

Government Relations Update – June 18, 2019

Pennsylvania Issues

Legislation

- **HB 786:** Trauma Center Legislation. As previously reported, on February 22, 2019, House Majority Leader Representative Bryan Cutler (R–Lancaster) introduced legislation to amend the Pennsylvania EMS Act as it relates to trauma center accreditation. The originally proposed amendments would have: (1) required that future applicants for Level I, II or III trauma center accreditation be greater than 25 miles from the nearest Level I, II or III trauma center; (2) established an annual volume criteria of 600 cases for Level II trauma centers, which is currently required for Level I reaccreditation; and (3) revised the funding formula to allow for reallocation of undistributed Level III trauma center funding to Level IV trauma centers in rural counties, since Level IV trauma centers do not currently receive funding through the EMS Act, and this funding would help provide coverage in underserved areas.

Representative Mike Schlossberg (D–Lehigh) was a co-sponsor on the bill. House Majority Leader Cutler and Representative Schlossberg serve on the Board of Trustees for the Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation (PTSF), which approved the proposed legislation. The Hospital & Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) also supported the legislation.

St. Luke’s University Health Network expressed concerns with the mileage requirement to the bill sponsors, HAP and PTSF staff, since the language would prevent a Level I, II or III trauma center at several current and planned St. Luke’s hospital locations, thereby negatively impacting patient access to care. In response to these concerns, Representative Ryan Mackenzie (R–Lehigh) proposed changes to the amendments, including removing the travel distance requirements: (1) when an established trauma center is moved or relocated; or (2) if a proposed center can demonstrate that the other trauma centers in the catchment area have a volume of cases greater than twice the amount required for reaccreditation. The modified legislation was approved by the House on June 11, 2019, and it was sent to the Senate for consideration.

- **HB 596:** Addiction treatment bed registry. On March 1, 2019, Representative Doyle Heffley (R–Carbon) introduced legislation requiring the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs to develop and administer an internet-based detoxification and addiction treatment bed registry to collect, aggregate and display information about available beds in licensed detoxification and rehabilitation facilities for the treatment of individuals in need of inpatient detoxification or addiction treatment. The registry would contain information for facilities and licensed providers; include information regarding the number of beds available at a facility; and provide a search function to identify available beds that are appropriate for the treatment of a substance abuse emergency. The bill was approved by the House on June 11, 2019, and it was sent to the Senate for consideration.
- **HR 216:** Warm Hand Off Task Force. As previously reported, on April 10, 2019, Representative F. Todd Polinchock (R–Bucks) introduced a Resolution calling for the Joint State Government Committee to form a task force and advisory committee to study ways the Commonwealth can forge the next link in the chain of care for people struggling with an addiction. The Resolution follows the House Human Services Committee’s public hearings concerning proposed legislation to mandate specific hand-off to treatment programs by hospitals. There was consensus among the presenters that the Commonwealth conduct the work necessary to assure that there are adequate detox and treatment resources across the continuum of care so the entire Commonwealth is positioned to help people who are afflicted with a substance use disorder. The Resolution was adopted by the House on June 5, 2019.

- **HR 193:** Mental Health Care Provider Shortage. On April 5, 2019, Representative Jeanne McNeill (D–Lehigh) introduced a Resolution calling for the Joint State Government Committee to conduct a study on the mental health care provider shortage in the Commonwealth. According to the Resolution, the study would: (1) identify the factors behind the mental health care provider shortage; (2) make projections on the number of mental health care providers in Pennsylvania over the next five and ten year periods; (3) determine how telemedicine can be used to extend the mental health care workforce in rural counties; (4) determine how Pennsylvania government entities can encourage more individuals to enter and remain in the mental health care workforce; and (5) make recommendations to (a) solve the disparity in the number of mental health care providers in rural counties compared to urban and suburban counties; and (b) stop and reverse the mental health care provider shortage in Pennsylvania. The Resolution was adopted by the House on June 4, 2019.

Advocacy

- **Legislative Visit:** On May 29, 2019, St. Luke’s hosted a legislative breakfast at St. Luke’s Hospital – Anderson Campus. The attendees included Representative Marcia Hahn (R–Northampton), Representative Mackenzie, Representative Joe Emrick (R–Northampton), Representative Pete Schweyer (D–Lehigh), Representative Schlossberg, Representative Heffley and Representative Craig Staats (R–Bucks). Ed Nawrocki, Robby Wax, Dr. Peter Thomas and Melissa Shafer presented an update regarding St. Luke’s and discussed proposed legislation.

New Jersey Issues

Legislation

- **S2427/A3769:** Angioplasty Bill. On April 5, 2018, Senator Joseph Vitale (D–Middlesex) introduced a bill requiring the New Jersey Department of Health to license certain qualifying hospitals to provide full service diagnostic cardiac catheterization, primary angioplasty and elective angioplasty services. A companion bill was introduced in the Assembly by Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker (D–Hunterdon) with Assemblyman Erik Peterson (R–Warren) as a co-sponsor. On May 23, 2019, the Assembly passed the bill, and it has been sent to the Senate, which referred it to the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee. St. Luke’s is working with a coalition of New Jersey hospitals in support of the legislation.
- **A5369/S3816:** Patient Protection Act. On May 16, 2019, Senate President Steven Sweeney (D–Salem) introduced legislation requiring a hospital seeking to transfer a patient outside of the state to first inform the patient of his/her right to receive care from a provider within the state. Prior to obtaining consent to transfer, the hospital would also need to document in the patient’s medical record the clinical basis for the patient’s proposed transfer outside the state. A companion bill was introduced by Nicholas Chiaravalloti (D–Hudson) on the same day, and it was passed by the Assembly on May 23, 2019. On June 10, 2019, the Senate approved amendments outlining special conditions for unconscious patients. The amended bill is likely going to be passed by the Senate.

Federal Issues

Advocacy

- **Legislative Visit:** On May 30, 2019, Congresswoman Susan Wild (D–PA–7), Congressman Dan Meuser (R–PA–9) and Congressman Tom Malinowski (D–NJ–7) participated in the taping of Lehigh Valley Chamber’s *Business Matters* television show at St. Luke’s Center. The legislators discussed various federal issues involving health care, including the Affordable Care Act and Surprise Balance Billing legislation.