

**Florida Academy of Family Physicians
2021 Legislative Session
Capital Update - WEEK SEVEN
April 16, 2021**

As the Legislature enters the final two weeks of its session both controversial and non-controversial measures vie for time in the few remaining legislative committee meetings. The more controversial bills can take hours, with many amendments and scores of people testifying. The less controversial bills can pass in a matter of minutes. Each committee chair must manage the time necessary to accommodate both types of bills in the finite time allotted for the committees to meet. This past week legislators split their time between these long committee hearings and time on the chamber floor acting on legislation that has already moved through the committee process. Amidst all of this hard work, legislators and Capitol observers wait for budget negotiations to begin. The timing and outcome of these negotiations provides valuable insight as to where the Legislature will conclude its work by April 30th, the last scheduled day of the regular legislative session.

Following is an update on the Florida Academy of Family Physicians' priorities.

Doctor of the Day



This week was highlighted with FAFP Government Relations Committee members Dr. Dan Montero (left) and Dr. Mike Cromer serving as Doctor of the Day. Dr. Montero was sponsored by Senate President Pro Tempore Aaron Bean (R- Nassau/Duval) and Dr. Cromer was sponsored by

Representative Susan Valdes (D- Hillsborough). As the session begins to wrap up in the final two weeks, stay tuned to see family medicine finish strong in service by having leaders participate in this important program down the stretch.



Legislation Important to Florida's Family Physicians – FAFP Positions Noted

COVID-19 Liability Protections for Businesses & Health Care Providers – **Support – SIGNED INTO LAW**

Legislative leaders announced that an agreement had been reached on COVID-19 liability protections for businesses and health-care providers. The agreement was placed on SB 72 by Senator Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg). The agreement provides procedures for COVID-19-related civil actions. **SB 72** took effect on March 29 when the Governor signed the bill

and applies retroactively; however, the bill does not apply in a civil action against a particular defendant if the suit is filed before the bill's effective date.

SB 72 passed the Senate on March 18 by a vote of 24-15 and passed the House on March 26 by a vote of 83-31. The bill was immediately enrolled and sent to the Governor who signed the bill into law on March 29. FAFP worked with other health care organizations in support of the legislation.

Link to Enrolled Version of SB 72:

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/72/BillText/er>

APRN Scope of Practice Expansion – Oppose

HB 111 by Rep. Randy Maggard (R-Dade City), **SB 424** by Senator Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg) allow advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) to engage in full independent practice by removing the current restriction to primary care practice.

FAFP is actively opposing these bills and neither bill has been heard by any House or Senate committees meaning it will most likely not pass.

Link to HB 111: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/111>

Link to SB 424: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/424>

PA Independent Practice – Oppose

HB 431 by Rep. Bob Rommel (R-Naples) and **SB 894** by Senator Manny Diaz (R-Hialeah) broaden the scope of practice for physician assistants (PAs) by allowing licensed PAs to practice autonomously. FAFP worked successfully to remove the autonomous practice provisions in the bill and worked to craft language adopted this week in the House to ensure that the appropriate supervision remains in place for physician assistants.

HB 431 was amended by the full House this week to include the following provisions:

- Authorizes PAs to prescribe 14-day supplies of Schedule II psychiatric controlled substances for minors under 18 years of age under the supervision of a family practice physician, a pediatrician, an internal medicine physician, or a psychiatrist.
- Authorizes physicians to supervise up to 10 physician assistants at a time. Current law limits the number of physician assistants a doctor can supervise to four.
- Allows physician assistants to sign Baker Act orders, death certificates, do-not-resuscitate orders, medical evaluations for workers' compensation, school physical examinations, and orders for physical therapy and occupational therapy.

On April 14, HB 431 passed the full House by a vote of 106-5.

HB 894 is in the Appropriations Committee, its last committee referral.

Link to HB 431: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/431>

Link to SB 894: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/894>

Psychologist Prescribing – Oppose

SB 160 by Senator Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg) and **HB 687** by Representative Ramon Alexander (D-Tallahassee) allow certified, licensed psychologists to prescribe, administer, discontinue, and distribute prescription drugs, including controlled substances.

Neither bill has had a committee hearing.

Link to SB 160: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/160>

Link to HB 687: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/687>

Optometry – Oppose

SB 876 by Senator Manny Diaz (R-Hialeah) and **HB 631** expand the scope of practice for certified optometrists to perform laser and non-laser ophthalmic procedures and therapies under certain circumstances.

HB 631 is in the Health and Human Services Committee, the final committee hearing. SB 876 has two hearings remaining – Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services and Appropriations.

Link to SB 876: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/876>

Link to HB 631: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/631>

Administration of Vaccines – Oppose

SB 768 by Senator Dennis Baxley (R-Ocala) and **HB 1063** by Rep. Juan Fernandez-Barquin (R-Miami) expand the scope of authority for Florida-licensed pharmacists to administer immunizations and vaccines. The bills authorize pharmacists and registered pharmacy interns to administer any immunization or vaccine to an adult that is:

- Listed in the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) recommended vaccine or vaccine licensed in the United States by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- Listed in the CDC’s Health Information for International Travel;
- Authorized vaccine for emergency use by the FDA.

The bills also repeal the specific statutory limitation to the 2015 CDC-recommended vaccines, effectively updating the reference to the CDC’s Recommended Immunization Schedule as of April 30, 2021. The Board of Pharmacy (BOP) may authorize additional adult immunizations and vaccines that may be administered by pharmacists and pharmacy interns as they are added to the lists of approved immunizations and vaccines noted above.

Finally, the bills authorize pharmacists to provide influenza vaccines to individuals age 7 and older within the framework of an established protocol under a supervising physician.

HB 1063 is on the calendar of bills ready to be considered by the full House.

On April 16, SB 768 passed the Rules Committee by a vote of 17-0 and the bill is scheduled to be considered by the full Senate on April 21.

Link to SB 494: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/494>

Link to HB 459: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/459>

Link to SB 768: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/768>

Link to HB 1063: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1063>

Step-therapy Protocol Exemptions – Support

SB 1290 by Senator Ed Hooper (R-Clearwater) and **HB 1001** by Rep. Matt Willhite (D-Wellington) require health insurers to publish on their website, and provide in writing to the insurer, procedures to request step therapy protocol exemptions. The procedure must include:

- The manner in which an insured patient or health care provider may request a protocol exemption;
- The manner and timeframe in which the health insurer or HMO is required to authorize or deny a protocol exemption request; and,
- The manner and timeframe in which an insured patient may appeal the denial of a request.

An insurer or HMO denying a protocol exemption request must provide a written explanation of the denial, including the clinical rationale supporting the denial. The written explanation must also describe the procedure for appealing the determination by the insurer or HMO.

On April 14, HB 1001 passed the Health and Human Services Committee, its last committee reference, by a vote of 21-0 and is now on the calendar of bills available for consideration by the full House. SB 1290 has not been heard by any Senate committees meaning it is most likely dead at this time.

Link to SB 1290: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1290>

Link to HB 1001: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1001>

Pharmacy Benefit Managers – Monitor

The Florida Pharmacy Act establishes a set of protections for licensed pharmacies regarding audits by Pharmacy Benefits Managers (PBMs) and other payers.

HB 1155 by Rep. Jackie Toledo (R-Tampa) and **SB 390** by Senator Tom Wright (R-New Smyrna Beach) transfer the audit provisions of the Florida Pharmacy Act to the Florida Insurance Code (Code). This change gives the Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) the authority to enforce these provisions and respond to potential violations.

SB 390 revises the provisions of the Code relating to the oversight of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) by OIR, including:

- Authorizing OIR to conduct market conduct examinations of PBMs to determine compliance with applicable provisions of the code;
- Requiring a health insurer or HMO, and any entity acting on their behalf, including a PBM, to comply with the pharmacy audit provisions;
- Providing that a health insurer or HMO may only contract with a PBM that complies with specified statutory requirements;
- Authorizing an audited pharmacy to appeal certain pharmacy audit findings made by health insurers or HMO; and
- Clarifying that an insurer or HMO remains responsible for any violations of the pharmacy audit requirements and the prompt pay law by a PBM acting on its behalf.

HB 1155 expressly authorizes pharmacies to appeal audit findings made by health plans and PBMs using the existing dispute resolution program available through AHCA. The bill establishes a financial penalty for PBMs that fail to register with OIR in accordance with current law.

HB 1155 is in the Health and Human Services Committee.

On April 13, SB 390 passed the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government by a vote of 10-0 and is now in the Appropriations Committee.

Link to HB 1155: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1155>

Link to SB 390: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/390>

Access to Health Care Practitioner Services – Oppose

HB 803 by Rep. Mike Caruso (R-Delray Beach) and **SB 1680** by Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Doral) exempt physicians and osteopathic physicians who provide pro bono services from continuing education requirements, allows the board to issue a limited number of restricted licenses to physicians not licensed in Florida to practice for 36

months in certain settings. The bills also increase the federal poverty level from 200 to 400 for the Access to Health Care Act.

SB 1680 is in its last committee, the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. HB 803 is scheduled for House floor consideration on April 20.

Link to HB 803: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/803>

Link to SB 1680: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1680>

Nonopioid Alternatives – Support

SB 530 by Senator Keith Perry (R-Gainesville) and **HB 725** by Rep. Scott Plakon (R-Longwood) allow health care practitioners to provide the required nonopioid alternative educational pamphlet in either an electronic format or in a printed format to patients or the patient’s representative. SB 530 also prohibits health insurance policies from requiring that treatment with an opioid analgesic drug product or abuse-deterrent opioid analgesic drug product be attempted and have failed before authorizing the use of a nonopioid-based analgesic drug product. Rep. Plakon has filed an amendment to SB 530 to remove this provision and make the bills identical.

On April 14, HB 725 and SB 530 were scheduled to be heard on the House floor; however, they were taken off the floor calendar.

Link to SB 530: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/530>

Link to HB 725: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/725>

Informed Consent for Pelvic Examinations – Support

Legislation passed in 2020 requires certain health care practitioners and medical students to obtain written consent from a patient or a patient’s representative before performing a pelvic exam. **SB 716** by Senator Lauren Book (D-Plantation) and **HB 361** by Rep. Evan Jenne (D-Dania Beach) amend and narrow the definition of “pelvic examination” and amend the current law requiring written consent for all pelvic examinations performed by health care practitioners and trainees.

HB 361 revises the definition of pelvic examination to mean a manual examination of the organs of the female reproductive system. The bill also revises the emergency exception to the informed consent requirement allowing a health care practitioner to perform a pelvic examination without the written consent of the patient if the pelvic examination is necessary for the provision of emergency services and care or the patient has an emergency medical condition. The House bill was amended this week in committee to add two exceptions to the informed consent requirement allowing a health care practitioner to perform a pelvic examination without the written parental consent if the pelvic examination is administered to conduct a:

- Child protective investigation; or a
- Criminal investigation involving child abuse or neglect.

On April 16, SB 716 passed the Rules Committee by a vote of 17-0 and the bill will be considered on the Senate floor on April 21.

On April 14, HB 361 passed the Health and Human Services Committee, its last committee reference, by a vote of 20-0 and the bill is on the calendar of bills ready for the House floor.

Link to SB 716: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/716>

Link to HB 361: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/361>

Medicaid Eligibility – Support

A budget conforming bill, **HB 5201** by the Health Care Appropriations Committee, extends postpartum Medicaid eligibility for pregnant women to 12 months and continues the policy of retroactive Medicaid eligibility for non-pregnant adults to the first day of the month in which an application for Medicaid is submitted. Most of the funding for the \$240 extension will come from pass-through funds from the federal government with the state committing about \$92 million. Currently, pregnant women are covered for only two months after the birth of a child. According to AHCA, the additional months of eligibility under the House's conforming bill will apply to about 97,600 Florida women each year. The bill is supported by House Speaker Chris Sprowls (R-Palm Harbor) and the bipartisan Florida Woman's Legislative Caucus.

HB 5201 is now postured for House and Senate budget conference negotiations.

Link to HB 5201: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/5201>

Personal Protective Equipment – Support

Florida's Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) is tasked with managing the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including acquiring and distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) to local governments and health care providers. Currently, FDEM is required to develop and maintain logistics contracts with suppliers who can supply resources and commodities, such as generators, and other commonly needed supplies during a natural disaster. The division also operates and manages the State Logistics Response Center which stores the state's stockpile of resources. Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, PPE was not acquired to the extent needed for supporting a pandemic response.

SB 1760 by Senator Ben Albritton (R-Wauchula) and **HB 1353** by Rep. Clay Yarborough (R-Jacksonville) require FDEM to maintain an inventory of PPE in reserve for declared emergencies caused by an infectious or communicable disease. The bills also require FDEM to plan for and procure PPE or have sufficient contracts in place for ensuring PPE availability in the event of a declared emergency and must make PPE available for purchase by healthcare practitioners or their employers at the cost procured or negotiated by the division, and may not sell such PPE at a price exceeding the purchase price.

SB 1760 is in the Appropriations Committee.

HB 1353 is in the Infrastructure & Tourism Appropriations Subcommittee.

Link to SB 1760: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1760>

Link to HB 1353: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1353>

Emergency Preparedness & Response Fund – Support

HB 7047 by the House Pandemics & Public Emergencies Committee and **SB 2006** by Senator Danny Burgess (R-Zephyrhills) and the Senate Select Committee on Pandemic Preparedness and Response amend the State Emergency Management Act to better address the threat posed by a pandemic or other public health emergency. Among the provisions, the legislation specifies that the State Emergency Management Act applies to pandemics and other public health emergencies, requires the Department of Health to create a state public health emergency management plan, and requires the Division of Emergency Management to acquire and maintain an inventory of state-owned personal protective equipment. Additionally, the bills limit state emergency orders, proclamations,

and rules to 60-day durations that can be renewed as long as the emergency conditions persist.

HB 7047 is in the Health and Human Services Committee.

SB 2006 is scheduled to be considered by the full Senate on April 21.

Link to HB 7047: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/7047>

Link to SB 2006: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/2006>

Dispensing Medicinal Drugs – Support

HB 29 by Rep. Matt Willhite (D-Wellington) and **SB 262** by Senator Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) authorize hospitals to dispense 48-hour supply of medicinal drugs to the patient of an emergency room of the hospital or a patient discharged from a hospital. The Senate bill was amended to provide that the new conditions that authorize the prescribing of a controlled substance are subject to ss. 456.44 and 465.0276, F.S., which regulate the prescribing of controlled substances.

HB 29 is on the calendar of bills ready for House floor consideration.

On April 19, SB 262 is scheduled to be heard in the Appropriations Committee, its last committee hearing.

Link to HB 29: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/29>

Link to SB 262: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/262>

Telehealth – Support

HB 247 by Rep. Tom Fabricio (R-Miramar) allows practitioners to prescribe schedule III, IV, and V controlled substances using telehealth services and retains current law restrictions on prescribing Schedule II controlled substances through telehealth.

SB 700 by Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Doral) was amended in committee and now contains the following provisions:

- Authorizes AHCA to reimburse for telehealth under the Medicaid program.
- Allowing out-of-state providers who are registered and enrolled in Florida Medicaid as an out-of-state provider to be reimbursed for telehealth services provided to recipients in this state.
- Expands the definition of “telehealth” in s. 456.47, F.S., to include:
 - A telehealth provider’s supervision of health care services through the use of synchronous and asynchronous telecommunications technology.
 - Telephone calls, emails, fax transmissions, and other nonpublic-facing telecommunications.
- Authorizing a telehealth provider, practicing in a manner consistent with his or her scope of practice, to prescribe Schedule III, IV, and V controlled substances through telehealth and may use telehealth to prescribe Schedule II controlled substances if they are prescribed for the treatment of certain conditions, including the treatment of a psychiatric disorder.
- A telehealth provider may not use telehealth to prescribe a controlled substance listed in Schedule I of s. 893.03 or to issue a physician certification for marijuana for medical use under s. 381.986.
- Providing additional long-acting medications by injection that pharmacists may administer to include an extended-release medication to treat opioid use disorder, alcohol use disorder, or other substance use disorder or dependency, including buprenorphine, naltrexone, or other medications that have been approved by the

FDA. The pharmacist seeking to administer these medication must complete an 8-hour continuing education course.

- Revising an exemption from the telehealth registration requirements when performed in consultation with a health care professional licensed in Florida who has authority over the diagnosis and care of the patient.

On April 14, HB 247 passed the Health and Human Services Committee, its last committee reference, by a vote of 20-0 and is now on the calendar of bills ready to be considered by the full House.

SB 700 is in the Appropriations Committee, its final committee reference. A [proposed committee substitute](#) has been drafted to the bill.

Link to HB 247: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/247>

Link to SB 700: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/700>

Prohibited Acts by Health Care Practitioners – Support

HB 721 by Rep. Ralph Massullo and **SB 1142** by Senator Ray Rodrigues (R-Estero) prohibit health care practitioners from using certain specialty designations. The term "anesthesiologist" may only be used by licensed physicians and licensed dentists and the term "dermatologist" may only be used by licensed physicians. SB 1142 also adds the making of misleading, deceptive, or fraudulent representations related to a practitioner's specialty designation as grounds for discipline.

HB 721 is in the Health & Human Services Committee, its final committee reference.

SB 1142 is in the Appropriations Committee, its final reference. A [proposed committee substitute](#) has been drafted to the bill.

Link to HB 721: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/721>

Link to SB 1142: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1142>

Health Care Practitioner Discipline – Support

SB 1934 by Senator Lauren Book (D-Plantation) and **HB 1579** by Rep. Vance Aloupis (R-Miami) add to the list of offenses that are grounds for disciplinary action against the license of any health care practitioner regulated by the Department of Health (DOH), for:

- Being convicted, found guilty, pleading guilty, or pleading nolo contendere, regardless of adjudication, to any of the crimes listed in s. 456.074(5), F.S., as amended; or
- Attempting, soliciting, or conspiring to commit an act that would constitute a crime listed in s. 456.074(5), F.S., or similar crime in another jurisdiction.

The bills also add homicide, as well as certain offenses involving minors, to the list of offenses that require DOH to issue an Emergency Suspension Order (ESO). The bills also direct the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to analyze state laws and rules relating to grounds for health care practitioner discipline and ESOs of licenses, specifically with respect to criminal offenses, and to report to Executive and Legislative Branch leadership by January 1, 2022.

On April 14, HB 1579 passed the Health and Human Services Committee, its final committee reference, by a vote of 20-0 and the bill is scheduled for consideration on the House floor on April 20. On April 16, SB 1934 passed the Rules Committee by a vote of 16-0 and the bill is scheduled to be considered by the full Senate on April 21.

Link to SB 1934: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1934>

Link to HB 1579: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1579>

PIP - Motor Vehicle Insurance Reforms – Monitor

SB 54 by Senator Danny Burgess (R-Zephyrhills) and **HB 719** by Rep. Erin Grall (R-Vero Beach) repeal Florida’s Motor Vehicle No-Fault Law which requires every owner and registrant of a motor vehicle in this state to maintain Personal Injury Protection (PIP) coverage. This week, SB 54 was amended and passed the full Senate. The legislation repeals Florida’s current motor vehicle no fault law, replaces it with mandatory bodily injury coverage and creates a new framework to govern motor vehicle claim handling and third party bad faith failure to settle actions against motor vehicle insurance carriers. The bill requires individuals to carry medical payments coverage (MedPay) to cover medical expenses of the insured. The bill also specifies that insurers must reserve the first \$5,000 of Med Pay benefits for 30 days to pay physicians and dentists for emergency services or hospital inpatient care.

On April 14, SB 54 passed the Senate by a vote of 38-1.

HB 719 is in the Judiciary Committee, its final committee reference.

Link to SB 54: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/54>

Link to HB 719: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/719>

Consumer Protection Against Fraud During a Pandemic – Monitor

HB 9 by Rep. Ardian Zika (R-Land O’ Lakes) and **SB 1608** by Senator Aaron Bean (R-Fernandina Beach) establish criminal penalties and authorizes civil remedies for those knowingly and willfully making a false or misleading statement or disseminating false or misleading information regarding the availability of, or access to, a COVID-19 vaccine.

HB 9 is on the Senate calendar of bills ready to be heard by the full Senate.

SB 1608 is in the Rules Committee, its last committee reference.

Link to HB 9: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/9>

Link to SB 1608: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1608>

“Parents’ Bill of Rights” – Oppose

SB 582 by Senator Ray Rodrigues (R-Estero) and **HB 241** by Rep. Erin Grall (R-Vero Beach) establish the “Parents’ Bill of Rights.” The bills provide that the state, its political subdivisions, any other governmental entity, or other institution may not infringe upon the fundamental rights of a parent to direct the upbringing, education, health care, and mental health of a minor child. If those entities infringe upon a parent’s fundamental right, they must demonstrate that the action is reasonable and necessary to achieve a compelling state interest, and the action must be narrowly tailored and not otherwise served by less restrictive means. The bills enumerate a list of rights that a parent possesses to direct the education of his or her child and be informed about the child’s educational programs. The bills also require a parent’s permission before a health care practitioner may provide services, prescribe medicine to the child, or perform a medical procedure, unless otherwise provided by law. The bills provide a misdemeanor penalty for a health care practitioner or similar person who violates the health care provisions and subjects these persons to disciplinary actions. The Senate bill specifies that the prohibition against the provision of health care services to a minor child without parental consent does not apply to care that is provided in good faith by a volunteer team physician and is necessary to treat an acute medical condition pursuant to s. 768.135, F.S., which relates to the provision of emergency care by a volunteer team physician at an athletic event. **The FAFP opposes this bill as it**

relates to treatment that may not be sought by children for fear of retribution for treatable conditions (e.g. STDs) yet are afraid of their parents finding out.

HB 241 passed the full House and resides in the Senate.

SB 582 will be considered on the Senate floor on April 21.

Link to SB 582: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/582>

Link to HB 241: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/241>

Department of Health Package - Support

SB 1568 filed by Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Doral) and **HB 1565** by Rep. Brad Drake (R-Eucheeanna) are the Department of Health's legislative package this session. The bills make numerous changes to programs under the Department of Health (DOH) and health care professions regulated by the Division of Medical Quality Assurance (MQA) within DOH. Specifically, the bills:

- Update institutional accreditation references for chiropractic medicine, clinical laboratory personnel, and mental clinical social workers and marriage and family therapists;
- Authorize DOH to deny a nursing application or discipline a nurse under certain circumstances;
- Remove obsolete references to DOH-issued licensure examinations for clinical social workers and marriage and family therapists;
- Revise education, training, and temporary certification requirement for midwives;
- Remove obsolete form and fee requirements for fingerprinting of orthotists and prosthetists;
- Revise educational requirements for psychologists applying for licensure by endorsement; and
- Allow DOH to continue to issue licenses to marriage and family therapy graduates until July 1, 2026, while such programs seek accreditation.

Last week, an amendment was added to SB 1568 to allow health care providers to use telehealth to prescribe a controlled substance listed in Schedule III, Schedule IV, or Schedule V. No changes were made to controlled II substances.

On April 15, SB 1568 passed the Appropriations Committee by a vote of 19-0 and the bill is scheduled to be considered by the full Senate on April 21.

On April 15, HB 1565 was scheduled to be considered by the full House; however, the bill was postponed.

Link to SB 1568: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1568>

Link to HB 1565: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1565>