



# DAILY BRIEF

From March 2, 2016

## HEALTH CARE

### **HB 221 & SB 1442- Relating to Out-of-Network Health Insurance Coverage**

On Wednesday, March 2nd, **HB 221**, relating to Out-of-Network Health Insurance Coverage, by **Rep. Carlos Trujillo (R-Doral)** was read for a third time on the House floor and passed by a vote of 116 yeas to 1 nay.

The intent of this bill is to protect consumers from balance billing when that situation occurs in an emergency setting; the balance bill is the difference between the provider's charges and the amount the provider has received in reimbursement from the consumer's insurance plan. Provider charges in Florida are often 100 times more than Medicaid charges, so this legislation should cap a significant cost driver in today's health care system.

The Senate companion, **SB 1442**, by **Senator Rene Garcia (R-Hialeah)**, was brought to the floor and controversial amendments were adopted that may jeopardize the passage of this measure. Senate President Designate **Joe Negron (R-Palm City)** proposed an amendment that would prohibit insurers from retroactively denying a procedure previously approved unless the patient's premium has been unpaid for more than 30 days. Sen. Garcia noted that similar language was previously defeated in the appropriations committee earlier this week. He expressed concern about this provision ultimately resulting in the bill's death in the House. However, the amendment was approved on a vote of 27 to 12.

Another amendment, offered by **Senator Jack Latvala (R-Clearwater)**, was also opposed by the bill sponsor. Sen. Latvala noted the language would remove anesthesiologists from the provisions in the bill that prohibit balance billing in certain non-emergency situations. Sen. Garcia noted that balance billing by these specialists is at the root of the problem and it would defeat the purpose of the bill. The amendment was initially approved on a vote of 22 to 16. Immediately following the vote, Sen. Garcia asked that the bill to be temporarily postponed.

Later in the day, the bill was brought back up and a motion was made to reconsider the Latvala amendment. Following significant debate, Sen. Latvala withdrew the amendment. Following the amendment withdrawal, the bill was again temporarily postponed.

AIF will continue to update our members on the progress of this bill.

### **HB 7087- Relating to Telehealth**

On Wednesday, March 2nd, **HB 7087**, relating to Telehealth, by **House Select Committee on Affordable Healthcare Access** and **Rep. Chris Sprowls (R-Clearwater)** was read for a third time on the House floor and passed by a vote of 114 yeas to 3 nays.

The bill would authorize Florida licensed health care providers to use telehealth to deliver services within their scopes of practice. It would also allow out-of-state providers to deliver services through telehealth to Florida patients if they register with the Department of Health (DOH) or the applicable board, meet specific eligibility requirements, and pay an established fee. The out of state telehealth provider would be prohibited from opening an office in Florida and from providing in-person health care services to patients located in the state.

Additionally, a telehealth provider would be required to conduct an in-person physical exam prior to providing services through telehealth, unless the provider is capable of conducting a patient evaluation in a manner consistent with the applicable standard of care sufficient to diagnose and treat the patient when using telehealth.

HB 7087 was sent to the Senate chamber. Once the bill was received, HB 7087 was referred to three additional Senate committee hearings in; **Senate Health Policy Committee**, **Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services**, and **Senate Appropriations Committee**.

**AIF supports legislation that permits an unfettered role for telehealth services that will allow our citizens access to better quality care at lower costs.**