A new era in Florida government began last week with the inauguration of Governor Ron DeSantis and the new Florida Cabinet. Following the various inaugural celebrations, DeSantis struck a conservative, yet conciliatory tone in his inaugural address, and then got to work. In the last few days he has already promoted sweeping environmental proposals, appointed two new Justices to the Florida Supreme Court and met with dozens of legislators. Meanwhile, the Florida legislature celebrated the inauguration and then went to work in its interim legislative committee meetings. The legislative focus last week was on Hurricane Michael recovery efforts as well as looking at the state’s fiscal outlook for 2019-20.

As of January 14th, 273 House and Senate bills have been filed for consideration during the 2019 Legislative Session. Legislation of interest to the FAFP is tagged and tracked as bills are filed.

Following is a brief summary of the key issues impacting the Florida Academy of Family Physicians.

**2019 Doctor of the Day Program**

The new 2019 application for the legislature’s Doctor of the Day Program has been released. Now is the time for family physicians to volunteer to take part in this important program during each of the nine-weeks of the 2019 Legislative Session which runs from March 5 through May 3. FAFP’s membership has maintained strong representation in Tallahassee to advance our advocacy efforts! For additional information about the program, please contact Jay Millson at jmillson@fafp.org.

**Legislation of Importance to FAFP**

Bills are marked with FAFP’s position: ⬗️ Support ⬕️ Oppose 🕹️ Monitoring

**Influenza & Strep Testing**

HB 111 by Rep. Rene Plasencia (R-Orlando) and SB 300 by Senator Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg) authorize pharmacists to test and treat for the influenza virus and streptococcal infections within the framework of an established written protocol of a supervising physician. The legislation requires pharmacists to maintain patient records for a minimum of 5 years, to carry professional liability insurance, and to obtain certification.
The bills require pharmacists to notify the patient's primary care provider within 2 business days after providing testing or treatment.
  Link to HB 111: http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2019/111
  Link to SB 300: http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2019/300

**Psychologist Prescribing**
Late on January 11th, psychologist prescribing legislation was officially filed in the Senate. **SB 304** by Senator Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg) allows certified, licensed psychologists to prescribe, administer, discontinue, and distribute prescription drugs, including controlled substances. A House companion measure has not been filed to-date.
  Link to SB 304: http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2019/304

**Physician Orders for Life-sustaining Treatment**
**SB 206** by Senator Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg) establishes the Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) Program within the Department of Health, specifies which document takes precedence when directives in POLST forms conflict with other advance directives, and requires the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), by January 1, 2020, to establish and maintain a clearinghouse for compassionate and palliative care plans. In addition, the bill authorizes home health agency personnel to withhold or withdraw cardiopulmonary resuscitation if presented with a POLST form that contains an order not to resuscitate the patient. **SB 208** also filed by Senator Brandes creates the requisite public records exemption for personal identifying information contained in compassionate and palliative care plans filed with the Clearinghouse for Compassionate and Palliative Care Plans managed by AHCA. A House companion measure has not been filed to-date.
  Link to SB 206: http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2019/206
  Link to SB 208: http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2019/208

**Opioid Prescribing**
On January 7th, the Health Policy Committee heard an overview of implementation of the new 2018 controlled substance prescribing law since July 1, 2018. Legislation passed last session required physicians or their staff members to check the statewide PDMP database before prescribing or dispensing drugs and imposed a three-day limit on prescriptions for treatment of acute pain. Physicians can prescribe up to seven-day supplies of controlled substances if deemed medically necessary. A representative of the Florida Hospice and Palliative Care Association testified before the committee asking for an exemption for hospice physicians from having to query the PDMP. Rebecca Poston, program manager of the state’s PDMP, testified that there has been a 3.8 percent reduction in the number of patients receiving controlled substances in Florida and there has been a corresponding 4.6 percent decrease in controlled-substance prescriptions dispensed.

**Medical Malpractice**
**SB 80** filed by Senator Kelli Stargel (R-Lakeland) specifies how to calculate damages in certain personal injury or wrongful death actions and prohibits admission of specified information relating to costs of medical or health care as evidence in such actions. A House companion measure has not been filed to-date.
HB 149 filed by Reps. John Cortes (D-Kissimmee) and Sam Killebrew (R-Winter Haven), authorizes an adult child who was under the care of a legal parental guardian at the time of a parent’s death to file a medical negligence claim and also authorizes a legal parental guardian of an adult child to file claim for medical negligence under certain circumstances. A Senate companion measure has not been filed to-date.

Link to HB 149: http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2019/149