This week the Senate Health Policy Committee amended **SB 1094** (Diaz) expanding consultant pharmacists’ scope of practice with a compromise that had been hammered out between the pharmacists and Florida Medical Association. The companion bills are moving in the House and Senate.

**Patient Safety Surveys**

Hospitals are now supporting bills requiring patient safety culture surveys that are moving through the legislature due to tragic news reports about child deaths and injuries at Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital in St. Petersburg and St. Mary’s Hospital in West Palm Beach.

**Health Care Practitioner Loan Default Changes**

The “Keep Our Graduates Working Act” is on the way to the Governor for action after passing the House and Senate this week. **CS/SB 356** (Hutson) prohibits any state agency, such as DOH, from denying the issuance of, refusing to renew, suspending, or revoking a professional license based solely on a payment delinquency or student loan default.

**FSU Day at the Capitol**

Over 1,000 hotdogs and veggie burgers were fed to FSU fans Wednesday as FSU Day at the Capitol was celebrated. Lawmakers from the Seminole Caucus joined with President John Thrasher, FSU Board of Trustees Chair Ed Burr, Head Football Coach Mike Norvell and Florida Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis to celebrate Florida State University’s academic and athletic achievements. Coach Norvell gave a rousing speech to the enthusiastic crowd. He spoke about using “a new-age approach and old-school values” to rebuild the foundation for FSU Football.
The “Keep Our Graduates Working Act”

Several states have repealed license suspension laws. From 2015 to 2019, Alaska, Illinois, Kentucky, Montana, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, and Washington repealed state laws regarding license suspension for a loan default. In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the DOH reported 850 student loan defaults, 76 completed investigations, and 26 emergency suspension orders filed. In the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the DOH reported 87 student loan defaults, 250 completed investigations, 121 emergency suspension orders filed, and further disciplinary action taken on 29 licensees.

**CS/SB 356** (Hutson) and **CS/CS/CS/HB 115** (Duran) the “Keep Our Graduates Working Act,” passed the House of Representatives and Senate unanimously this week and will be reviewed by the Governor. The bill removes state agency authority to take disciplinary action against a healthcare practitioner who defaults on a federal- or state-guaranteed student loan or who fails to comply with the terms of a service scholarship. A healthcare practitioner may not have a license suspended or revoked by the Department of Health (DOH) solely because of a loan default or failure to complete service scholarship obligation.

"Anguish in the Aftermath" photo collection is on display this week at the Florida Capitol as a reminder of the two-year anniversary of the Parkland school shooting. The massacre occurred on Feb. 14, 2018, and 17 people, 14 students and 3 staff members, were killed. (Skyler Swisher, Sun-Sentinel)
Consultant Pharmacists’ Scope of Practice Compromise

Currently, pharmacists may not alter a prescriber’s directions, diagnose or treat any disease, initiate any drug therapy, or practice medicine or osteopathic medicine, unless authorized by law and are included in a formulary developed by a committee composed of members of the Board of Medicine, the Board of Osteopathic Medicine, and the Board of Pharmacy under certain statutory guidelines.

A consultant pharmacist is a pharmacist who has had extra training and provides expert advice on the use of medications to individuals or older adults. The current scope of practice for a consultant pharmacist is broader than that of a regular pharmacist. A consultant pharmacist may order and evaluate laboratory testing. For example, with authorization of a medical director, a consultant pharmacist may order and evaluate clinical and laboratory testing for a patient residing in a nursing home. Additionally, if authorized by a licensed physician, podiatrist, or dentist, a consultant pharmacist may order and evaluate clinical and laboratory testing for individuals under the care of a licensed home health agency.

Pharmacists and physicians may work together under collaborative practice agreements (CPAs), which are formal agreements in which licensed physicians make diagnoses, supervise patient care, and refer patients to pharmacists using a protocol that authorizes the pharmacist to perform specific patient care functions.

As originally filed, CS/SB 1094 (Diaz) would have expanded the consultant pharmacist’s scope of practice. Professional pharmacists were authorized to: 1) Order and evaluate any laboratory testing; 2) Order and evaluate any clinical testing; 3) Conduct patient assessments; 4) Modify, discontinue, or administer medicinal drugs pursuant to s. 465.0125, F.S.; and 5) Conduct “other pharmaceutical services,” which includes reviewing and making recommendations regarding the patient’s drug therapy and health care status to a patient’s prescribing physician, podiatrist, or dentist regarding the patient’s drug therapy and health care status.

In the Senate Health Policy Committee this week, an amendment was adopted that was a compromise between the consultant pharmacists and the Florida Medical Association. CS/HB 1094 removes the ability to “initiate” medicinal drugs pursuant to a written CPA with a physician, podiatrist, or dentist from the underlying bill’s definition of the “practice of professional pharmacy.”

CS/CS/HB 599 (A.M. Rodriguez) is on the House Special Order Calendar for consideration next week.

Patient Safety Surveys

Health care transparency has been a priority of the House leadership for several years. Patient safety culture surveys are used to measure patient safety culture by determining what is rewarded, supported, expected, and accepted in a health care organization as it relates to patient safety. They provide health care organizations with an understanding of the safety related perceptions and attitudes of its managers and staff and are used as diagnostic tools to identify areas for improvement. These can also be used to measure organizational conditions that can lead to adverse incidents and patient harm.

Patient safety culture surveys determine what is rewarded, supported, expected, and accepted concerning patient safety in a health care organization. They record staff safety related perceptions and attitudes and can be used to: 1) identify conditions that might lead to adverse incidents and 2) serve as diagnostic tools for continuous improvement. Adverse incidents are self-reported by the facilities once they determine that an incident meets the statutory definition. The AHCA receives and reviews more than 5,000 adverse incident reports annually. The most frequently reported outcomes from hospitals and ASCs are patient death, a patient requiring surgery that is unrelated to their admitting diagnosis, and surgery to remove a foreign object from a previous surgery. The AHCA publishes quarterly and annual statistics for adverse incidents as required by law.

CS/SB 1370 (Harrell) passed the Senate Health Policy Committee unanimously this week. The bill requires that hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers (ASC) conduct a patient safety culture survey at least biennially. They must use the Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture developed by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; the survey must be anonymous; and survey data must be submitted to the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA).

The bill is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health & Human Services next week. The companion bill, CS/HB 763 (M. Grant), is scheduled for a hearing next week in the House Health & Human Services Committee.
On page 1 the photo is of Dean Fogarty on the Senate Floor for FSU Day at the Capitol. The photos of Sens. Diaz, Harrell and Hatson are from the Tampa Bay Times, Tallahassee Democrat and floridapolitics.com websites. The FSU Day photos were on the FSU.com website, FSU COM FB page, and taken by the author. Sources included articles from Christine Jordan Sexton, Jim Turner, Gary Fineout, Dara Kam, Danny McAuliffe, James Call, as well as the Florida Channel and House & Senate bill analyses.

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/

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Dogs of the Week
Indie and Eagle, all-star dogs of wonderful Campus Administrator Andrea La Douceur, Daytona Beach.