



2013 Legislative Session Weekly Update

LeadingAge Florida

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Week Nine of 2013 Session

May 3, 2013

Final Week of 2013 Legislative Session

Affordable Housing Bills

SB 740 Relating to Affordable Housing Tax Exemptions — By Sen. Wilton Simpson (R-New Port Richey)

The bill deletes an ad valorem tax exemption for property owned by certain Florida-based limited partnerships to be used for affordable housing for certain income-qualified persons. The effective date will be upon becoming a law and shall first apply to the 2013 ad valorem tax rolls. The bill did not make it out of committee. The House companion, **HB 921** by Rep. Ronald Renuart (R-Ponte Vedra Beach), died on the House Calendar.

HM 753 Memorial Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program — By Mark S. Pafford (D-West Palm Beach)

The bill urges Congress to adequately restore funding to Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program. The Memorial states that funding for low-cost housing has drastically decreased from the \$650 million appropriated in 2005 to \$78 million in 2011 and \$0 in 2012. This lack of funding leaves thousands of low-income seniors on waiting lists for as long as 2 or 3 years or more. Currently there is a desperate need for low-cost housing in the state. The Senate companion is **912** by Sen. Joseph Abruzzo (D-Wellington). Neither bill made it out of committee.

SB 928 Relating to Community Development – By Sen. Wilton Simpson (R-New Port Richey)

The bill deletes an ad valorem tax exemption for property owned by certain Florida-based limited partnerships and used for affordable housing for certain income-qualified persons; extending the expiration date applicable to the granting of community contribution tax credits against the sales and use tax, corporate income tax, and insurance premium tax for contributions to eligible sponsors of community projects approved by the Department of Economic Opportunity; revising the powers of the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, etc. Effective Date: Upon becoming a law and shall first apply to the 2013 ad valorem tax rolls. The House companion, **HB 437** by Rep. Daniel Davis (R-Jacksonville), passed the House 113-0. 928 was substituted for HB 437 and passed the Senate 38-0.

SB 1852 Relating to Housing Funds – By the Appropriations Committee

The bill appropriates \$200,080,474 to several state entities for various housing and foreclosure-related programs and services, contingent upon such funds being deposited into the state treasury from the National Mortgage Settlement. This money comes from the agreement that settles the state and federal investigations finding that the country's five largest mortgage servicers routinely signed foreclosure related documents outside the presence of a notary and without really knowing whether the facts they contained were correct. Both of these practices violate the law.

Funds are appropriated, with specific restrictions and requirements, as follows:

- \$70 million for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program;
- \$65 million for the State Apartment Incentive Loan Program (SAIL);
- \$10 million for housing for homeless persons;

SB 1852 passed unanimously in the Senate 38-0. The House companion, **HB 7111** by the Appropriations Committee, was substituted for the Senate bill and passed 117-0.

Nursing Home Bills

HB 1159 - Relating to Skilled Nursing Facilities — By Rep. H. Marlene O’Toole (R-Lady Lake)

The bill would provide expedited review for certificate-of-need requirements for construction of licensed skilled nursing facilities in the vicinity of The Villages. HB 1159 was amended so that a formula would be used to calculate bed need; total beds in a new facility would be capped at 240; criteria would be set forth for retirement communities; and all nursing home beds would be dually certified as Medicaid and Medicare. It passed the House 73-40. Effective Date: July 1, 2013. The companion, **SB 1482** by Sen. Alan Hays (R-Umatilla), was substituted for the House bill and passed 32-6. An amendment related to trauma centers was added and so at the time of this writing, the bill is in returning messages to the house.

SB 1384 Relating to Nursing Home Litigation — By Sen. Bill Galvano (R-Bradenton)

This bill affects nursing home litigation and it will do the following:

- Limit liability of individual managers consistent with the business judgment rule.
- Provide that the legal remedies provided by the nursing home law are the exclusive legal remedies that can be brought by a nursing home resident against the nursing home.
- Allow a defendant nursing home to challenge a preliminary proffer of evidence related to a claim for punitive damages.
- Provide that punitive damages are generally only assessable against the person who committed the action (or inaction) that led to the injury.

This bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2013, and applies to all causes of action on or after that date. It died on the Senate Calendar. The companion bill, **HB 869** by Rep. Bill Hager (R-Boca Raton), did not make it out of committee.

SB 1748 Relating to Medicaid Nursing Home Eligibility — By Sen. Greg Evers (R-Crestview)

This bill limits and places sanctions on persons transferring assets in order to become eligible for Medicaid nursing facility services. The senate bill did not make it out of Appropriations. The House companion, **HB 1323** by Rep. Jeanette Nunez (R-Miami), passed the House 80-35 and died in senate messages

Assisted Living Facility Bills

SB 616 Relating to ALF Certification of Administrators — By Sen. Aaron Bean (R-Jacksonville)

This bill will require assisted living facility administrators to meet certain training and education requirements established by a third-party credentialing entity. It would also allow the Department of Elderly Affairs to require additional training or education of any personal care staff in the facility --except an administrator. The bill was not heard in committee. The House companion is **HB 865** Rep. Dennis Baxley (R-Ocala), was not heard in committee.

SB 646 Relating to Enforcement of ALF — By Senate Children, Families and Elder Affairs Committee

This bill strengthens the enforcement of current regulations for Assisted Living Facilities (ALF) by revising fines imposed for licensure violations, clarifying existing enforcement tools, and requiring an additional inspection for facilities with significant violations. Specifically, the bill would:

- Clarify who is responsible for assuring that mental health residents in an ALF receive necessary services.
- Clarify the duties of the state Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.
- Create a provisional Extended Congregate Care (ECC) license for new ALFs and specify when the Agency for Health Care Administration's (AHCA) may deny or revoke a facility's ECC license.
- Reduce by half the number of monitoring visits the AHCA must conduct for ALFs with Limited Nursing Services (LNS) licenses and ECC licenses.
 - Require that facilities with one or more, rather than three or more, state supported mental health residents obtain a limited mental health (LMH) license.
- Allow the AHCA to revoke the license of a facility with a controlling interest that has or had a 25 percent or greater financial or ownership interest in a second facility which closed due to financial inability to operate or was the subject of other specified administrative sanctions.
- Clarify the criteria under which the AHCA must revoke or deny a facility's license.
- Specify circumstances under which the AHCA must impose an immediate moratorium on a facility.
- Set fines for all classes of violations to a fixed amount at the midpoint of the current range and multiply these new fine amounts for facilities licensed for 100 or more beds by 1.5 times.
- Allow the AHCA to impose a fine for a class I violation even if it is corrected before the AHCA inspects a facility.
- Double fines for repeated serious violations.
- Require that fines be imposed for repeat minor violations regardless of correction.
- Double the fines for minor violations if a facility is cited for the same minor violation three or more times over the course of three licensure inspections.
- Specify a fine amount of \$500 for ALFs that are not in compliance with background screening requirements.
- Add certain responsible parties and agency personnel to the list of people who must report abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families' (the DCF) central abuse hotline.
- Require an additional inspection, within 6 months, of a facility cited for specified serious violations.
- Require new facility staff, who have not previously completed core training, to attend a 2 hour pre-service orientation before interacting with residents.
- Require that the AHCA conduct a study of inter-surveyor reliability in order to determine the consistency with which regulations are applied to facilities and report its findings and recommendations by November 1, 2013.
- Require that the AHCA propose a plan for an ALF rating system by November 1, 2013.
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 - Require that the AHCA conduct a study of inter-surveyor reliability in order to determine the consistency with which regulations are applied to facilities and report its findings and recommendations by November 1, 2013.
 - Require that the AHCA propose a plan for an ALF rating system by November 1, 2013.
- The bill passed the Senate 38-0 and died in House messages.

HB 1319 Relating to ALF — By Rep. Eddy Gonzalez (R-Hialeah Gardens)

Revises responsibilities of DCF relating to coordination of services provided by Medicaid prepaid mental health plans; revises time period during which involuntary examination may be initiated; provides penalties; authorizes AHCA to impose moratorium on or suspension of license of facility under certain conditions; grants extended congregate care license for an assisted living facility; establishes requirements for qualification as administrator of ALF; specifies requirements for facilities that provide care for clients with Alzheimer's disease & other related disorders; increases fines for certain violations of pt. I of ch. 429, F.S.; requires facility licensed for flexible beds to retain certain information regarding residents; provides guidelines for administration of over-the-counter medications; increases amount of funds that facility may keep on behalf of resident; authorizes agency to conduct periodic unannounced inspections & surveys of facilities; provides conditions under which agency must impose moratorium; authorizes development of electronic communication systems to transmit information & require submission of reports; provides fine for failure to timely report. Effective Date: July 1, 2013. The bill did not make it out of committee. This was the companion to SB 646.

SB 966 Relating to Health Care — By Sen. Aaron Bean (R-Jacksonville)

The bill deletes a monthly reporting requirement for laboratories; designating the Florida Hospital Sanford-Burnham Translational Research Institute for Metabolism and Diabetes as a resource for diabetes research in this state; revising the definition of the term "hospital" for purposes of annual assessments on net operating revenues for inpatient and outpatient services to fund public medical assistance; creating the Standardized Credentials Collection and Verification Program for physicians, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2013. **There is no identical House companion. At the time of this report, more than 70 admentments were pending on the senate floor, including admentments related to assisted living facility, background screening, transitional living facilities, trauma hospitals.***Home and Community Based Services Bills*

HB 125 Relating to Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly — By Rep. Jimmie Smith (R-Lecanto)

This bill will allow the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to contract as a Program All Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) services with one not-for-profit organization hospice that has more than 30 years' experience as a licensed hospice and is currently a licensed hospice serving individuals and families in Citrus, Hernando and Pasco counties. It passed the House 114-0, but died in the senate messages

SB 440 Relating to Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly — By Sen. Wilton Simpson (R-New Port Richey)

This bill will allow the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to contract as a PACE services with one not-for-profit organization hospice that has more than 30 years' experience as a licensed hospice and is currently a licensed hospice serving individuals and families in Citrus, Hernando and Pasco counties. It did not make it out of committee.

HB 601 Relating to the Department of Elderly Affairs — By Rep. Matt Hudson (R-Naples)

This bill directs the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability to conduct a review and evaluation of the functions of the Department of Elderly Affairs. It also requires the office to consult with other certain state agencies and stakeholders regarding the review and evaluation. **It died on the House Calendar.** The companion is **SB 804** by Sen. Garrett Richter (R-Naples), did not make it out of committee.

SB 748 Relating to Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly — By Sen. Aaron Bean (R-Jacksonville)

This bill will allow the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to contract as a PACE services with one not-for-profit organization hospice that has more than 30 years' experience as a licensed hospice and is currently a licensed hospice serving individuals and families in Duval, St. Johns, Baker, and Nassau counties. It remained in the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. Its companion bill is **HB 779** by Rep. Jones was not heard in committee.

SB 1094 Relating to Home Health Agencies — By Sen. Anitere Flores (R-Miami)

This bill deletes requirements for the quarterly reporting by a home health agency of certain data submitted to the Agency for Health Care Administration. It passed the Senate 34-0. **HB 4031** by Rep. Jose Felix Diaz was substituted for SB 1094 and passed the House 115-0.

<p><i>Bills of Interest – All Members</i></p>
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HB 9 Relating to Involuntary Examinations under the Baker Act — By Rep. Daphne Campbell (D-Miami Shores)

This bill adds Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants to the list of medical professionals who may execute a certificate for involuntary examination of a person. Currently, involuntary examinations may only be initiated by certain medical professionals, namely physicians, clinical psychologists, psychiatric nurses, mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and clinical social workers. Currently, involuntary examinations may only be initiated by certain medical professionals, namely physicians, clinical psychologists, psychiatric nurses, mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and clinical social workers. The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2013. The bill passed the full House 116-0. The Senate companion, **SB 110** by Sen. Anitere Flores (R-Miami), did not make it out of committee.

CS/HB 47 - Fire Safety Devices — By Rep. Ed Hooper (R-Clearwater)

The bill requires the gradual adoption of tamper-resistant smoke alarms powered by a nonremovable lithium “long life” battery designed to last for 10 years. In jurisdictions that have adopted similar measures, data indicate a significant decline in alarm failures. The bill does not require existing smoke alarms to be immediately replaced. Instead, the provision applies to new installations and applies when existing smoke alarms are replaced. Manufacturer comments generally indicate that smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years. CS/HB 47 does not apply to new construction, because it exempts any smoke alarm or fire alarm system that is electrically wired or connects to a panel. Current residential building codes already require smoke alarms to be wired to commercial power. The Senate companion is **SB 264** by Sen. Alan Hays (R- Umatilla). Neither bill made it out of committee.

CS/HB 77 Landlord/Tenant by Rep. Elizabeth Porter (R-Lake City)

The bill modifies several areas of the “Florida Residential Landlord and Tenant Act” which governs the relationship between landlords and tenants under a residential rental agreement. This bill would:

- Provide that attorney's fees may not be awarded for personal injury actions resulting from maintenance issues between landlord and tenant.
- Provide that certain statutory notice and attorney fee provisions may not be waived in a lease.
- Modify the statutory disclosure regarding deposits to provide specific wording.
- Clarify eviction notice requirements for a recurrent noncompliance event within 12 months.
- Allow a landlord to accept partial rent without waiving the right to evict.
- Prohibit a landlord from retaliating against a tenant who lawfully pays a landlord's association dues pursuant to a lawful demand, or a tenant who complains of a fair housing violation.
- Provide that a landlord and a mobile home park owner must be given an opportunity to cure a deficiency in any notice or pleadings prior to dismissal of an eviction action.

It passed in the House 78-37. The Senate companion, **SB 490** by Sen. Kelli Stargel (R-Lakeland), was amended as passed by the Senate 27-10. The amended bill was passed in the House 92-25.

HB 115 Relating to Professional Licensure of Military Veterans by Department of Health

— By Rep. David Santiago (R-Deltona)

This bill requires the Department of Health (DOH) to waive initial professional licensure and certificate fees for military veterans who apply for a fee waiver using a DOH form and who provide supporting documentation required by DOH. A military veteran is only eligible for the fee waiver if the veteran has been honorably discharged from any branch of the United States Armed Forces within 24 months from the application. Current law does not allow the DOH or its regulatory boards to distinguish applicants for initial licensure based on military service. The bill was substituted for SB 160 and passed the House 115-0. The Senate companion, **SB 160** by Sen. Garrett Richter (R-Naples), passed the full Senate 36-0.

HB 195 Relating to EMS — By Rep. Keith Perry (R-Gainesville)

HB 195 amends part III of Ch. 401, F.S. and updates the definitions and training standards to reflect the new EMT-Paramedic National Standard Curriculum or the National EMS Education Standards. The bill removes outdated competencies and makes conforming changes throughout the bill. The bill increases the timeframe within which EMTs and paramedics can take the state examination following successful completion of an approved training program from 1 to 2 years. The bill amends s. 381.0034, F.S., to delete the requirement that EMTs and paramedics obtain HIV/AIDS continuing education instruction. The bill amends the timeline that

the state emergency medical services plan is updated from biennially to every five years. HB 195 was substituted for SB 520 and passed 117-0. The Senate companion, **SB 520** by Sen. Rob Bradley (R-Orange Park), passed the full Senate 38-0.

SB 228 Relating to Pre-Suit Discovery in Medical Negligence Actions — By Sen. Anitere Flores (R-Miami)

This bill clarifies authorization for pre-suit discovery. Providers are to furnish copies of written and electronic and not by verbal methods. This authorization may not be construed to allow a health care provider to have any other communications, discussions, or conversations regarding the patient's health information. House companion is **HB 1387** by Rep. Eddy Gonzalez (R-Hialeah Gardens). Neither bill made it out of committee.

HB 305 Relating to Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists — By Rep. Erik Fresen (R-Miami)

This bill authorizes certified registered nurse anesthetists to practice within protocol established in collaboration with, rather than with approval of, physicians & medical staff of facility in which anesthetic service is performed. Effective Date: July 1, 2013. The Senate companion, **SB 1450** by Sen. Chris Smith (D-Fort Lauderdale). Neither bill made it out of committee.

SB 308 Relating to Abusive Workplace — By Sen. Oscar Braynon (D-Miami Gardens)

This bill creates the "Abusive Workplace Environment Act." It prohibits a public employer from subjecting his or her employee to an abusive workplace environment; requiring that a civil action filed under the act must be commenced no later than 1 year after the date of the last incident that is part of the alleged unlawful employment practice. It provides that if a person is found to have committed an unlawful employment practice that culminated in an adverse employment action, the court may enjoin the person from engaging in the unlawful employment practice and may order any other relief that it deems appropriate, including punitive damages and attorney fees, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2013. It is related to **HB 149** by Rep. Daphne Campbell. Neither bill made it out of committee.

HB 313 Relating to Medicaid Dental Services — By Rep. Lori Berman (D-Boynton Beach)

This bill authorizes AHCA to reimburse health access setting operating as Medicaid provider for dental services under certain conditions. Effective Date: July 1, 2013. The companion is **SB 488** by Sen. Oscar Braynon (D-Miami Gardens). Neither bill made it out of committee.

HB 315 Relating to Senior Services — By Rep. Elaine Schwartz (D-Hollywood)

This bill authorizes each county to create by ordinance independent special district to provide funding for services for seniors. It also requires elector approval to annually levy ad valorem taxes. Effective Date: July 1, 2013. The companion is **SB 976** by Sen. Eleanor Sobel (D-Hollywood). Neither bill made it out of committee.

CS/SB 316 Internet Taxes by Sen. Nancy Detert (R-Venice) amends Florida law to require out-of-state retailers that conduct business over the Internet to collect and remit Florida sales tax on sales made to Florida customers. The House companion is **HB 497** by Rep. Jared Moskowitz (D-Coral Springs). Neither bill made it out of committee.

HB 349 Relating to Treatment Programs for Impaired Professionals — By Rep. Ronald Renuart (R-Ponte Vedra Beach)

This is a bill proposed during the 2012 Legislative Session. It provides that the professions of emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and radiological personnel may be subject to the treatment program for impaired practitioners at the election of the impaired practitioner consultant. In addition, it amends the requirements for the impaired practitioner consultant. It provides that the consultant may be an entity that employs a registered nurse as its executive director. It provides that the consultant may contract for services if requested by a school or

program for students enrolled in a school for licensure as a health care practitioner under Ch. 456, F.S., or as a veterinarian under Ch. 474, F.S. The CS provides that whenever the department receives a legally sufficient complaint alleging that a licensee or applicant, not just licensee, is impaired and no other complaint exists, the appropriate board, the board's designee, or the Department of Health (DOH) shall forward all information in its possession regarding the impaired licensee or applicant to the consultant. It is assumed that additional workload related to this legislation will be absorbed by the existing contract with the current vendor for fiscal year 2012-13. However, the Department of Health estimates the additional costs in fiscal year 2013-14 will be about \$81,000. The bill specifically states that this additional cost cannot be charged to the Medical Quality Assurance Trust Fund. HB 349 was substituted for **SB 248** by Sen. John Thrasher, which passed the Senate 39-0. The House passed it 118-0.

HB 365 Relating to Pharmacy — By Rep. Matt Hudson (R-Naples)

House Bill 365 permits the substitution of biosimilar biological products for prescribed biological products by Florida pharmacists. Substitution is only permitted if the biological product to be substituted appears on a list developed and maintained by the FDA as biosimilar to and interchangeable with the prescribed biological product. The patient and the prescribing health care provider have the ability to reject substitution and request the prescribed biological product. The bill requires a pharmacist to notify the prescribing health care provider of the substitution within a specific time frame and in a specific manner. Both the pharmacist and the prescribing health care provider are required to maintain a written record of the substitution. The bill appears to have an undetermined, positive fiscal impact on state and local governments. It passed the full House 116-1. The bill companion is **SB 732** by Sen. Denise Grimsley (R-Sebring), which was substituted for the House bill and passed 36-1.

HB 409 Relating to Health Insurance — By Rep. Dennis Baxley (R-Ocala)

This will require health insurers & HMOs to allow insurers to continue to use services of preferred providers or network providers listed on provider or network panel at time of insured's enrollment for minimum period of time. It requires HMOs to provide subscribers with current list of network providers and make list available for public inspection. It requires health insurers & HMOs to pay certain providers who have been terminated from panel for health services provided to insurers after termination. Effective Date: October 1, 2013. The Senate companion is **SB 510** by Sen. John Legg (R-Lutz). Neither bill made it out of committee.

SB 438 Relating to Memory Disorder Clinics — By Sen. Thad Altman (R Melbourne)

This revises provisions for the establishment of memory disorder clinics in the state. It was not heard in committee and had no House companion.

CS/SB 530 Dispute Resolution/Arbitration -- By Sen. John Thrasher (R-St Augustine)

This bill largely adopts the provisions of the 2000 revision of the Uniform Arbitration Act, as approved by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws.¹³ The bill significantly amends or repeals each section of the existing Florida Arbitration Code, and amends s. 682.01, F.S., to rename the chapter as the "Revised Florida Arbitration Code." The bill also clarifies that after June 30, 2016, all agreements to arbitrate, regardless of the date executed, will be subject to the Revised Florida Arbitration Code. The bill passed the full Senate 39-0. The House companion is **CS/HB 693** by Rep. George Moraitis (R-Ft. Lauderdale) was substituted for the Senate bill and passed the House 118-0.

HB 535 Relating to Medicaid Eligibility — By Rep. Jimmy Patronis (R-Panama City)

This bill provides conditions for the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to evaluate an applicant's life insurance policy when determining their eligibility for Medicaid services. It authorizes AHCA to use federal or state funds under Medicaid program to pay life insurance premiums of an applicant or recipient. It also provides restrictions on sale, assignment, or transfer of ownership of life insurance policy for which the state is named as beneficiary or

which is collaterally assigned to state; provides conditions for owner of life insurance policy to enter into viatical settlement contract with health care services provider for coverage of Medicaid long-term care services. The Senate companion is **SB 794** by Sen. Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg. Neither bill made it out of committee.

SB 536 Relating to Physical Therapy — By Sen. Nancy Detert (R-Venice)

It authorizes physical therapists to implement physical therapy treatment plans of a specified duration provided by advanced registered nurse practitioners. It was substituted for HB 413 and passed the Senate 37-0. Its companion, **HB 413** by Rep. Travis Hutson (R- Palm Coast), passed the House 115-0.

HB 587 Relating to Damages for Medical or Health Care Services — By Rep. Dave Hood (R-Daytona Beach)

In general, this bill moves the determination of the value of medical services from the trial court judge to the jury. Where the bill has already been paid, the jury is informed of the actual amount and the jury may not award a higher amount. Where the services have not been paid (which may apply to past damages and will always apply to future damages), the bill limits the amount recoverable to the maximum amount that is customarily accepted in payment for such services by providers in the same geographic area, excluding Medicaid, Medicare and other government entitlement programs.

The bill also prohibits an injured party from being awarded reimbursement for a medical service that was not medically necessary. Medical necessity is from the perspective of the injured person, not based on expert testimony.

Also, the bill only applies to a cause of action that accrues after the effective date of the bill. The bill provides an effective date upon becoming a law. The companion is **SB 1402** by Sen. Kelli Stargel (R-Lakeland). Neither bill made it out of committee.

SB 612 Relating to Medical Doctors — By Rep. Bill Galvano (R-Bradenton)

This bill requires that when health care practitioners present themselves as "Doctor" or "Dr.", there is certain disclosure and there is no intent to mislead. It provides criminal penalties for violations if there is intent to mislead, etc. Effective Date: October 1, 2013. It did not make it out of committee. The House companion, **HB 805** by Rep. Heather Dawes Fitzenhagen (R-Fort Myers), was not heard.

HB 791 Relating to Audits of Pharmacy Records — By Rep. Manny Diaz (R-Hialeah)

The bill would revise requirements for audit of Medicaid-related pharmacy records; authorizes audits of third-party payor & third-party administrator records of pharmacy permittees; specify that certain audit criteria apply to third-party claims submitted after specified date; prohibit certain accounting practices used for calculating recoupment of claims; prohibit third-party payor or state agency from mandating delivery of pharmacy provider services and prescription drugs by mail; authorize third-party payor or state agency to offer incentivized program for prescription drugs by mail. Effective Date: upon becoming a law. The companion is **SB 1358** by Sen. Anitere Flores (R-Miami). Neither made it out of committee.

SB 844 Relating to Medicaid Fraud — By Sen. Denise Grimsley (R-Sebring)

The bill adds an additional provision relating to a change in principal that must be included in a Medicaid provider agreement with the Agency for Health Care Administration, revises provisions specifying grounds for terminating a provider from the program, for seeking certain remedies for violations and for imposing certain sanctions. It also deletes the requirement that the agency place payments withheld from a provider in a suspended account and revising when a provider must reimburse overpayments. Effective Date: July 1, 2013. SB 844 was substituted for HB 939

and passed the Senate 38-0. **HB 939** by Rep. Cary Pigman (R-Sebring), passed the House 116-0.

SB 886 Relating to Damages for Medical or Health Care Services — By Sen. John Thrasher (R-Jacksonville)

In general, this bill provides circumstance under which patient records may be released without prior written authorization. The bill did not make it out of committee. There is no House companion.

HB 1015 Relating to State Ombudsman Program — By Rep. Kenneth Roberson (R-Port Charlotte)

This bill conforms terminology and programmatic requirements to the Older Americans Act (in part, as directed by the Administration on Aging's Compliance Review).

- State Ombudsman has final authority to make appointments of individuals serving as ombudsmen.
- Clarification of representatives of the office to include the state ombudsman and both staff and volunteers of the program; delineates the activities and duties of the state ombudsman in relation to ombudsmen in general.
- Removes limitations on access to resident records in conformance with s. 712(b) of the Older Americans Act.
- Amends the state council to act as an advisory body to the program, including members that represent the views of area agencies on aging, older individuals, and providers of long-term care as specified in s. 712(e) of the Older Americans Act.
- Revises the confidentiality of resident records section to conform to the limitations on disclosures set forth in s. 712(d) of the Older Americans Act.

It also clarifies the application, background screening, and training requirements needed to become an ombudsman. And it clarifies the operation of the program within districts to allow flexibility to ombudsmen who wish to participate but are constrained by geographical boundaries. Finally, it revises the terminology creating local councils to conform to s. 712(a)(5) of the Older Americans Act and relieves the state of the unnecessary resource burdens when performing state activities. It passed the House 114-0 and died in messages. The Senate companion, **SB 1212** by Sen. Darren Soto (D-Kissimmee), did not make it out of committee.

SB 1112 Relating to Background Screening — By Sen. Rene Garcia (R-Hialeah)

The bill would allow the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to share driver license photographs with the Agency for Health Care Administration pursuant to an interagency agreement; adding additional disqualifying offenses to background screening provisions; requiring that all persons seeking an exemption from disqualification have paid any court-ordered monetary penalty in full before being eligible to apply, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2013. The bill did not make it out of committee. The companion, **HB 1021** by Rep. Betty Reed (D-Tampa), passed the House 116-0, but died in messages.

SB 1724 Relating to Transitional Living Facilities — By Sen. Rene Garcia (R-Hialeah)

The bill Requires the licensure of transitional living facilities; provides requirements for transitional living facilities relating to client admission, transfer, and discharge; requires a comprehensive treatment plan to be developed for each client; provides requirements for the screening of potential employees and monitoring of employees for the protection of clients; provides requirements and limitations for the use of physical restraints, seclusion, and chemical restraint medication on clients, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2013. The bill did not make it out of committee. The companion, **HB 1109** by MaryLynn Magar (R-Hobe Sound), passed the House 119-0, but died in messages.

SB 1792 Relating to Medical Negligence Actions — By Senate Judiciary Committee
 Medical Negligence Actions; Authorizing a health care practitioner or provider who reasonably expects to be deposed, to be called as a witness, or to receive discovery requests to consult with an attorney on certain matters; authorizing the disclosure of patient information in connection with litigation under certain circumstances; authorizing a medical liability insurer to recommend an attorney to a health care practitioner or provider under certain circumstances; providing that a prospective defendant may conduct an ex parte interview with a claimant's treating health care provider as a tool of informal discovery, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2013. It passed the full Senate 27-12. It passed in the House 77-38.

SB 1816 Relating to Health Care — By the Appropriations Committee
 The bill would create a program called "Healthy Florida" that would be administered by the Florida Healthy Kids Corp., which has long provided subsidized insurance for children in low- and moderate-income families. Healthy Florida could require enrollees to pay premiums and co-payments for services, with the amounts set each year in the state budget. Enrollees would have a choice of health plans, which could receive contracts on a statewide or regional basis.

Like in the current Florida Healthy Kids program, insurers would be required to spend at least 85 percent of the money they receive on providing health services to enrollees, a concept known in the industry as a medical-loss ratio.

The bill would require Healthy Florida to be evaluated after three years, with the Legislature deciding whether to renew it. Also, the program would rely heavily on federal funding to pay for the coverage --- and would end if federal funding dropped below 90 percent.

The bill was substituted for **HB 7169** by the Select Committee on PPACA (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act), which passed the House 71-45. The bill passed the Senate 38-1.

SB 1844 Relating to Health Choice Plus program - By Health Policy Committee
 The bill creates a state program to help the uninsured pay for various health care options by subsidizing the costs. Florida Health Choices mission is to allow individuals to shop for a variety of health coverage and plans. The funding would mostly be paid for using state general revenue funds with cost estimates about \$30 to \$40 million a year. Enrollees would pay at least \$20 a month for their plans and the state's subsidy would be about \$10 a month. It passed the Senate 36-0. It passed the House 73-41.

HB 7013C1 Relating to Early Voting — By House Appropriations Committee
 The bill makes a number of changes to state law. Below is a comparison between current law and the proposed changes. The bill passed the House 118-1. The Senate companion, **SB 600** by Sen. Jack Latvala (R- Clearwater), was substituted for HB 7031, amended and passed the Senate 26-13. The amended bill was passed by the House 115-1.

ISSUE	CURRENT LAW	EFFECTS OF PROPOSED CHANGES
EARLY VOTING DAYS §101.657	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 days required <input type="checkbox"/> Begins on the 10th day before and ends on the 3rd day before an election <input type="checkbox"/> Early voting not permitted on the Sunday before the general election	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 days minimum, 14 days maximum <input type="checkbox"/> Begins on the 15th day before and ends on the 2nd day before an election <input type="checkbox"/> Early voting optional at the supervisor of elections' discretion on the Sunday before the general

election

EARLY VOTING HOURS

§101.657

48 hours minimum, 96 hours maximum

At least 6 but no more than 12 hours per day

No 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. restriction

No requirement that all sites in a county be open on the same days or for the same amount of time

64 hours minimum, 168 hours maximum (72 more hours than under current law)

At least 8 but no more than 12 hours per day

No 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. restriction

No requirement that all sites in a county be open on the same days or for the same amount of time

EARLY VOTING SITES

§101.657

Early voting may be offered at city halls, public libraries, main or permanent branch offices of supervisors of elections.

Expands currently authorized sites to include fairgrounds, civic centers, courthouses, county commission buildings, stadiums, and convention centers
Also authorizes individual or accompanying

For a copy of the bills listed in this bulletin, please call Legislative Information at 800-342-1827 or use the Florida "Online Sunshine" website on the Internet at Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.. Hard copies of bills are available through House Documents (850/488-7097) or Senate Documents (850/487-5915).