Scope of Practice
House Bill Moves Forward

Speaker Oliva made autonomous practice of ARNPs and PAs a focal point of his Session opening day remarks. This week, CS/HB 607 authorizing autonomous practice under certain conditions passed the House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee. There is not an identical companion in the Senate at this time.

Prescription Drug Donation Repository

Since 1997, state prescription drug donation and reuse programs have existed. The programs allow unused prescription drugs to be donated and re-dispensed to patients within federal guidelines. In the U.S., 38 states have passed laws authorizing such programs. Florida only does this for Cancer treatment drugs.

House Budget “Reprioritization”
House Subcommittees’ Recommendations

The House Appropriations subcommittees on Health Care and Higher Education reviewed base budgets and made recommendations for budget cuts and areas for additional funding to the full committee.

Quote of the Week: “Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.”
~ St. Mtr. Teresa quoted by Senate President Galvano

The 2020 Florida Legislative Session Begins in Tallahassee

“The health care-industrial complex made up of hospitals, medical device manufacturers and pharmaceutical companies are the great robber barons of our time.”
~ Speaker Jose Oliva

This week the legislature convened for the 60-day Legislative Session. Budget and policy issues, such as education, health care and the state’s environmental challenges are of primary concern to all of Florida’s political leaders. Tuesday, they presented their legislative priorities.

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The Speaker’s priority bill providing autonomous practice for nurse practitioners and physician assistants passed the House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee this week by a unanimous vote. CS/HB 607 (Pigman) authorizes APRNs who meet certain criteria to practice advanced or specialized nursing without physician supervision and allows PAs to practice primary care without physician supervision. These APRNs and PAs may serve as a patient’s primary care provider.

Supporting the bill were representatives from the following organizations: Florida Hospital Association, Florida Association of Nurse Anesthetists, The James Madison Institute, Florida Chamber of Commerce, Florida Academy of Physician Assistants, Inc., AARP Florida, Americans for Prosperity, Florida Association of Nurse Practitioners, National Council of State Boards of Nursing, and the Small County Coalition. Opposing the bill were representatives from the following organizations: Florida Medical Association, Florida Osteopathic Medical Association, Florida Academy of Family Physicians and Florida Chapter, American College of Physicians, American Academy of Emergency Medicine and Florida College of Emergency Physicians.

Additionally, a bill authorizing pharmacists to diagnose and treat strep throat and the flu passed the Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee. House Bill 389 (Sirois) relating to Testing for and Treatment of Influenza and Streptococcus passed the Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee by a vote of 10-1. The bill authorizes pharmacists, in conjunction with a Florida physician, to test for and treat the flu and strep within the framework of an established written protocol. The bill requires a supervising physician to review the actions taken by a pharmacist. The bill also prohibits any person from interfering with a physician’s professional decision of whether to enter into a protocol to supervise a pharmacist to provide testing for and the treatment of the flu and strep. The Senate companion bill, SB 714 (Hutson) has not been considered yet.

Governor Ron DeSantis presented his policy priorities in a short address to the joint legislature on opening day. He listed priorities that included water quality legislation to help restore the environment, enhancing education through teacher raises, occupational licensing deregulation, implementation of E-Verify, increasing Gardiner Scholarships and Family Empowerment scholarships to eliminate waiting lists. He praised Florida’s state university system: “…the top ranked public university system in the nation and has three universities in the top 50: UF in the top 10 heading for the top 5; FSU in the top 20 heading for the top 15, and USF in the top 50 heading for the top 25.”

House Speaker Jose Oliva targeted “the healthcare industrial complex” and accused the hospitals, pharmaceutical companies and medical device manufacturers of gouging consumers. He said the creation of stand-alone ERs to be primary care substitutes was another form of increasing their profits. Speaker Oliva said: “You see fewer and fewer medical students are studying to be primary care physicians. The cost of schooling is high and other specialties offer far more lucrative options. This together with an exploding population has created a large and growing demand for primary care which will soon reach crisis levels.” He condemned Florida’s “archaic and backwards approach to scope of practice,” and argued that, “an advanced nurse practitioner who has at least a four-year degree in nursing, a graduate degree, in many cases, a doctorate in nursing and 2,000 hours of clinical, supervised residency to be allowed to practice what they studied!” Speaker Oliva also said that state universities excessively spend state funds and “seek extravagance in buildings and sports programs which adversely affect their costs…” However, in his remarks about supporting child welfare workers, the Speaker praised the commitment of President Thrasher and FSU’s Florida Institute of Child Welfare to develop and constantly advance their curriculum at the FSU School of Social Work.

Senate President Bill Galvano’s brief remarks to the “first Senate of a new decade” included an exhortation for senators to “show constituents that we can exchange and debate ideas while maintaining civility and decorum.”
Prescription Drug Donation Repository Legislation

**CS/SB 58** (Book) unanimously passed the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health & Human Services. A Prescription Drug Donation Repository Program is created in the Department of Health (DOH) to facilitate donation and distribution of prescription drugs and supplies to indigent, underinsured, and uninsured patients in the state. The program establishes a system of repositories, which are used to distribute donated prescription drugs to eligible patients. The bill lists eligibility criteria for repositories, donors, donations, and donation recipients. Program participants must follow the program’s procedures for donating, inspecting, storing, and dispensing prescription drugs and supplies. Repositories are required to report monthly on their program activities. The DOH must publish registries on its website of participating repositories and available donations under the program. The bill also grants immunity for participating persons and entities that exercise reasonable care in donating, accepting, transferring, distributing, or dispensing prescription drugs under the program.

Pharmacies, charitable clinics, and hospitals are locations where such donations are accepted. In Florida’s Cancer Drug Donation Program, only Class II hospital pharmacies that elect or volunteer to participate are eligible to accept donations of cancer drugs from designated individuals or entities.

According to the House staff analysis, Iowa, Wyoming, and Oklahoma appear to have successful drug reuse programs. From its inception in 2007, Iowa’s program has served over 71,000 uninsured or underinsured patients and provided 9.1 million units of free drugs and supplies. This has saved $17.7 million in costs based on the value of donated medications. Wyoming’s program has filled over 150,000 prescriptions worth over $12.5 million in the last 10 years, and since 2004, Oklahoma’s program has filled over 239,000 prescriptions worth over $23.8 million. Georgia formally launched its program in January 2018 and has served over 1,000 patients, dispensing prescription drugs worth over $2 million.

**CS/HB 177** (Yarborough) unanimously passed the Health & Human Services Committee this week and is on the House Calendar.

**House Budget Reprioritization Recommends Cuts to Hospitals and University & College Carry Forward Funds**

“Cognitive Dissonance” is defined as discomfort felt when there are conflicting ideas, beliefs or values occurring at the same time. This week, it was evident when Governor DeSantis touted his $91.3 billion budget recommendations, the Revenue Estimating Conference revised revenue projections slightly upward, and then the House Appropriations Subcommittees recommended budget reductions, called “reprioritizations.”

The Revenue Estimating Conference calculated an additional $306 million than previously forecast, increasing the 2020-2021 estimate by $86 million. The economists continue to predict an economic slow down due to weaker housing, construction and sales tax revenues and several global pressures. The House Appropriations subcommittees reviewed agency base budgets and the chairs made recommendations to the full committee his week.

**House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee Chair MaryLynn Magar** said that they identified $207.4 million to be reprioritized ($45 million GR and $95 million nonrecurring & $66 million in state trust funds). The subcommittee found no recurring base projects that could be eliminated. They recommended eliminating various administrative functions deemed no longer in the state’s best interest. Additional reductions include: DOH budget based on reversions and unfunded budget ($10 million); Children’s Medical Services funding due to managed care implementation and workforce reduction; eliminating vacant FTEs within county health departments ($13 million); Ounce of Prevention funding based on historical reversions; medical marijuana funding for FAMU and make it a statewide education program through DOH; and other agency administrative reductions. They also recommended reduce certain hospital outpatient rates by 2% to fund a 1.5% nursing home rate increase. These budget cuts will be used to fund the APD waiver, child welfare and mental health services and veteran nursing homes.

**House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee Chair Randy Fine** indicated the budget reprioritization exercise target was to cut $295.7 million; however, they exceeded the target to a total of recommending a $371.3 million cut: $144.6 million recurring funds and $226.7 million in nonrecurring funds. Several categories of budget reductions were selected including whether programs were not core functions of higher education. Several recurring base projects were reduced or eliminated in colleges and universities budgets. Funds for students going to private colleges and universities were reduced. Required credit hours for scholarships were increased from 12 to 15 hours. Administrative costs at New College and Florida Polytechnic were double digits so reduced. Colleges were reduced where costs increased and they have reserve balance of more than 10%.

Chair Fine said state universities still have very large carry forward balances. He explained that the Legislature appropriated more money than was necessary to operate the colleges and universities. The excess went into a savings account. Chair Fine said he is recommending reductions equal to 25% of those carry forward balances as of July 1, after reserves and encumbrances, providing a nonrecurring cut of $181.6 million General Revenue (of a total statewide SUS amount of $726 million). In addition, state colleges with carry forward balances receive a 20% reduction and adult education programs were cut.
The **Mission San Luis de Apalachee** was a Spanish Franciscan mission built in 1633 in the Florida Panhandle, two miles west of the present-day Florida Capitol Building in Tallahassee. From 1656 to 1704, Mission San Luis served as the principal village of the Apalachees and was the Spaniards' westernmost military, religious, and administrative capital. Mission San Luis was one of over 100 mission settlements established in Spanish Florida between the 1560s and 1690s. It was home to more than 1,400 residents, including a powerful Apalachee chief and the Spanish deputy governor.

**Additional Resources:**

Advocate for Florida State:
http://www.advocateforfloridastate.fsu.edu/site/PageServer?pagename=deploymenthome

FSU Governmental Relations:
http://govrel.fsu.edu/

The Florida Channel:
http://thefloridachannel.org/

Florida Senate: http://www.flsenate.gov/

Florida House of Representatives:
http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/

Florida Governor's Office: http://www.flgov.com/

**For more information:**
Laura E. Brock, Ph.D.
FSU College of Medicine
1115 West Call Street
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4300
Email: laura.brock@med.fsu.edu
Office: 850.645.9429
Mobile: 850.566.1002

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**Dog of the Week**

**Woody Harris** – “Thinking” - son of Sandi Harris, FSU Alumna.