

2021 House of Delegates

Report of the Government Affairs Committee

2021 NJAFP Board GA House of Delegates Report

Trenton remains functioning in a remote/virtual environment. The Legislature spent a great deal of the last year focused on legalization of marijuana bills, Covid-related initiatives, of course, as well as a sprinkling of NJAFP issues, including scope of practice, healthcare transparency and telemedicine.

COVID-19 VACCINE DISTRIBUTION: NJAFP has spent the greatest amount of its advocacy efforts the state's vaccine distribution and the exclusion of primary care practices. NJAFP remains in regular contact with the NJDOH Commissioner and her staff, including Drs. Adinaro and Montana, on vaccine distribution, generally, and to primary care practices. Dr. Adinaro present to our Board in December about a week before the first doses were received in NJ. Members of NJAFP leadership met with the Commissioner and all her staff, including Drs. Montana and Adinaro, in March with the sole purpose of discussion the exclusion of primary care. Claudine is communicating often with the Commissioner's chief of staff, as well as the Governor's office on this issue. Ultimately, NJDOH is not convinced that primary care practices were able to meet the volume of mass vaccination necessary in these initial months as health systems, pharmacies, and mega sites could. In addition, the NJDOH is looking at primary care practices to be included by May, however they want all sites to be "open pods." This is a work in progress, and we know it is very frustrating to many family physicians and their patients. In addition to the Trenton advocacy, NJAFP has expended a great deal of time working this topic in the public realm/media on the specific to benefits of allowing primary care practices to vaccinate. <https://njafp.org/njafp-in-the-news/>.

NJ ACCESS TO CARE COALITION:

NJAFP continues collaborating with over 15 medical specialty societies through the Access to Care Coalition. The focus of this group now is scope of practice and rebranding/messaging our scope advocacy. We are in the initial stages of polling to find out what our target audience believes and what we need to do to succeed in Trenton on this issue. NJAFP will be participating with the Coalition on a communications messaging campaign on scope of practice. We have initial results of a basic polling question that at a minimum tells us that we have a lot of work to do with the public's understanding of team-based care and training/education of physicians vs. "providers."

TELEMEDICINE:

NJAFP is actively promoting and supporting the following legislation.

- S2559/A4179 - - provides parity in payment/codifies relaxation of telemed rules for state regulated plans, Medicaid, NJ Family Care, State health/employee benefits plans.

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These bills are pending two more committee votes before heading to the floor in both houses.

- S2467 – In the meantime, Governor Murphy signed this bill into law that provides extension of relaxation of telemed rules to 90 day past public health emergency.

TRUTH IN ADVERTISING LAW

Governor Murphy signed this legislation, which was promoted by the Access to Care Coalition and took 10 years to get done. This law ensures proper identification of health care professionals, both in the hospital and ambulatory care setting. This law also makes sure that health care professionals are at a minimum identifying themselves appropriately by their professional degree, titles, and board certifications on any advertising for services. NJAFP will publish a “how to” on complying with this law for members.

COVID EXECUTIVE ORDERS: Governor Murphy’s EOs come fast and furious and NJAFP is continuing to monitor them for any impact on the practice of family medicine, licensing, and scope of practice.

PRIMARY CARE INVESTMENT: As previously reported, COVID has continued to put some of NJAFP’s top initiatives on hold. We will revisit primary care investment in 2021.

NETWORK ADEQUACY: NJAFP is working on revisions to the state’s network adequacy regulations. This is in preliminary stages.

Respectfully submitted,

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