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IN THIS ISSUE

- [Week 17 of session moves toward final adjournment](#)
- [Pivotal point reached in telehealth payment parity](#)
- [Negotiations ongoing for EMS and public hospital trustees bill](#)
- [COVID-19 passport bill goes to the governor](#)
- [Tort reform stalls](#)
- [Listen to IHA's Capitol Update](#)
- [Legislative forums scheduled](#)
- [How to stay in the know](#)

Week 17 of session moves toward final adjournment

This week concludes week 17 of the legislative session, and legislators spent most of their time negotiating the different budget bills and other end-of-session legislation. This includes the introduction in both chambers of tax bills and the second standings bill. The Iowa Hospital Association is hearing legislators will work to wrap up the session and adjourn for the final time in the next couple of weeks.

The Iowa Hospital Association will provide updates on the status of the legislative session and, following the final signing of bills, will provide a Legislative Summary detailing the significant hospital-related legislation reviewed this year.

Pivotal point reached in telehealth payment parity

This week, in a surprising turn of events, both the House and the Senate filed tax omnibus bills that included telehealth payment parity for mental health in identical form. The House version, [House File 893](#), was voted out of committee Thursday 22-0, and the House continues to support their version of the bill.

The governor has proposed a tax omnibus compromise bill that has been agreed to by the Senate, [Senate Study Bill 1276](#). This legislation also includes the same telehealth payment parity language for mental health.

This marks a pivotal point this session, with both chambers now supporting telehealth payment parity for mental health. This is a good sign that payment parity for mental health will make it across the finish line, but there are still negotiations occurring between the chambers.

The governor's compromise bill also includes the Senate's proposal to shift mental health funding from the property tax levy to a state appropriation. The House continues to express bipartisan concern about elements of this provision.

The Iowa Hospital Association thanks Rep. Joel Fry (R, Clarke) for tirelessly working to advance this legislation. Thanks also is extended to Gov. Kim Reynolds for including telehealth payment parity in the compromise bill. The Iowa Hospital Association will continue to advocate for this important priority as it moves toward passage.

Negotiations ongoing for EMS and public hospital trustees bill

This week, the Iowa Hospital Association has been in contact with legislators in both chambers about [House File 562](#), a bill easing the process for counties and city emergency medical service districts to declare EMS an essential service, allowing districts to levy tax funds to support the service. Lawmakers are negotiating the final language and believe this issue has about a 50% chance of passing this session.

The Iowa Hospital Association also learned that negotiations remain ongoing for a technical corrections election bill. [Senate File 568](#) has a provision that would permanently return the deadline for public hospital trustee candidates to submit their candidacy paperwork 69 days before the general election. During the 2019 legislative session, this deadline was moved up to the spring. In 2020, the Iowa Hospital Association successfully advocated a temporary fix allowing candidates to submit their paperwork in the fall.

The Iowa Hospital Association will continue to follow developments about these issues and will provide updates as they occur.

COVID-19 passport bill goes to the governor

[House File 889](#) (Banning COVID-19 Passports) passed in the Senate Wednesday, 32-16, without debate. This bill prohibits the mandatory disclosure of whether someone has received a vaccination for COVID-19, disqualifying certain entities from receiving state grants or contracts. The bill also has a provision that exempts health care facilities under 686D.2, which includes hospitals. That provision remains in the bill and now goes to the governor for her signature.

Tort reform stalls

The tort reform bill, [House File 592](#), has not been debated, and it may come down to the final days of session and some behind-the-scenes negotiations. This bill would place a \$1 million cap on noneconomic damages in medical malpractice cases. Please keep up your efforts to advocate for tort reform.



Listen to IHA's Capitol Update

The Iowa Hospital Association knows the importance of updates coming from the Capitol and works to provide easy ways to access that information. Members now have a convenient way to stay up to date on advocacy issues with the Iowa Hospital Association Capitol Update.

Capitol Update can be accessed through a Zoom video recording or audio-only version.

- [Podcast Link](#)
- [Vodcast Link](#)

Questions can be directed to [Joah Hogan](#) at the Iowa Hospital Association.

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 remaining legislative events for this legislative session.

Saturday, May 8

- 9-10 am, Altoona Coffee Chat with Sen. Zach Nunn and Rep. Brian Lohse, [Virtual Link](#).

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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