

OVERVIEW

The Legislature is well on its way toward enacting a budget for fiscal year 2022-23 which begins October 1. Both Chambers have passed their versions and sent them across the rotunda to the other body. From there, each House will formally reject the other's budget and matters will get settled by way of a Joint Conference Committee. Meantime, on May 20, the Revenue Estimating Conference will come to a consensus regarding the anticipated State revenue for the remainder of the calendar year. The figures agreed upon from this Conference will be the basis for the target figures legislative leaders will use to determine State departmental budgets and school aid. All indications are the State will be flush with money. It is anticipated the Legislature will forward a complete budget to the Governor on or around July 1. The Governor's race for Republicans is heating up with 10 candidate filings, although 3 of those candidates face challenges to the petition signatures they submitted. It appears the GOP candidate that is most threatened with disqualification is former Detroit police chief James Craig. The Craig campaign has admitted that thousands of his petition signatures may not be genuine. With the August primary election getting closer, legislators who are not term limited will be anxious to hit the campaign trail. In April, Michigan Republicans nominated two people endorsed by former President Donald Trump to run for Attorney General and Secretary of State. Most observers believe these GOP nominees will make it easier for the current Democratic Party incumbents to win re-election in November. Nurse practitioners, through the sponsor of their bill to increase their scope of practice, have called for work group meetings with representatives of physician interests.

LEGISLATION

Nurses Seek to Practice Radiology: SB 680, sponsored by Sen. Rick Outman, (R-Six Lakes) would establish the category of “certified nurse practitioners” (CNP) in statute and would greatly expand their scope of practice. The bill allows a CNP to determine a diagnosis, which is, in essence, the practice of medicine. The bill also allows CNPs to prescribe pharmacological and non-pharmacological “interventions and treatments” that are within their specialty role. Finally, the bill allows CNPs to supervise others and to order, perform, supervise and interpret laboratory and imaging studies. Clearly, this is the practice of medicine and radiology.

MRS will be working with MSMS and other physician specialty organizations to defeat this bill. The bill is still with the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Meantime, representatives of the nurses and the Wayne State University School of Nursing have requested a series of work group meetings in an effort to reach a compromise which at this point, given the aspirations of the nurses, is unattainable.

Prior Authorization: Last year, Sen. Curt VanderWall (R-Ludington), the Chair of the Senate Health Policy Committee, introduced legislation calling for procedures and protocols to be established before the use of prior authorization by insurance companies. MRS has been a member of the “Health Can’t Wait” coalition, which has been advocating prior authorization reform. Unfortunately, major insurers such as Blue Cross/Blue Shield were successful in amending last session’s version of the legislation to the point where even the Coalition opposed its passage. Consequently, the bill died at the end of session. In March, Sen. VanderWall introduced SB 247, a revised version of last session’s bill. While SB 247 is not as strong as last session’s bill as originally introduced, it is still supported by the Coalition. SB 247 has unanimously passed the Senate and was sent to the House. SB 247 finally received a hearing before the House Health Policy Committee on March 22. Thereafter, the House approved its substitute, and the Senate concurred in the bill. The legislation was presented to the Governor for her signature on March 29 and was signed by her on April 7. It is now known as Public Act 60 of 2022.

Upgrade Standards for Radiographic Technologists: HB 5116, sponsored by Rep. Rodney Wakeman (R-Saginaw) establishes education and training standards for those who operate sophisticated imaging equipment. Currently, Michigan is an outlier among states, mandating requirements for only mammography and CT operation. MRS is supportive but has suggestions as to how to make the bill stronger. The legislation is with the House Health Policy Committee and has received its first hearing. Another hearing on the bill is anticipated prior to the legislature’s summer break.

Essential Health Provider Legislation:

SB 246, sponsored by Sen. VanderWall, increases the debt limit the State would pay for an individual who has taken part in the essential health provider repayment program from \$200,000 to \$300,000 over a ten-year period. SB 435, sponsored by Sen. Michael MacDonald (R-Macomb), expands the list of healthcare professions that would qualify for the program to include behavioral sciences. These bills have passed the Senate and the House and were signed into law by the Governor on March 24.

REGULATORY

The MRT Work Group met on May 12 and was given an overview of the Certificate of Need and Work Group process. Future meetings will be held on June 9, July 7 and August 4.

A PET SAC meeting was scheduled for May 26 to discuss and review its changes. Future meetings will be held on June 23, July 21, August 18, September 22 and October 20.