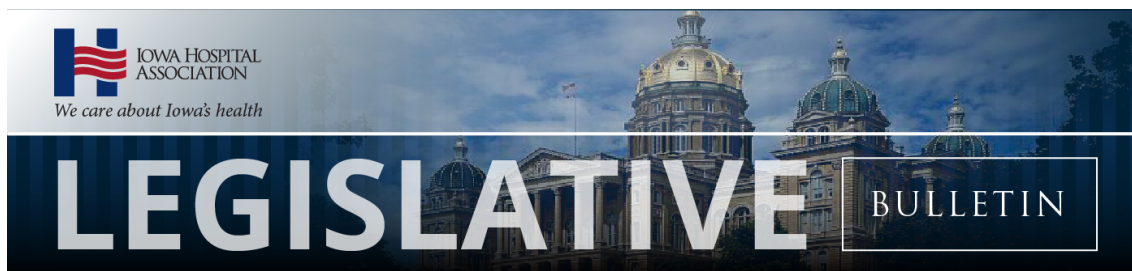


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May 15, 2021

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### Week 18 of legislative session remains quiet

This week of the legislative session has been quiet with both chambers gaveling in and out immediately most days. Legislative leaders in both the House and the Senate are continuing to negotiate the remaining issues, including budget bills and tax reform. The [Iowa Hospital Association](#) believes lawmakers will work to adjourn for the final time within the next two weeks. It is crucial hospital advocates continue to [stay in touch with their legislators](#) as negotiations now can move very quickly in session, and it is important they understand the [hospital perspective](#). Watch for local legislative events for these opportunities.

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### Wellmark extends telehealth payment parity

[Wellmark posted information this week](#) indicating that they will extend payment parity for appropriate medical and behavioral health virtual visits for all in-network providers in Iowa until Sunday, Oct. 31. This is great news for providers wanting to continue the service and patients in need of access.

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### Senate tax bill passes through committee

On Tuesday, the Senate Ways and Means and Appropriations committees reviewed and approved on a party-line vote the Senate tax omnibus bill, now [Senate File 619](#). This legislation is a

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compromise between Senate leadership and the governor's office and proposes a range of changes with a variety of tax policies. Two significant provisions within SF 619 include [telehealth payment parity for mental health services](#) provided through telehealth and shifting mental health funding from property tax to the state general fund. Because this legislation contains hospital-supported topics, the Iowa Hospital Association is registered in support of the bill and will continue to provide updates as they develop.

The House will review their tax bill, [House File 893](#), in a subcommittee and committee meeting Monday morning. The Iowa Hospital Association will continue to follow both bills and provide updates.

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## IHA continues to advocate on EMS legislation

Despite the quiet week at the Capitol, the Iowa Hospital Association continues to advocate for legislation easing the process for counties and city emergency medical services districts to [declare EMS an essential service](#), allowing the services to receive tax funds to support their work. Conversations between legislators remain private, but the Iowa Hospital Association is cautiously optimistic about the legislation passing this session. Hospital advocates are encouraged to continue to advocate on this issue when possible and to stay tuned for updates.

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## Legislative forum scheduled

Meeting with legislators while they're in their home districts is a great way [to advocate for issues](#) you care about. The following legislative event is scheduled:

### ***Friday, May 21***

- 11:30 am-1 pm, Ames Session Wrap-up with area legislators, [Virtual Link](#).
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## How to stay in the know

Throughout legislative session, the Iowa Hospital Association has developed several ways to keep you informed. Stay tuned throughout session for weekly editions of [Legislative Bulletin](#), biweekly [Capitol Update](#), IHA's Facebook page, Twitter account and LinkedIn account (web addresses are below). The Iowa Hospital Association also will mobilize hospital advocates through VoterVoice Action Alerts when legislators need to hear about hospital issues. **Advocates can sign up for email or text message VoterVoice Action Alerts at <https://www.ihaonline.org/advocacy/iha-hospital-action-network/>.**

Links to bookmark:

- [IHA's bill tracker](#)
- [Facebook page](#)
- [Twitter account](#)
- [LinkedIn account](#)
- [Legislator contact information](#)



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