. Joe Gruters (R-Sarasota) repeal the provision authorizing certain entities and institutions to adopt, implement, or enforce specified policies by rule or executive order of Governor.

**Pharmacy** – [HB 273](#) by Rep. Linda Chaney (R-St. Petersburg), provides for permitting of remote-site pharmacies, requires that licensed or consultant pharmacist serve as prescription department manager of remote-site pharmacy, requires remote-site pharmacies to notify the Florida Department of Health (DOH) of changes in pharmacy's prescription department managers, authorizes remote-site pharmacies to store, hold, and dispense medicinal drugs, prohibits dispensing of Schedule II medications at remote-site pharmacies unless pharmacist is present, requires prescription department managers to visit remote-site pharmacies, prohibits remote-site pharmacies from being open when supervising pharmacy is closed unless certain pharmacist is present or providing remote supervision at remote-site pharmacy, and exempts registered pharmacists serving as prescription department managers for remote-site pharmacies from certain practice limitations.

**Prescriptive Authority Certification for Psychologists** – [HB 23](#) by Rep. Gallop Franklin (D-Tallahassee) and [SB 250](#) by Sen. Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee) allow psychologists to prescribe medicine if they meet specified criteria.

**Sickle Cell Care Management and Treatment Education** – [HB 333](#) by Rep. Felicia Simone Robinson (D-Miami Gardens) requires physicians and nurses to complete a 2 hour continuing education course on sickle cell disease care management as part of the initial licensure or certification renewal.