

Healthcare Committee Summaries January 16 – January 19

On Tuesday, January 16th, week two of Florida's legislative session commenced, focusing on the deliberation and approval of additional healthcare bills in committees. A significant highlight was the approval of the Senate's Live Healthy initiative, encompassing SB 7016 and SB 7018.

- Tuesday, January 16th – **House Health and Human Services Committee**
- Tuesday, January 16th – **Senate Health Policy**
- Tuesday, January 16th – **House Select Committee on Health Innovation**
- Wednesday, January 17th – **House Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee**
- Thursday, January 18th – **House Healthcare Appropriations Subcommittee**

Tuesday, January 16th – House Health and Human Services Committee

The House Health and Human Services Committee met at 1:00 PM to discuss two bills: HB 201 Emergency Refills of Insulin and Insulin-related Supplies or Equipment and HB 227 Intravenous Vitamin Treatment.

- [Committee Members](#)
- [Video](#)

[HB 201 Emergency Refills of Insulin and Insulin-related Supplies or Equipment](#)

CS/HB 201, presented by Representative Bell, expands current law, allowing pharmacists to provide emergency refills of insulin and related supplies or equipment for diabetes treatment up to three times a year if the pharmacist is unable to readily obtain refill authorization from a prescriber.

Existing law has some exceptions for emergency prescription refills, allowing pharmacists to give a one-time refill of one vial of insulin for diabetes treatment if they cannot quickly get approval from a doctor. However, the current rule does not permit pharmacists to provide insulin-related supplies or equipment in emergency refills.

With no questions, testimony, or debate recorded, the bill received unanimous support from the legislators, culminating in a final vote of 14 Yeas and 0 Nays.

Committees of Reference
12/06/23 House Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee – PASSED (18 Yeas, 0 Nays)
1/16/24 House Health & Human Services Committee – PASSED (14 Yeas, 0 Nays)
Placed on Calendar, on 2 nd Reading

[HB 227 Intravenous Vitamin Treatment](#)

CS/HB 227, presented by Rep. Garcia and known as the Stephanie Balais Bill, focused on intravenous vitamin treatment. The bill mandates healthcare providers to obtain a self-screening risk assessment from patients before

administering Intravenous Vasodilator Therapy (IVVT). It prohibits unsafe IVVT based on questionnaire responses. Providers must inform patients about potential side effects, provide instructions on seeking medical attention, and share a visit summary. The bill requires notifying the patient's designated physician when IVVT is given and maintaining an emergency care plan. These requirements do not apply to IVVT in hospitals or ambulatory surgical centers.

With no recorded questions, testimony, or debate, the bill secured substantial support from legislators, resulting in a final vote of 15 Yeas and 0 Nays.

Committees of Reference
12/06/23 House Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee – PASSED (18 Yeas, 0 Nays)
1/16/24 House Health & Human Services Committee – PASSED (15 Yeas, 0 Nays)
Placed on Calendar, on 2nd Reading

Tuesday, January 16th – Senate Health Policy

The Senate Health Policy Committee met at 1:30 PM to discuss six bills, including SB 302 Dental Services, SB 410 Protection from Surgical Smoke and SB 938 Dentistry.

- [Committee Members](#)
- [Video](#)

SB 302 Dental Services

SB 302 mandates dentists and entities offering dental services through telehealth to provide the dentist's contact details, after-hours emergency contact, and licensure information. The bill emphasizes that the dentist of record remains primarily responsible for all telehealth-delivered dental treatment. It introduces a definition for advertisement and requires disclaimers in telehealth dental service ads, recommending an in-person examination before certain services like impressions, appliance placement, or correction of malformations.

Discussions centered around the geographical range for telehealth dentists and their licensure requirements. Testimonies from dental associations highlighted the need for guardrails and accountability in telemedicine dentistry. The bill passed unanimously with 8 Yeas and 0 Nays. The next committee stop will be the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services.

Committees of Reference
1/16/24 Senate Health Policy – PASSED (8 Yeas, 0 Nays)
Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services
Senate Fiscal Policy

[SB 410 Protection from Surgical Smoke](#)

SB 410, championed by Senator Garcia, aims to regulate surgical smoke in healthcare facilities. The legislation mandates hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers (ASC) to establish and enforce policies by January 1, 2025, necessitating the use of a smoke evacuation system for surgical procedures expected to produce surgical smoke. Surgical smoke is the byproduct generated during various medical procedures, especially those involving the use of lasers or electrocautery devices. It consists of harmful particles, vapors, and gases that may pose health risks to healthcare workers and patients. The bill passed with a final vote count of 8 Yeas and 0 Nays.

Committees of Reference
1/16/24 Senate Health Policy – PASSED (8 Yeas, 0 Nays)
Senate Fiscal Policy
Senate Rules

[SB 938 Dentistry](#)

SB 938, by Senator Yarborough, eliminates the involvement of the Board of Dentistry (BOD) and the Department of Health (DOH) from the dental examination administration process, removing obsolete language. Changes to dental licensure requirements include deleting the waiting period for dental students to apply, replacing the National Board of Dental Examiners (NBDE) with the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations (JCNDE), eliminating an alternate pathway, and revising disclosure requirements for out-of-state licensed dentists. The bill also removes the one-year full-time practice requirement for out-of-state licensed dentists obtaining Florida licensure and allows individuals who fail the licensure examination to retake it. The committee navigated through the bill seamlessly, emphasizing its commitment to addressing intricacies in dental licensure without the need for additional questions, testimonies, or debates. SB 938 passed with 8 Yeas and 0 Nays.

Committees of Reference
1/16/24 Senate Health Policy – PASSED (8 Yeas, 0 Nays)
Senate Fiscal Policy
Senate Rules

Tuesday, January 16th – House Select Committee on Health Innovation

The House Select Committee on Health Innovation met at 4:00 PM to discuss four bills which included HB 241 Coverage for Skin Cancer Screenings, HB 659 Health Plans and HB 877 Electronic Health Records.

- [Committee Members](#)
- [Video](#)

[HB 241 Coverage for Skin Cancer Screenings](#)

HB 241, by Representative Massullo and Payne, mandates the coverage and cost-free provision of an annual skin cancer screening by a licensed dermatologist for insured individuals under specific health insurance policies or contracts issued or renewed on or after January 1, 2025. The covered policies include those under chapter 627.64198, F.S., group/blanket/franchise health insurance policies under 627.66912, F.S., and health maintenance (HMO) contracts under 641.31091, F.S. The bill further prohibits insurers or HMOs from combining payment for a skin cancer screening with any other procedure or service during the same or subsequent office visit. The bill passed unanimously with 14 Yeas and 0 Nays.

Committees of Reference
1/16/24 House Select Committee on Health Innovation – PASSED (14 Yeas, 0 Nays)
House Appropriations Committee
House Health & Human Services Committee

[HB 659 Health Plans](#)

HB 659, by Representative Abbott, prevents a health plan from declining to participate in filed claims. Providers, including both group and individual health insurers, and health plans can still raise disputes in state or federal court. However, once a lawsuit is initiated, the Statewide Provider and Health Plan Claim Dispute Program cannot further consider the claim. The bill passed with 14 Yeas, 0 Nays and will move onto its second committee out of a total four.

Committees of Reference
1/16/24 House Select Committee on Health Innovation – PASSED (14 Yeas, 0 Nays)
House Insurance & Banking Subcommittee
House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee
House Health & Human Services Committee

[HB 877 Electronic Health Records](#)

CS/HB 877, championed by Representative Overdorf, mandates that all hospitals, including specialty hospitals, establish a connection to a national network either directly or through a third-party vendor for the exchange of patient medical records. Additionally, hospitals with certified electronic health records must share ADT data with the Florida ENS. The bill grants rulemaking authority to the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) for implementation. Furthermore, community pharmacies capable of accepting electronic prescriptions must share pharmacy data with E-PLUS. This facilitates access to a patient's medication history for medical personnel involved in disaster preparedness and response during declared emergencies. This bill is part of the legislative package for AHCA. The legislation had no opposition and passed with 14 Yeas.

Committees of Reference
1/16/24 House Select Committee on Health Innovation – PASSED (14 Yeas, 0 Nays)
House Health & Human Services Committee

Wednesday, January 17th – House Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee

The House Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee met at 8:00 AM to discuss and debate six bills which included: HB 827 Mental Health Professionals, and HB 975 Background Screening Requirements for Health Care Practitioners.

- [Committee Members](#)
- [Video](#)

[HB 827 Mental Health Professionals](#)

Representative Koster presented CS/HB 827. The bill modifies the title for post-master's licensure candidates in clinical social work, marriage and family therapy, and mental health counseling during their two years of supervised clinical practice. Instead of being referred to as "registered interns," they will now be called "registered associates." The bill also removes the requirement for a fully licensed mental health professional to be present on-site when clinical services are provided by a registered associate in a private practice setting. Additionally, it changes the title for interns providing services while enrolled as students from "student intern" to "student associate" for those exempt from licensure under s. 491.014, F.S. In response to inquiries from Representative Rudman, the bill sponsor clarified the level of training that interns must undergo before attaining associate licenses. The committee unanimously supported the bill with a final vote of 16 Yeas.

Committees of Reference
1/17/24 House Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee – PASSED (16 Yeas, 0 Nays)
House Health & Human Services Committee

[HB 975 Background Screening Requirements for Health Care Practitioners](#)

Representative Bell, on behalf of Representative Trabulsy, introduced HB 975, aiming to expand background screening requirements for all healthcare practitioners. Currently, most health care practitioners licensed by the Department of Health (DOH) do not have background screening as part of their initial licensure process. The bill proposes that all health care professionals licensed by DOH must undergo background screening for their initial licensure. The bill extends this requirement to licensure by endorsement for specific professions, such as occupational therapists, respiratory therapists, dietitians and nutritionists, psychologists, and mental health professionals. Health care professionals licensed before July 1, 2024, will be required to fulfill the background screening requirement by July 1, 2025. HB 975 prompted inquiries about the necessity of background checks, the nature of a level two background check, and the inclusion of fingerprinting. Some Representatives on the committee expressed concerns about the potential damage of healthcare but acknowledged the importance of

safeguarding vulnerable populations. The legislation ultimately passed with 15 Yeas and 1 Nay.

Committees of Reference
1/17/24 House Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee – PASSED (15 Yeas, 1 Nays)
House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee
House Health & Human Services Committee

Thursday, January 18th – House Healthcare Appropriations Subcommittee

The House Healthcare Appropriations Subcommittee met at 9:00 AM to discuss three bills, which included HB 99 Social Work Licensure Interstate Compact and HB 197 Health Care Practitioners and Massage Therapy.

- [Committee Members](#)
- [Video](#)

[HB 99 Social Work Licensure Interstate Compact](#)

HB 99, by Representative Hunschofsky, establishes the Social Work Licensure Interstate Compact and grants authorization for Florida to join this compact. This enables social workers licensed or eligible for licensure in Florida to acquire a multistate license, allowing them to offer services in all seven member states once the compact is enacted. The bill passed unanimously with 11 Yeas and will move onto its final committee stop before the Florida House floor.

Committees of Reference
12/13/23 House Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee – PASSED (15 Yeas, 1 Nays)
1/18/24 House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee – PASSED (11 Yeas, 0 Nays)
House Health & Human Services Committee

[HB 197 Health Care Practitioners and Massage Therapy](#)

HB 197, presented by Representative Lopez, broadens the situations mandating the Department of Health (DOH) to issue emergency orders suspending the license of a massage therapist or establishment. It will require DOH to promptly suspend the license if any employee of a massage establishment is arrested for specific offenses. The bill explicitly forbids any sexual activity within a massage establishment and prohibits advertising by a massage therapist or establishment on platforms associated with prostitution or sexual services. The legislation also establishes additional operational requirements for massage establishments and includes specific exemptions. The bill passed unanimously and received 11 Yeas.



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Committees of Reference
12/6/23 House Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee – PASSED (18 Yeas, 0 Nays)
1/18/24 House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee – PASSED (11 Yeas, 0 Nays)
House Health & Human Services Committee