

Health Care Highlights[©]

A Comprehensive Newsletter Covering Activities of the West Virginia Legislature and State Government

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VOLUME 27, ISSUE 2

Welcome to the 2nd issue of award-winning *Health Care Highlights* for 2015. This year marks the 27th year of our unique health care publication. Our newsletter reaches more than 5,000 health professionals and health policymakers.

Health Care Highlights is published weekly during the regular legislative session and monthly during the periods in between legislative sessions by the firm **Government Relations Specialists, LLC**. *Health Care Highlights* provides a special focus on health topics of interest, legislative health deliberations, and a special section featuring the history and status of all health care bills introduced in the West Virginia state Senate and the House of Delegates.

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Today is the 13th day of the 60-day regular legislative session. This week, we begin the weekly tracking of all health care-related bills under consideration by the House and Senate. Currently, 275 House bills have been introduced. The Senate is considering 297 bills. Of the 572 total bills introduced so far this session, many are similar to bills from previous legislative sessions or are rules bills. We are currently tracking 102 health care-related bills, which is about 17% of all bills so far. In addition, this week we will report actions taken by legislative committees and other health care news.

2015 Key Legislative Dates

- Jan. 27:** DHHR Budget Hearing - Senate Finance Committee - 3:00 PM
- Jan. 30:** DHHR Budget Hearing - House Finance Committee – 9:00 AM
- Feb. 2:** Submission of Legislative Rule-Making Review bills due. ([WV Code §29A-3-12](#))
- Feb. 23:** Last day to introduce bills in the Senate. ([Senate Rule 14](#))
Does not apply to originating or supplementary appropriation bills, or resolutions.
- Feb 24:** Last day to introduce bills in the House. ([House Rule 91a](#))
Does not apply to originating or supplementary appropriation bills, or resolutions.
- March 1:** Bills due out of committees in house of origin to ensure three full days for readings.
- March 4:** Last day to consider bills on third reading (passage stage) in house of origin for "cross-over." ([Joint Rule 5b](#))
Does not include budget or supplementary appropriation bills.
- March 14:** Adjournment at midnight. ([WV Const. Art. VI, §22](#))
- March 15:** Extended session possible, but not expected, to work only on the Budget Bill and other appropriation bills.



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House Health Approves Overdose Prevention Bills

The House Committee on Health and Human Resources on Thursday approved two separate bills familiar to readers of *Health Care Highlights* – one to allow first responders to administer an opioid antagonist in the event of a suspected drug overdose, the other providing immunity for someone who seeks health care in overdose cases. Similar bills failed during the 2014 regular session; passage of both, state health officials say, will save lives.

Often referred to as the Naloxone bill, **HB 2009** would allow police, fire and emergency service providers to possess that drug or other opioid antagonists to administer when they suspect someone has overdosed on a narcotic drug. The bill provides guidelines for administration of these antagonists, establishes training requirements, provides immunities for first responders who either administer or fail to administer an opioid antagonist, as well as health providers who prescribe, dispense or distribute Naloxone related to a training program, and outlines responsibilities.

Dr. Rahul Gupta, state health officer and commissioner of the Bureau for Public Health, described Naloxone as “a relatively benign drug” which is unlikely to cause adverse reactions for patients. “First responders get to the site and see that somebody is perhaps overdosed,” Gupta told the committee. “They are able to administer this drug immediately and buy time for that person to get to the appropriate health care facility.”

The "Overdose Prevention Act" (**HB 2045**), meanwhile, would provide immunity from certain offenses for a person who seeks health care for another, or for himself or herself, who is experiencing an overdose. The bill is also known as the "Good Samaritan Overdose Act." Several delegates recounted recent tragedies involving youths experimenting with underage drinking or illicit drugs.

Delegate Bob Ashley said he was concerned about potential “unintentional consequences” of the bill. “So we’re protecting a class of people who may be breaking the law?” he asked. Delegate Kelli Sobonya noted, “I don’t want this to be a license for people to continue illicit behavior,” but said she supported the bill and suggested creating a series of public service messages at colleges and universities to inform students if the bill becomes law. Delegate Larry Faircloth said the bill, “does more good than harm, by far.”

Gupta said West Virginia leads the nation in overdose deaths, a full 25% more than the next highest state. More than 460 West Virginians died of drug overdoses in 2013, up from 361 in 2009.

Both bills were recommended by the interim Joint Committee on Health and are supported by leading medical organizations. The House Health Committee reported both bills, with minor amendments, to the Judiciary Committee.

Expedited Partner Therapy OK’d

Physicians, physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses would be allowed to prescribe antibiotics to the partner of a patient they’re treating for a sexually transmitted disease without first examining that partner, under **HB 2046**, approved Tuesday by the House Committee on Health and Human Resources. The expedited partner therapy bill is supported by all of the top medical organizations. It was recommended by the interim Joint Committee on Health, and will now move to the Judiciary Committee.

“This is a public health intervention ... designed to reduce the overall number of cases,” explained Dr. Rahul Gupta, state health officer and commissioner of the state Bureau for Public Health. “This is not a substitute for referral (of the partner); this is not a substitute for good doctor-patient care. The idea is just to get a handle on the situation.”

Gupta said if partners remain untreated, the chances for reinfection or infecting others increases exponentially. Similar laws, as recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, already are in place in 44 other states. Although the bill includes a fiscal note estimating annual costs of \$46,495 to \$55,794, Gupta said long-term costs to the state’s overall health care system will decrease through early detection and early access to treatment.

The bill provides limited liability to providers, requires counseling by the physician, and requires the DHHR to develop outreach materials. Gupta said follow-up by a disease contact intervention specialist, pharmacist instruction and prescription warnings provide checks against potential inadvertent drug reactions.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin vetoed a similar bill passed by the Legislation in 2014 for technical reasons.

Dexter Stepping Down at Thomas Health System

Stephen P. Dexter, president and CEO of Thomas Health System, plans to retire July 31 after 21 years of service. He will be succeeded by Dan Lauffer, the system's current executive vice president and chief operating officer, though Dexter will remain a senior executive with the system through January 2017.

"I'm excited to be turning the reigns over to Dan Lauffer," Dexter said. "I have known Dan for 20 years. He is an exceptional individual and a true leader in the health care community. Under Dan's guidance, the best days are ahead."

Lauffer earned his undergraduate degree from Alderson-Broaddus College and his Master of Science degree in Health Care Administration from Marshall University. "This transition comes at a time when the health care industry is undergoing great change," Lauffer said. "The Thomas Health System is positioned well to take on these challenges because of the talent of its Board of Trustees, the medical staff, department leaders, the dedicated employees and the senior executive team."

Thomas Health System includes Saint Francis Hospital in Charleston and Thomas Memorial Hospital in South Charleston. Thomas Memorial Hospital opened in 1946. Saint Francis Hospital, founded in 1913, started as a 25-bed facility. The Hospital Corporation of America bought Saint Francis in 1995, then sold it to LifePoint Hospitals of Brentwood, Tenn., in 2006. Thomas Memorial bought Saint Francis a year later, creating the Thomas Health System.

CAMC Receives National Recognition

Charleston Area Medical Center, for the second consecutive year, has been recognized among the top 5% of hospitals in the U.S. for overall clinical excellence, according to Healthgrades, the nation's leading health care ratings company. Healthgrades performed an independent study of mortality and complication rates at 4,500 hospitals nationwide.

CAMC is the only hospital in West Virginia, and one of only 261 in the U.S., to achieve the 2015 Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence. Healthgrades reviews data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Medicare Provider Analysis and Review (MedPar) database. Hospitals that achieve the award deliver overall clinical excellence in at least 21 of 32 clinical procedures and specialties for both risk-adjusted mortality and complication rates during and after a hospital stay.

"We're proud to be recognized for our high level of performance across a number of departments and specialties," said President and CEO Dave Ramsey. "This award is important validation that we strive to provide the highest quality care for all our patients."

"Doc For A Day" Returns For 26th Year

This year marks the 26th year of the "Doc for a Day" program at the Statehouse, featuring family physicians from around the state who volunteer their professional medical services each day the Legislature convenes during the regular session. "Doc for a Day" recently won a coveted national award for outstanding service from the American Academy of Family Physicians. The program is sponsored by the West Virginia Chapter of the Academy of Family Physicians and is annually authorized under agreement by the speaker of the House of Delegates and the president of the state Senate.

In addition to family physicians, the "Doc for a Day" program also includes medical residents from the Charleston Division of the WVU Medical School and the Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine. The family physicians provide these volunteer medical services as a public service, without any compensation. More than 47,500 patients have received this free medical care since the program began in 1989.

Medical services are offered to legislators, legislative staff, governmental officials and visitors to the Capitol Complex. Health insurance is not required, no fees are charged to patients, and appointments are not necessary for medical services rendered by the "Doc for a Day" program. The family physicians work in the Capitol Dispensary (304-558-3663), with excellent assistance from Capitol Nurse Holly Smith, but are available for "house calls" anywhere in the Capitol Building or Complex. Mitch Jacques, MD, PhD, is the medical director. It should be noted that volunteer participating physicians are strictly prohibited from political advocacy or lobbying while serving as the Doc for a Day.

West Virginia Legislature

Health Care Bill Status as of 1/23/15

To review current status, visit www.legis.state.wv.us

To find a particular bill, look below for the bill number under a general health category. A description of the bill is provided along with the bill's lead sponsor, additional information about the bill, committee references and other legislative action. For those receiving this newsletter electronically, please note that bill numbers are web-links to the bill text, so you may click on the blue bill number while holding down the control key and information on the bill will open in your web browser.

APPROPRIATIONS & BUDGET

[SB 233](#) Cole+ **Budget Bill SFY 2016** (see [HB 2016](#)) *Bill proposed by Governor. Of note; 26.3% of all state expenditures are allocated for Health and Human Resources. DHHR Budget Hearing 1/2.* To Finance.

[HB 2016](#) Armstead+ **Budget Bill SFY 2016** (see [SB 233](#)) *Bill proposed by Governor. Of note; 26.3% of all state expenditures are allocated for Health and Human Resources. DHHR Budget Hearing 1/30.* To Finance.

BOARD LICENSURE AND REGULATION

[SB 22](#) Beach **Expands Board of Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses five members to 10** To Gov. Org., then Finance

[SB 126](#) Beach **Rewrites the article concerning the practice of psychology** To Health, then Gov. Org.

[SB 239](#) Kirkendoll+ **Eliminates unnecessary boards, councils, task forces, commissions and committees** (see [SB 255](#), [SB 294](#), [HB 2101](#), [HB 2177](#)) *Interim bill recommended by Joint Committee on Gov. Org.* To Gov. Org.

[SB 255](#) Cole+ **Eliminates unnecessary boards, councils, task forces, commissions and committees** (see [SB 239](#), [SB 294](#), [HB 2101](#), [HB 2177](#)) *Bill proposed by Governor.* To Gov. Org., then Judiciary

[SB 294](#) Cole+ **Eliminates unnecessary boards, councils, task forces, commissions and committees** (see [SB 239](#), [SB 255](#), [HB 2101](#), [HB 2177](#)) *Bill proposed by Governor.* To Gov. Org., then Judiciary

[HB 2101](#) Morgan+ **Eliminates unnecessary boards, councils, task forces, commissions and committees** (see [SB 239](#), [SB 255](#), [SB 294](#), [HB 2177](#)) *Interim bill recommended by Joint Committee on Gov. Org.* To Gov. Org.

[HB 2103](#) Howell+ **Requires licensing boards to provide public access to disciplinary actions** *The bill also requires applicants for medical and health professional licenses to submit to a state/national crime records checks with fingerprints.* Gov. Org. amended, to Finance

[HB 2177](#) Armstead+ **Eliminates unnecessary boards, councils, task forces, commissions and committees** (see [SB 239](#), [SB 255](#), [SB 294](#), [HB 2101](#)) *Bill proposed by Governor.* To Gov. Org.

[HB 2233](#) Walters+ **Requires review of legislative rules 5 years after initial approval** To Judiciary, then Finance

[HB 2239](#) Howell+ **Creates a Board of Health Professions** *Under review by affected boards.* To Health, then Gov. Org.

[HB 2259](#) Hamrick+ **Requires the Governor to fill vacancies on professional boards within 60 days** To Gov. Org.

[HB 2269](#) Walters+ **Requires DHHR rules to be no more stringent than corresponding federal laws** To Judiciary

[HB 2272](#) Ellington+ **Permits Pharmacy Board to maintain an official prescription program** To Health, then Gov. Org.

CHILDREN

[SB 7](#) Stollings+ **Requires CPR and care for conscious choking instruction in schools** (see [HB 2007](#)) To Education

[SB 68](#) Unger+ **Creates Healthy Children and Healthy Communities Act** To Health, then Finance

[SB 69](#) Unger+ **Requires public school screening for dyslexia** To Education, then Finance

[SB 132](#) Miller+ **Reduces school nurse staffing ratio** To Health, then Finance

[SB 286](#) Ferns+ **Allows exemptions to compulsory immunizations of students** To Health, then Judiciary

[SB 296](#) Walters+ **Provides maximum licensed school psychologist-pupil ratio** To Education, then Finance

[HB 2007](#) Stansbury+ **Requires CPR and care for conscious choking instruction in schools** (see [SB 7](#)) To Education, then Finance

[HB 2250](#) Rodighiero **Allows holiday sweets in schools with parental or guardian consent** To Education

[HB 2255](#) Rodighiero **Increases felony penalties for exposing children to meth manufacturing** To Judiciary

[HB 2258](#) Cowles **Patients' Bill of Rights** To Health, then Finance

[HB 2261](#) Cowles **Requires automated external defibrillators in public schools** To Education, then Finance

HOSPITALS

[HB 2034](#) Williams **Provides civil immunity for hospital volunteers providing good faith emergency care** To Judiciary

[HB 2100](#) Williams+ **Permits hospital patients to designate a lay caregiver** To Health, then Judiciary (see [SB 244](#))

[HB 2248](#) Rodighiero **Patient Safety Act establishing direct-care RN to patient ratios** To Health, then Gov. Org.

INSURANCE & HEALTH COVERAGE

[SB 28](#) D. Hall **Requires health insurance coverage for nonnarcotic pain relief systems** To Health, then Finance

[SB 84](#) Stollings+ **Redefines “third-party administrator” to include pharmacy benefits managers** To Insurance, then Judiciary

[SB 97](#) Laird **Sets maximum air-ambulance fees paid by PEIA** *Only HealthNet currently has a contract.* To Insurance, then Finance

[SB 120](#) Stollings+ **Recodifies laws for DHHR and Medicaid** To Health, then Gov. Org.

[SB 262](#) Cole+ **Transfers CHIP and Children’s Health Insurance Agency from Department of Administration to DHHR** (see [HB 2210](#)) *Bill proposed by Governor.* To Health, then Judiciary

[SB 267](#) Cole+ **Eliminates GOHELP** (see [HB 2209](#)) *Bill proposed by Governor.* To Health, then Judiciary

[SB 274](#) Cole+ **Allows flexibility to DHHR in complying with TANF** *Bill proposed by Governor.* To Health, then Judiciary

[SB 289](#) Takubo+ **Prohibits insurance plans from charging higher fees for oral cancer chemotherapy treatments** *34 states have passed similar legislation, including all surrounding states except PA. A similar bill will be introduced this week in the House with reasonable modifications suggested by the health insurance industry.* To Insurance, then Judiciary

[SB 295](#) Ferns+ **Establishes appeal process for DHHR Board of Review and for Medicaid decisions** To Health, then Judiciary

[HB 2047](#) Shott **Continues the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit** To Health, then Judiciary

[HB 2209](#) Armstead+ **Eliminates GOHELP** (see [SB 267](#)) *Bill proposed by Governor.* To Gov. Org.

[HB 2210](#) Armstead+ **Transfers CHIP and Children’s Health Insurance Agency from Department of Administration to DHHR** (see [SB 262](#)) *Bill proposed by Governor.* To Health, then Gov. Org.

[HB 2173](#) Rodighiero **Provides reduced rates to married workers without children under PEIA** To Insurance, then Finance

[HB 2215](#) Householder+ **Protects individuals seeking coverage through WV Health Benefit Exchange** To Health, then Judiciary

[HB 2216](#) Ellington+ **WV Health Benefit Exchange Act** To Health, then Judiciary

[HB 2242](#) Longstreth+ **Requires health insurers to reimburse ambulance service providers directly** To Insurance, then Finance

[HB 2244](#) Rodighiero **Provides state health care services to active duty and inactive military personnel** To Insurance, then Finance

[HB 2260](#) Ellington+ **Prohibits DHHR from expanding managed care without Legislature’s approval** To Health, then Finance

MEDICAL LIABILITY

[SB 2](#) Gaunch+ **Predicates actions for damages upon comparative fault principles** (see [HB 2002](#)) To Judiciary

[SB 6](#) Ferns+ **Needed revisions to the Medical Professional Liability Act {MPLA}** *Supported by all leading health care, hospital, long term care and medical groups. Opposed by trial lawyers.* (see [HB 2006](#)) To Judiciary - Perhaps on Agenda Tuesday

[HB 2002](#) Wagner+ **Predicates actions for damages upon comparative fault principles** (see [SB 2](#)) Judiciary reported Com.Sub., on 2nd reading 1/26

[HB 2006](#) Weld+ **Needed revisions to the Medical Professional Liability Act {MPLA}** *Supported by all major health care, hospital, long term care and medical groups. Opposed by trial lawyers.* (see [SB 6](#)) To Judiciary - House to wait for Senate bill

[HB 2091](#) Manchin **False Claims Act** *This bill failed last year and is not expected to pass this session.* To Judiciary, then Finance

MISCELLANEOUS

[SB 30](#) D. Hall+ **Permits the sale of raw milk** To Agriculture, then Health

[SB 48](#) Yost+ **Modifies guidelines for treating injured workers** To Health, then Judiciary

NURSING HOMES, LONG TERM CARE & SENIORS

[SB 64](#) Stollings+ **Provides exemption from moratorium for specialty skilled nursing beds** To Health

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS & DRUG USE/ABUSE/DIVERSION

[SB 9](#) Stollings+ **Allows law enforcement and emergency services personnel to possess and administer opioid antagonists** (see [SB 231](#), [HB 2009](#), [HB 2044](#)) To Health (on agenda 1/20, but withdrawn to wait for similar bill from the Governor.)

[SB 16](#) Stollings+ **Requires the state Board of Pharmacy to identify specialty drugs** To Health, then Judiciary

[SB 18](#) Stollings+ **Overdose Prevention Act** (see [SB 230](#) [HB 2045](#)) To Health, then Judiciary

[SB 20](#) Stollings **Allows public health agencies to bill patients for STD and HIV testing** To Health, then Judiciary

[SB 66](#) Stollings **Revises fees for manufacturer/distributor/dispenser/researcher of controlled substances** To Health, then Finance

[SB 81](#) Plymale+ **Increases penalty for illegally transporting certain controlled substances into WV** To Judiciary

[SB 99](#) Carmichael+ **Mandates drug testing of legislators & certain recipients of state/federal funds** To Health, then Judiciary

[SB 230](#) Stollings+ **Overdose Prevention Act** (see [SB 18](#), [HB 2045](#)) To Health, then Judiciary

[SB 231](#) Stollings+ **Allows law enforcement and emergency services personnel to possess and administer opioid antagonists** (see [SB 9](#), [HB 2009](#), [HB 2044](#)) To Health

[SB 232](#) Stollings+ **Provides expedited partner therapy for sexually transmitted disease** (see [HB 2046](#)) To Health, then Judiciary

[SB 270](#) Stollings+ **Amends criteria for pain management clinic designation** To Health, then Judiciary

[HB 2009](#) Fast+ **Allows law enforcement and emergency services personnel to possess and administer opioid antagonists** (see [SB 9](#), [SB 231](#), [HB 2044](#)) Health amended, to Judiciary

[HB 2021](#) Lane **Mandates drug testing for recipients of federal-state and state assistance** To Health, then Finance

[HB 2026](#) Howell+ **Allows terminally ill patient access to investigational, non-FDA approved drugs** To Health, then Judiciary

[HB 2044](#) Perdue+ **Allowing police, fire and emergency services personnel to possess and administer opioid antagonists** (see [SB 9](#), [SB 231](#), [HB 2009](#)) To Health, then Judiciary

[HB 2045](#) Perdue+ **Overdose Prevention Act** (see [SB 18](#), [SB 230](#)) Health amended, to Judiciary

[HB 2046](#) Perdue+ **Provides expedited partner therapy for sexually transmitted disease** (see [SB 232](#)) Health reported, to Judiciary

[HB 2104](#) Arvon+ **Prohibits business licenses for selling drug paraphernalia** (see [HB 2180](#)) To Health, then Judiciary

[HB 2136](#) Phillips, R.+ **Increases criminal penalties for transporting controlled substances** To Judiciary, then Finance

[HB 2174](#) Marcum+ **Increases criminal penalties for transporting controlled substances** To Judiciary

[HB 2180](#) Hamilton+ **Prohibits business licenses for selling drug paraphernalia** (see [HB 2104](#)) To Health, then Judiciary

PROFESSIONALS: HEALTH & MEDICAL

[SB 21](#) Beach+ **Expands prescriptive authority for APRNs and certified nurse midwives** *This bill was not recommended for passage by the Joint Gov. Org./Gov. Ops interim committee.* To Health, then Gov. Org.

[HB 2084](#) Manchin **Prohibits discrimination by health care workers** To Health, then Judiciary

[HB 2098](#) Hamrick+ **Authorizes health professionals to provide services at state-run veterans' facilities without obtaining authorization to practice** To Veterans' Affairs, then Health

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS & ABORTION

[SB 236](#) Karnes+ **Limits health insurance coverage for elective abortions to supplemental policies** To Insurance, then Judiciary

[SB 271](#) Karnes+ **Requires providers to administer anesthesia to an unborn fetus older than 7 weeks** To Health, then Judiciary

[SB 277](#) Miller+ **Requires issuance of certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth** To Health, then Judiciary

[HB 2031](#) Romine **Prohibits abortion based solely on gender of the fetus** To Health, then Judiciary

[HB 2153](#) Perry+ **The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act** To Health, then Judiciary

[HB 2172](#) Rodighiero **Requires abortion providers to obtain parental notification or consent in writing** To Health, then Judiciary

[HB 2256](#) Rodighiero **Prohibits state funding of abortions** To Health, then Judiciary

RULE MAKING & LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

State agencies, boards and commissions are often given statutory authority to promulgate rules. These are known as "legislative review" during the interim period by the Legislative Rule-Making Review Committee, and if approved, then are introduced for legislative consideration in individual rules-bills. The rules-bills are then assigned to various committees, eventually ending up in the Judiciary Committees of the Senate and House of Delegates. There they are bundled into categories of rules-bills.

SENATE RULES BILLS

DHHR [SB 171](#) Chronic pain management licensure. Health reported, to Finance, then Judiciary

DHHR [SB 173](#) Medication administration and performance of health maintenance tasks. Health reported, to Judiciary

DHHR [SB 176](#) Nursing home licensure. Health reported, to Judiciary

DHHR [SB 177](#) Statewide trauma / emergency care system. Health reported, to Judiciary

MEDICAL BOARD [SB 197](#) PA licensure, disciplinary and complaint procedures, continuing ed. To Gov. Org., then Judiciary

PHYSICAL THERAPY BOARD [SB 200](#) Fees for physical therapists and PT assistants. Gov. Org. reported, to Judiciary

OSTEOPATHIC MEDICAL BOARD [SB 201](#) Board fees. Gov. Org. reported, to Judiciary

OSTEOPATHIC MEDICAL BOARD [SB 202](#) Osteopathic physician assistants. To Gov. Org., then Judiciary
PHARMACY BOARD [SB 203](#) Immunizations administered by pharmacists. Health amended, to Judiciary
PHARMACY BOARD [SB 204](#) Pharmacy technician registration. Gov. Org. reported, to Judiciary
PHARMACY BOARD [SB 205](#) Controlled substances monitoring. Health reported, to Judiciary
PHARMACY BOARD [SB 223](#) Licensure and practice of pharmacy. Gov. Org. reported, to Judiciary

TAXES, FEES & LOANS

[HB 2127](#) Howell+ **Provides a corporate net income tax credit for manufacturers of medical devices** To Finance

TOBACCO

[SB 109](#) Blair+ **Exempts veterans' and active duty military groups from indoor smoking rules** To Military, then Judiciary

[HB 2208](#) McGeehan+ **Gives county commissioners sole authority to regulate smoking** To Political Subdivisions, then Gov. Org.

Public Television Offers Daily Coverage of the Legislature

Daily coverage by West Virginia Public Television of the legislative session is excellent and recommended. "The Legislature Today" airs Monday through Friday at 6:30 p.m. and repeats at 11:30 p.m. The 30-minute news program also airs on WVPBS-2 with repeats at 6 a.m. You also can hear all the news of the Legislature at 6:30 p.m. weeknights on West Virginia Public Radio.

"The Legislature Today" is a great source for daily legislative news and information featuring reports from the Senate, House and committee meetings with in-depth interviews about the issues facing the state. The WPBS program is expertly produced by Ashton Marra and Beth Vorhees, and hosted by Marra.

Online Audio and Video Streaming, Twitter Feeds Available

The House of Delegates and state Senate are both offering streaming audio of floor sessions and certain committee meetings during the 2015 regular legislative session. The system for audio streaming by computer and smart phone is available on the web at <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/live.cfm>.

In addition, the House of Delegates began live video streaming of its floor sessions on Wednesday. Use the following link to obtain the feed: <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Stream/housechamber.cfm>. Video streaming of Senate floor sessions begins Monday. Viewing the feeds requires a quick installation of Microsoft Silverlight®.

Readers also may note that a number of committees and both houses post updates daily via Twitter. Here are a few that might prove useful to follow: @WVSenateHHRcmt; @RyanFernsWV; @WVSenClerk; @BillColeWV; @WVGov; @GovTomblin; @ArmsteadWV; @WVHouse; @WVSenate; and @WVLegislature. Do you have others that you find valuable? Let us know, and we'll pass them on!

In Other Health Care Highlights ...

... The Senate Committee on Health and Human Resources on Tuesday approved a series of rules bills, including two measures affecting the state Board of Pharmacy, one regarding immunizations administered by pharmacists and allowing pharmacy interns to provide vaccinations under the pharmacist's personal supervision, and the other regarding the state's Controlled Substances Monitoring database. Both rules bills now move to the Judiciary Committee. ...

... Cabell Huntington Hospital and Marshall Health recently announced a \$1 million endowment to launch the Brent A. Marsteller Scholarship Fund to honor the hospital's retiring president and CEO. The scholarship will benefit students at the Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine, and will be funded over five years in \$100,000 yearly installments. Marsteller announced his retirement effective Dec. 31 after 14 years at the helm. ...

... Five new hospitals have joined the "Say YES to Safe Sleep for Babies" campaign, bringing to 17 the total number of participating hospitals and reaching 66% of the birthing population statewide. The recent additions include Berkeley Medical Center in Martinsburg, Camden Clark Hospital in Parkersburg, CAMC Women and Children's Hospital in Charleston, Jefferson Medical Center in Ranson and Summersville Regional Medical Center in Summersville. The program distributes information and tips on ways to keep babies from unsafe sleeping habits, which researchers believe is one of the causes of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. ...

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Thom Stevens, Editor

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Your Best Source for West Virginia Legislative & Governmental Health Information

Quotes of the Week:

... ***“Some people have an opinion, and they don’t let information get in the way.”***

- Anonymous Statehouse observer, anticipating an upcoming debate on a controversial health issue.

... ***“It’s a little ridiculous, but I was trying to prove a point.”***

- House Health Committee counsel Charles Roskovensky, providing a good example of a bill’s practical application.

... ***“For every pack of cigarettes that costs \$6.36, the average impact on your health is about \$35.”***

- Dr. Linda Carte, head of Cancer Services at United Hospital Center, as quoted by *WDTV*.

... ***“Health Care Highlights is still the best summary of what is going on in the Legislature and state in health care.”***

- Tom Jones, former CEO of West Virginia United Health System.

January Capitol Health Care Events

January 27 West Virginia Occupational Therapy Association Day

American Cancer Society Action Network

January 28 West Virginia Physical Therapy Association Day

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Capitol Station, P.O. Box 5008

Charleston, WV 25361

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