LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

TOP MMA PRIORITIES

Where things stand

**PRIORITY: Physician-led team-based care**
Advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) are pushing for more independence (for example, prescribing authority). The MMA supports collaborative physician-led team-based care in order to make sure patients receive the best care possible from the right practitioner.

*Status:*
Negotiations continued as this issue went to press. The main sticking point continues to be preventing certified registered nurse anesthetists from practicing interventional pain relief.

**PRIORITY: Regulating e-cigarettes**
The MMA supports prohibiting the use of e-cigarettes in public indoor spaces such as workplaces and bars by expanding the Freedom to Breathe Act. The MMA is also looking at additional retail regulations such as requiring tobacco sellers to obtain a license to sell e-cigarettes and requiring them to place the product behind their counters. Having them disclose ingredients on the product’s packaging is also being considered.

*Status:*
Legislation that will regulate e-cigarette use appears imminent, but prohibiting their use indoors is still being debated.

**PRIORITY: Battling prescription opioid misuse**
The MMA supports strengthening the Minnesota Prescription Monitoring Program so that alerts are sent to prescribers regarding patients who are potentially “doctor shopping.” The MMA also supports “911 Good Samaritan + Naloxone” legislation that is designed to prevent opioid overdose deaths by providing immunity to those who call 911 in good faith to save a life and increasing public access to the antidote naloxone. The law would allow first responders to carry naloxone and make the drug available through community-based agencies that work with intravenous drug users.

*Status:*
The bill allowing first responders to carry naloxone passed unanimously on the Senate floor. The bill to strengthen the state’s prescription monitoring program is expected to pass as well.

**PRIORITY: Prohibiting tanning bed use by minors**
The MMA supports legislation to prohibit the use of indoor tanning devices by minors, require a warning notice be provided to each consumer and update posted warning signs at tanning facilities.

*Status:*
This bill is moving quickly without opposition from outside groups.

**PRIORITY: Restoring the newborn screening program**
The MMA is urging the Legislature to restore the state’s newborn screening program to its previous nation-leading status by removing the retention periods for test samples and data established in 2012.

*Status:*
This legislation is well-positioned. It will allow the Department of Health extended storage of the blood spots and test data as well as allow for new test development. It also requires parental consent for use of the spots for research.

**PRIORITY: Cost and quality data for hospitals and clinics**
The MMA supports eliminating provider peer grouping and focusing more attention on the all-payer claims database as the tool for creating public comparisons of the cost and quality of care provided by hospitals and clinics.

*Status:*
This legislation has made it through all committees with no changes. It continues to be supported by the MMA, Minnesota Hospital Association and the Department of Health. The only opposition has come from a handful of legislators who don’t believe the state should have any medical data. The MMA expects this bill to pass.

**PRIORITY: Expediting the provider tax phase-out**
In 2011, legislators voted for the phase-out and eventual repeal of the provider tax by the end of 2019. The 2 percent tax has driven up the cost of health care and falls more heavily on sick and low-income Minnesotans. The MMA will continue working to ensure the repeal and will oppose any efforts to use money from the Health Care Access Fund for any new purposes.

*Status:*
It appears the fund will not be touched this session.

**PRIORITY: Aligning clinical data sharing**
The MMA supports legislation that would bring the Minnesota Health Records Act into alignment with the federal HIPAA standards governing the sharing of health information. Enhanced information sharing is crucial to the functioning of accountable care organizations, health care homes and total cost of care arrangements. Appropriately shared clinical data will increase the quality of patient care and decrease costs.

*Status:*
This legislation did not receive a committee hearing this session.