

Government Relations Update – April 19, 2022

Pennsylvania Issues

Legislation

- **SB 1019**: Covid Regulatory Flexibility. On January 14, 2022, Senator Michele Brooks (R-Erie) introduced legislation to extend until June 30, 2022 important waivers and flexibilities for hospitals and healthcare facilities originally granted under the Emergency Declarations issued by Governor Tom Wolf (D), including expanding coverage of telemedicine and provider credentialing flexibilities. The bill passed both chambers and was signed into law by Governor Wolf on March 30, 2022. The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) and St. Luke's University Health Network are now advocating for a further extension, including a permanent extension for certain waivers.
- **HB 889**: Updating International Nursing Licensure Exam Requirements. As previously reported, on March 15, 2021, Representative Brett Miller (R-Lancaster) introduced legislation to amend the Pennsylvania Professional Nursing Law by allowing all graduates of an international nursing education program to sit for the registered nurse licensure examination, provided the Pennsylvania Board of Nursing determines the program meets Pennsylvania's standards. Currently, the Professional Nursing Law allows graduates of nursing programs in foreign countries to sit for the licensure examination only if they have first been licensed in the foreign country. The bill passed the House on October 26, 2021, and it was referred to the Senate Professional Licensure Committee, where it was approved. It is currently awaiting consideration by the Senate. HAP and St. Luke's support this legislation.
- **HB 2401**: Home Health Care Regulatory Relief. On March 16, 2022, Representative Jeff Wheeland (R-Lycoming) introduced legislation to allow certified registered nurse practitioners and physician assistants to order home health services. The bill would also allow registered nurses to conduct required bimonthly supervisory visits with patients remotely instead of in person. These practices have been permissible for the past two years under the Emergency Declarations. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services also recently updated the federal home health regulations to make permanent the remote supervision option. The bill passed the House on April 12, 2022 and was sent to the Senate for consideration. HAP and St. Luke's support this legislation.
- **HB 2419**: Telehealth: Outpatient Psychiatric Oversight. On March 16, 2022, Representative Tina Pickett (R-Sullivan) introduced legislation to remove the statutory requirement that outpatient psychiatric clinics have a psychiatrist on site for two hours per week for each full-time staff member and instead to allow for telebehavioral health services through the clinics. The bill passed the House on April 12, 2022 and was sent to the Senate for consideration. HAP and St. Luke's support this legislation.

Miscellaneous

- **Hospital Name Badges**. Under the Health Care Facilities Act, employees of a licensed facility are required to have the name of the licensed facility displayed on their photo ID badge. The Act does not take into consideration that the parent or trade name of the health system or hospital may be more identifiable to the patient than the name of the actual licensed facility. St. Luke's was recently cited by the Department of Health for failing to comply with the Act. In response, St. Luke's is advocating for an amendment to the Act to address the issue.