Patient Access to Primary Care Providers

**CS/HB 843** (AM Rodriguez) passed the House Health & Human Services Committee by a unanimous vote. The bill requires hospitals to notify a patient’s primary care or specialist provider, if any, within 24 hours of the patient’s admission to the hospital.

Electronic Prescribing Bill Moves in House Committee

E-prescribing is used to securely transmit prescriptions to pharmacies using special software. **CS/HB 831** (Mariano) and **SB 1192** (Bean) mandate the use of electronic Prescribing by January 1, 2021.

Alternative Treatment for Veterans

**CS/SB 1518** (Wright) authorizes alternative treatments for veterans diagnosed with PTSD and TBI to be delivered through a state university or Florida College System institution.

House & Senate Appropriations Bills Ready for Conference

The House and Senate passed appropriations bills this week. The bills are only about $400 million apart, with differences in higher education, affordable housing, Medicaid, bonding for roads, K-12 funding, Visit Florida, Enterprise Florida, and Hurricane Michael funding. They are similar to the Governor’s recommended budget on Everglades restoration funding. The House cuts universities by $100 million, Preeminence funding by $20 million and World Class Scholars and Professional/Graduate funds by $15 million. PECO projects are to be paid for from carry forward funds in the House budget.

Quote of the Week:

“History has its eyes on you.”

~Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton: The Revolution*
Electronic Prescribing ~

**CS/HB 831 (Mariano)** – Electronic Prescribing – passed the House Health and Human Services Committee by a vote of 12 – 2. The bill requires prescribers transmit all prescriptions electronically, beginning January 1, 2021. Consequently, written prescriptions are prohibited except when electronic prescribing is unavailable due to a temporary electrical or technological failure. Congress passed legislation mandating e-prescribing for certain medicinal drugs under the Medicare Part D program and 15 states have enacted mandatory e-prescribing laws.

Florida prescribers have been slower to adopt e-prescribing for controlled substances than others. Only 7.8 percent of controlled substance prescriptions were e-prescribed in 2017. The estimated cost for an electronic health record (EHR) system for an office with 10 full-time prescribers is approximately $42,332 for implementation and $14,725 for annual maintenance.

Supporting the bill were representatives of the Florida Retail Federation, Associated Industries of Florida and Walgreens. The Florida Medical Association opposed the bill because of the potential cost to physician’s offices.

The companion bill, **SB 1192 (Bean)** will be considered in the Senate Health Policy Committee next week.

Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)

This **CS/HB 1123 (Ponder)** codifies the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) in Florida Statutes. The PACE is a capitated health benefits program authorized by federal law and cooperatively operated by the Department of Elderly Affairs (DOEA) and the Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA). PACE is a comprehensive service delivery system funded by a combination of federal Medicare and state Medicaid financing. PACE was created as a way to provide clients, family, caregivers and professional health care providers the flexibility to meet a person’s health care needs while continuing to live safely in the community.

The bill also requires PACE organizations to meet specific quality and performance standards, as required by federal law and regulations. AHCA is charged with monitoring the reporting requirements assigned to PACE organizations.

**CS/HB 1123** will be considered by the House Health & Human Services Committee this week. The Senate companion, **CS/SB 778 (Baxley)** passed two committees and is in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Firefighter Memorial Monument

The new memorial to fallen firefighters was dedicated this week. Celebrated by Cabinet officials Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried, CFO Jimmy Patronis, and Atty. Gen. Ashley Moody.
Veterans’ Health Care Services

Complimentary and Alternative Medical Treatments for Veterans with PTSD and TBI

CS/SB 1518 (Wright) -- Alternative Treatment for Vets – passed the Senate Health Policy Committee unanimously. The bill authorizes the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs (FDVA) to contract with one state university or Florida College System institution to provide alternative treatment options for veterans who have been diagnosed by a health care practitioner with service-connected posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or a traumatic brain injury (TBI) under certain conditions. Veterans who have been certified by the VA, or any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, as having a TBI or PTSD, are eligible for these services, which may include accelerated resolution therapy, equine therapy, music therapy and service animal training therapy.

The provision of the alternative treatment services must be under the direction and supervision of an individual licensed as an allopathic physician, an osteopathic physician, a chiropractor, a psychologist, or a clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, or a mental health counselor.

The House companion bill, CS/HB 501 (Ponder), will be considered by the House Health & Human Services Committee next week.

Patient Access to Primary Care

CS/HB 843 (AM Rodriguez) -- Patient Access to Primary Care and Specialist Providers -- passed the House Health and Human Services Committee by a vote of 14-0 and is on the Special Order Calendar for April 10, 2019. The bill requires hospitals to notify a patient’s primary care or specialist provider, if any, within 24 hours of the patient’s admission to the hospital.

The bill also requires hospitals to tell admitted patients that they may request to have their primary care or specialist provider consulted during the development of their plan of care. Hospital physicians must make reasonable efforts to consult with the patient’s primary care or specialist provider upon the patient’s request.

Hospitals are also required to notify the patient’s primary care or specialist provider, if any, of the patient’s discharge within 24 hours and provide the discharge summary and any related information or records to the primary care or specialist provider within 7 days.

The Senate companion bill is included in the Senate health care “train,” CS/SB 7078 (Health Policy) passed the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services by a vote of 5-4 this week.

Driverless Cars?

CS/HB 311 (Fischer) & CS/SB 932 (Brandeis) - “autonomous vehicles” authorizes demonstration projects. It is moving in both the House and the Senate.
The original Governor's Mansion was built on the current site in 1907 and was occupied for nearly 50 years by a succession of eleven governors. In 1955, during the term of Governor LeRoy Collins, the first mansion was dismantled when it became structurally unsound. The current mansion was completed in 1956, and the First Family moved into their new home in the Spring of 1957. The Governor's Mansion was designed by renowned Palm Beach architect, Marion Sims Wyeth, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places.