

**Iowa Academy of Family Physicians**  
**End of Session Report**

If the 2013 Legislative Session was one where great pieces of legislation passed and compromise was abundant, the 2014 Legislative Session was one with dampened down expectations from the very start. In many of my early weekly newsletters, legislators spoke about bi-partisanship, working for the people of Iowa and adjourning the legislative session earlier than the 100 day per diem allotted to legislators. However once the Government Oversight Committee began investigating the Department of Administrative Services use of settlement agreements and alleged coaching of Administrative Law Judges by the Director of Workforce Development progress and bi-partisanship quickly ground to a halt.

Through the hyper-partisan rhetoric and posturing by both parties the legislature adjourned a week past scheduled with a few notable accomplishments, a balanced budget and a preview of the campaign themes for the upcoming election season.

At the bottom of the report are specifics to our interests however generally, the top achievements for legislators to take back to their districts will include:

- Balancing the state budget without raising taxes. Iowa is expected to have a budget surplus of about \$610 million when this fiscal year ends on June 30. Iowa also has \$649 million in reserve funds, the largest amount in state history.
- Expanding skills training to help Iowans fill openings for good jobs at local businesses.
- Increasing funding for infrastructure investments and boosting incentives for businesses that create good local jobs and grow the economy.
- Keeping tuition affordable at our colleges and universities, including leading the effort to freeze tuition at Iowa State, UNI and the University of Iowa for the second year in a row.
- Boosting student achievement in our K-12 schools through investments in early reading initiatives and quality teaching.
- Continuing our commitment to Iowa's quality of life with strong investments in the environment, as well as cultural and recreational opportunities.

***Education & job training***

- Increasing the number of skilled workers with apprenticeships, job training and retraining and internships for students studying science, technology, engineering and math ([SF 2347](#), [HF 2460](#)).
- Providing K-3 students falling behind with intensive literacy help ([SF 2347](#)).
- Recruiting the next generation of great Iowa teachers and encouraging our most effective educators to help others improve classroom results ([SF 2347](#)).
- Keeping tuition affordable with a funding increase to our community colleges ([SF 2347](#)).
- Freezing tuition at Iowa State, UNI and the University of Iowa for the second straight year ([SF 2347](#)).
- Providing more financial aid for private college students ([SF 2347](#)).

***Job creation & economic growth***

- Increasing funding for Iowa's 16 Small Business Development Centers ([HF 2460](#)).
- Providing incentives for businesses that locate and expand in Iowa ([HF 2460](#)).
- Funding innovation economic development efforts between our state universities and communities and businesses ([HF 2460](#)).
- Investing in the arts, cultural endeavors and historic preservation, which draw visitors to our communities ([HF 2460](#)).

- Tripling the amount of solar energy tax credits available ([SF 2340](#)) and encouraging the production of home-grown fuels ([SF 2344](#)).
- Expanding help to fix up abandoned buildings and blighted areas ([SF 2339](#)).

### ***Health & health care***

- \$1.7 million appropriated for the Rural Physician Loan Repayment Program.
- Protecting the health of Iowa kids by preventing them from using e-cigarettes ([HF 2109](#)).
- Maintaining local Emergency Management Services by increasing the amount the state pays through Medicaid for local ambulance and other emergency services ([HF 2463](#)).
- Helping kids with epilepsy by legalizing medical cannabis oil to treat seizures, upon doctor recommendation ([SF 2360](#)).
- Hiring an additional ombudsman to protect the rights of seniors in nursing facilities. ([HF 2463](#)).
- Protecting Iowa's redesigned mental health services by fully funding state commitments ([HF 2463](#)).
- Making it easier for seniors to continue living in their own homes ([SF 2193](#), [SF 2320](#)).

### ***Safe communities***

- Defining elder abuse and financial exploitation, and allowing victims to secure protective orders ([SF 2239](#)).
- Providing state funding for the first time for local elder abuse support services ([HF 2463](#)).
- Investing in Iowa's successful Drug Courts and Family Treatment Courts ([SF 2449](#), [HF 2450](#)).
- Funding for grants to help victims of domestic violence and sexual assault ([HF 2450](#)).
- Allowing criminal charges against coaches who sexually exploit students ([HF 2474](#)).
- Doubling the volunteer firefighter and EMS tax credit, and extending the credit to reserve police officers ([HF 2459](#)).

### ***Quality of life***

- Providing a record \$25 million for REAP, Iowa's popular Resource Enhancement and Protection program ([HF 2458](#), [SF 2349](#), [SF 2363](#)).
- Expanding childcare assistance for parents working part time while learning new skills ([HF 2463](#)).
- Boosting the state's child and dependent care tax credit for working families ([SF 2337](#)).
- Making stable homes a reality for more children with a \$2,500 tax credit for adoption-related expenses ([HF 2468](#)).
- Increasing funding for soil conservation and water quality ([HF 2458](#)).
- Increasing housing for working families with incentives to build and rehabilitate housing in the areas that need it the most ([HF 2448](#)).

### **Specific Legislation**

#### **Senate File 379 – BOARD OF MEDICINE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

Senate File 379 changes the number of alternate members needed to serve on a disciplinary hearing panel.  
**STATUS: DIED ON HOUSE CALENDAR (ADDED TO SENATE FILE 2196)**

#### **SF 2360 CANNABIDIOL**

SF 2360 allows Iowans diagnosed by an Iowan neurologist with intractable epilepsy to seek permission to obtain Cannabidiol for treatment. An Iowan who has been diagnosed with intractable epilepsy can apply to receive a card from the Department of Public Health allowing them to have up to 32 oz of Cannabidiol. A patient or a guardian who has the card issued to them and who follows the law will not be prosecuted by the state for possession of Cannabidiol. People who do not have the Cannabidiol Card are still

prohibited from having Cannabidiol. The cards must be renewed every year. The University of Iowa shall submit a yearly report detailing scientific literature, studies and clinical trials regarding the use of Cannabidiol around the country. This bill will be repealed July 1, 2017.

***STATUS-SENT TO GOVERNOR***

**House File 2376 – STANDARD FORM FOR PRIOR AUTHORIZATION**

The bill requires the Insurance Commissioner to develop a standard process and form to obtain prior authorization for prescription drug benefits. The standard prior authorization process must include the capability of electronic submissions.

***STATUS: DIED IN THE SENATE*** (a form of this bill was placed in the HHS budget)

**Senate File 2330 - COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER REIMBURSEMENT**

This section strikes the language in the HHS budget bill last year that mandated reimbursement for a service provided by a community mental health center under the Medicaid program at 100 percent of the reasonable costs of the service. The bill allows a CMHC to choose instead to be reimbursed in accordance with the alternative reimbursement rate methodology established by the Medicaid program's managed care contractor for mental health services that was approved by the DHS.

***STATUS: DIED IN THE HOUSE*** (this was put in the HHS budget bill)

**Senate File 2251 – CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PILOT**

This bill revises the current 28 hour per week employment requirement to apply to a combination of both employment and participation in an education program for 28 hours per week. This means that people can receive child care assistance if they both work and go to school for a combination of 28 hours per week. Currently, to get assistance you need to work or go to school 28 hours per week. This change will only take place in four pilot counties, not state-wide.

***STATUS - DIED IN THE HOUSE*** (this is implemented state-wide in the HHS budget)

**Senate File 2080 – PRESCRIPTION DATABASE**

The bill allows the Board of Pharmacy (under the Department of Public Health) to enter into an agreement with a prescription database program in any surrounding state or in Kansas. The Board may provide information from the program to a prescription database monitoring program in another jurisdiction.

***STATUS: SIGNED BY GOVERNOR***

**Senate File 2120 – ADVANCED REGISTERED NURSE PRACTITIONER TITLE**

This bill authorizes the use of the abbreviation ARNP by Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners.

***STATUS: SIGNED BY GOVERNOR***

**HOUSE FILE 2297 – PHARMACY BENEFIT MANAGER REGULATION**

The bill sets regulations on pharmacy benefit managers, requiring them to disclose certain drug price information to retail pharmacies.

The House Commerce Committee passed the bill unanimously on February 18, and the full House approved it 98-0 on March 4. The Senate made a minor amendment to the bill and passed it back to the House unanimously. The House approved the change and sent it to the governor on March 11. The governor signed it on March 14.

***STATUS: SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR***

**House File 2463 - FY 2015 HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS**

On April 29, the Iowa House and Senate gave final approval to the health and human services appropriations bill. Prior to the bill's passage, both chambers approved a conference committee report that reconciled several differences between them. The Iowa House easily approved the final

version of the legislation, but Senate approval was narrow (26-24). House File 2463 spends \$1.858 billion from the General Fund in FY 2015. This is an increase of \$107.4 million over the FY 2014 spending levels. The vast majority of the additional funding in the bill is directed to Medicaid. Due to the change in the Federal match rate for Medicaid funding, \$86.6 million of the increase is cover the increased state share of the program. An additional \$9 million was placed in the HAWK-I program due to the change in its match rate and significant enrollment growth brought on by the implementation of Obamacare. Additional funds in Medicaid are provided to reduce the waiting list for HCBS waiver services (\$6 million) and to increase nursing home reimbursement rates (\$1.25 million).

The conference committee report dropped funding and policy language the Senate approved that would have opened a state training school for female juvenile delinquents at the former juvenile home site in Toledo. The final legislation contains \$2 million to serve youth adjudicated in Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) proceedings -- youth who would previously have been served at Toledo.

The final legislation increases current funding for family and children services in several areas, including:

- \$50,000 to continue a survey of Iowans to determine the impact on adult health of adverse childhood experiences
- \$300,000 to further expand the 1st Five program
- \$6 million to reduce the waiting list for home and community-based waiver services for children with disabilities
- \$1.5 million to expand child care eligibility
- \$150,000 in additional FaDSS spending
- \$40,000 for a Fatherhood Initiative

The final legislation establishes a Healthiest Children Initiative under the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). The initiative's goal is "to develop and implement a plan for Iowa children to become the healthiest children in the nation by January 1, 2020." IDPH is required to convene a panel to create the plan, which will address how to effect improvements in (1) physical, dental, emotional, behavioral, and mental health and wellness, (2) access to food and nutrition, (3) safe and quality child care settings, and (4) safe and stable home and neighborhood environments. The plan must also promote "healthy, active lifestyles" by addressing "adverse childhood events" and reducing environmental toxins and tobacco use, while increasing immunization rates and improving family well-being. The plan is due to the legislature and governor by December 15, 2014.

***STATUS: SENT TO THE GOVERNOR***

## **Conclusion**

In closing, as we begin planning for the 2015 Legislative Session we need to be cognizant that many of the folks we've worked with in passed sessions will no longer be in the Capitol chambers due to retirement or election results. Getting involved in the elections is crucial; champions on the inside of the Capitol are just as important as champions for our interests on the outside.

As always I am available anytime you would like to speak by phone, email or in person. Thank you again for the opportunity to represent the Iowa Academy of Family Physicians.