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### Week 14 of session full of floor debate and budget discussions

Legislators spent much of this week in floor debate and in meetings negotiating budget bills for fiscal year 2022. All individual budget bills have been introduced and much of the work for the remaining part of session will focus on these bills. The Iowa Hospital Association will follow closely any developments that may occur.

The Health and Human Services budget bill, which contains funding for Iowa's Medicaid program and health care policy, has been released by the Senate. [Senate Study Bill 1267](#) was introduced yesterday in the Senate and will become the vehicle for future budget discussions. Although the Iowa Hospital Association is still analyzing this bill, a general overview is included in this edition of the Legislative Bulletin.

Please stay tuned to this publication for updates about budget negotiations.

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### HHS budget bill introduced

The last budget bill for fiscal year 2022, the [Health and Human Services Appropriations bill](#), was introduced Thursday and expected to be reviewed by a subcommittee and committee in the Senate Tuesday. This year's bill funds the various health care programs at a status quo level. Some notable provisions in the bill include:

- The continuation of the cost-adjustment factor for critical access hospitals.
- An extension of the sunset for the Hospital Health Care Access Assessment Program to 2023.
- Additional public assistance application oversight criteria.

- The establishment of a pharmacy dispensing fee in the Medicaid program.

The Iowa Hospital Association will continue to analyze the bill and provide more information as developments occur.

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## Telehealth hangs by a thread

As budget bills are being introduced, we know the end of the 2021 legislative session is near. Unfortunately, telehealth payment parity for behavioral health services still has not passed. Although this issue sailed through the House nearly unanimously on a bipartisan vote, it is not advancing in the Senate. The House kept the issue alive by adding the language in [House File 294](#) to [Senate File 524](#), which concerns inpatient bed tracking. Although telehealth is not advancing in Iowa, legislation promoting services provided through telehealth in other states such as Minnesota and Nebraska is advancing. Iowa hospitals cannot afford to lose patients to bordering states because of lack of action. The Iowa Hospital Association needs advocates to reach out to their Senators to keep this issue moving forward.

A VoterVoice Action Alert has been issued to urge the Senate to support this measure. **Advocates who live in Senate districts bordering the state can [click here to take action](#). Advocates who have senators in leadership positions can [click here to take action](#). All remaining advocates can [click here to take action](#).**

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## Negotiations about EMS are ongoing

As reported in last week's Legislative Bulletin, legislators continue to work on updating and easing the process for counties and city emergency medical service districts to declare EMS an essential service. The Iowa Hospital Association understands a new bill likely will be released and assigned directly to the Ways and Means Committees in both chambers.

Additionally, the Iowa Hospital Association has received reports from legislators in both chambers that negotiations are continuing, and there is optimism to still pass a bill on this issue. This is encouraging as any legislation introduced at this point in the legislative session will need bipartisan and bicameral support. The Iowa Hospital Association remains committed to stressing the importance of this issue and will provide updates as they develop.

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## Legislative forums scheduled

Meeting with legislators while they're in their home districts is a great way to advocate for issues you care about. Check the list below of upcoming legislative events for the next two weeks. Some of these events are virtual and others are in person. [Click here](#) for the full list of scheduled legislative forums.

### ***Saturday, April 17***

- 7:30-9 am, Jefferson County Legislative Forum with area legislators, [Virtual Link](#).
- 9-10 am, Linn County Town Hall with Sen. Liz Mathis and Reps. Molly Donahue and Eric Gjerde, [Virtual Link](#).
- 9:30-11 am, Clinton/DeWitt Legislative Coffee with Sen. Cournoyer, and Reps. Norlin Mommsen and Mary Lynn Wolfe, [Virtual Link](#).
- 10-11 am, Shelby County Legislative Coffee with Sen. Jason Schultz and Rep. Steven Holt, [Chamber of Commerce](#), Harlan.
- 10:30-Noon, Quad Cities Legislative Forum with area legislators [Virtual Link](#).

### ***Monday, April 19***

- 8-10:30 am, Marti's Morning Coffee with Rep. Marti Anderson, [Grounds for Celebration](#), Des Moines.

### Friday, April 23

- 11:30 am-1 pm, Ames Legislative Forum with with area legislators, [Virtual Link](#)
- 4:30-6:30 pm, Cedar Valley Legislative Forum with area legislators, [Virtual Link](#)

### Saturday, April 24

- 10 am-Noon, Urbandale Talk With Legislators with Sen. Brad Zaun and Rep. John Forbes, [Virtual Link](#)

### Monday, April 26

- 8-10:30 am, Marti's Morning Coffee with Rep. Marti Anderson, [Grounds for Celebration](#), Des Moines.

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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). IHA also will mobilize hospital advocates through action alerts when legislators need to hear about hospital issues. **Advocates can sign up for email or text message IHA 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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