

2024 Legislative Session - Just Around the Corner

The 2024 Regular Legislative Session is right around the corner, commencing on Wednesday January 3rd. Legislators are allowed to file bills before the legislative session starts during a period called “pre-filing.” This begins on December 1st and it gives the association a good picture of what the priorities for the legislators are going to be this session.

Our number one priority this session will be to advocate for additional SNF Medicaid reimbursement. Our goal will be to secure a rebase to the SNF Medicaid rate to capture your post-COVID costs. As you know the last rebase was based on FY2019 costs and didn’t capture the significant increase in costs you have incurred post COVID.

This session we must also renew the Federal Reimbursement Allowance (FRA) program. As you know, the FRA is a program that draws down federal funds and is responsible for approximately \$3.3 billion in the Medicaid budget. The Nursing Facility program or Nursing Facility Reimbursement Allowance (NFRA) provides nearly 40% of the funding to our SNF Medicaid rate. This vital program also funds hospitals, pharmacies and emergency services. The program includes a sunset in statute and must be renewed periodically prior to its expiration date (September 30, 2024). Unfortunately, given the current political climate, legislators know the program must be renewed due to the impact it has on the state budget and they use the renewal of this vital program to try to advance their own, unrelated, agendas. The last time the FRA program was up for renewal we were forced into a special session as several legislators would not allow it to pass the regular session without a completely unrelated abortion amendment. That amendment would have jeopardized the FRA program and likely put the Missouri Medicaid program out of compliance with CMS. This year will be no different and the Missouri Right to Life is already engaging with legislators who are threatening to stop the passage of the renewal of the FRA if an amendment related to abortion is not included in the bill. Again, the FRA has nothing to do with abortion and is being used merely as a tactic to get this unrelated, controversial, possibly non-compliant issue passed. This will be a number 1 issue that will have at great impact on the pace and outcome of the 2024 legislative session. We will keep you updated as this progresses and will likely ask our members to reach out to their legislators, at the appropriate time, through a “call to action” and explain how vital this program is to our Medicaid rate and to pass this without any unrelated amendments that would likely jeopardize the program.

Finally, we will be looking to promote policies that help alleviate the workforce shortage in Missouri as well as look out for policies that could be cumbersome and damaging for our industry. Although many bills will be filed, keep in mind that the budget bills will not be filed until later in January after the Governor has announced his budget priorities and recommendations for the rest of the budget items. We will begin updating you on legislation of importance in the next month.