


# 2022 Florida Legislative Session - FINAL SUMMARY

## Family Physician Focused


(\*Implementation dates, provided Governor's approval)

The FAFP started the 2022 legislative session having identified three critical areas of need and was capable of delivering on all issues: telemedicine improvements, allowing emergent care without parental consent, and loan repayment/forgiveness funding for family physicians. With much of the scope of practice advances being tactically stymied, the FAFP joined forces with the Florida Medical Association, Florida Osteopathic Medical Association and other medical specialty societies to achieve all three goals and more. The following represents details of the FAFP legislative victories in 2022 ([go to www.fafp.org/advocacy](http://www.fafp.org/advocacy) and click on the final Capitol update for more detailed information):

### Telehealth Expansion (July 1, 2022\*)


 SB 312/HB17 allows telehealth providers to issue prescription renewals for a Schedule III, IV or V controlled substance through telehealth, within the scope of their practice. While this is a significant step forward, the effort is not complete. The FAFP will continue to press the legislature to ensure telehealth services are paid at parity compared to in-person office visits despite the arguments that this should be a contractual relationship between the insurance company and the physician.

### Emergency Medical Care & Treatment of Minors - Parental Consent (July 1, 2022\*)

 In 2021, the original "parental consent" bill did not expressly exempt physicians from treating minors in

the event of an emergency except if the emergent care or treatment was provided in a hospital or within a college health service. However, [HB 817](#) fixes this "glitch" and now allows physicians to render emergency medical care without parental consent.

### Medical Education Reimbursement and Loan Repayment Program (implementation TBD)


 Although written into statute since 2002, the legislature has never funded this program for various reasons. However, significant effort was made to obtain \$6,000,000 for FY 2022-23 along with additional funding to support 3.5 FTEs to get the program up and running. The funds, up to \$20,000 per year for educational expenses, are specifically dedicated to physicians, and other healthcare professionals, practicing primary care in rural or underserved areas, as determined by the Florida Department of Health (DoH). This is a tremendous victory not only for family physicians searching for loan repayment but to the patients in rural, underserved communities who will receive enhanced quality of care by having access to primary care physicians. Similarly, the FAFP recently provided a letter of support to the Florida DoH's application to obtain a federal grant that could provide even more funding for primary care loan forgiveness. More information will be forthcoming as soon as family physicians are eligible to apply for the loan forgiveness.



**Step-therapy Protocols (July 1, 2022\*)**  
[HB 459](#) requires health insurers to

publish on their websites and provide to their insureds step-therapy protocol exemption procedures, something that organized medicine as a whole has been advocating for years as it unnecessarily delays patient care. The new statutory definition of a step-therapy protocol is "a written protocol that specifies the order in which certain prescription drugs, medical procedures, or courses of treatment must be used to treat an insured's condition." Now, health insurers must both provide in writing and post on their websites, the procedure to request a step-therapy protocol exemption or the process to appeal a denied request from the company. The legislation will hopefully improve what has become a serious administrative burden that can potentially harm patients by delaying access to necessary and appropriate therapeutic interventions.

### COVID-19 Liability Protections for Businesses & Health Care Providers

 (Signed Feb. 24) ([SB 7014](#)), which provides liability protections unless gross negligence can be proven, extends the date through June 1, 2023. This legislation continues to provide liability protections unless gross negligence can be proven, extends the date through June 1, 2023. The legislation, originally signed by the governor in March 2021, mostly protects physicians and large healthcare facilities (e.g., nursing homes, hospitals), but [CLICK HERE](#) to read the updated Statute. The continuation of any liability protection represents a significant victory for medicine during the 2022 session.