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**Hospitals advocate for malpractice reform and telehealth during**

## Hospital Day on the Hill

On Wednesday, hospital advocates from across the state gathered virtually for IHA's 2021 Hospital Day on the Hill. Attendees heard a welcome address from Gov. Kim Reynolds and a discussion focused on health care advocacy policy and regulations between Kirk Norris, IHA president/CEO, and Tom Nickels, executive vice president for government relations and public policy for the American Hospital Association. The event ended with a panel of Iowa legislators who shared their insights about health care issues being reviewed by lawmakers. Members of the IHA advocacy team also reviewed the key legislative actions important to Iowa hospitals this year and shared information for successfully reaching out to legislators.

Besides the Hospital Day on the Hill program, IHA issued two action alerts on the topics of telehealth payment parity and medical malpractice reform:

- During the first week of session, [legislation was introduced in the House](#) that would require health carriers to reimburse health care providers for mental health services provided through telehealth in the same manner and at the same rate as if the service were provided in person. This legislation is eligible to be voted on by the House, then go to the Senate for review. Senators need to understand the importance of telehealth payment parity. Click [HERE](#) to take action. After reaching out to your senator, please share any responses with [Erin Cubit](#) at IHA.
- Last week, legislators in the Iowa House introduced legislation related to [noneconomic damage awards against health care providers](#). Noneconomic damages are ones in which there is not a specific price on the outcome. Examples of these damages include pain, suffering, inconvenience, physical impairment and mental anguish. These damages drive up the cost of health care and put a significant financial strain on facilities, particularly in rural areas. This legislation puts a hard cap on noneconomic damages for personal injury or death of \$1 million for any occurrence. Because this legislation is eligible for floor debate, now is the time to reach out to representatives to ensure they hear the hospital perspective and are encouraged to keep the legislation moving. Click [HERE](#) to take action. After reaching out to your representative, please share any responses with [Nicole Proesch](#) at IHA.

IHA has developed additional resources to assist advocates in their outreach:

- [IHA's Advocacy Toolkit](#)

IHA would like to thank all the presenters and public officials who shared information with hospital advocates about health care policy. We appreciate your participation and expertise.

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## Week seven of legislative session overview

As hospitals participated in Hospital Day on the Hill virtually, legislators in both chambers continued to debate bills, including a particularly intense debate about election bills. The first funnel is only one week away on Friday, March 5, but bills are still being introduced. Several key issues saw action this week for hospitals, including EMS, days awaiting placement and tort reform. IHA will continue to work on these issues and will provide updates through the Legislative Bulletin.

Visit IHA's [Legislation NOW](#) page for this week's details on the bills IHA is following.

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## House approves EMS essential service bill

[House File 562](#) (formerly House Study Bill 186) passed unanimously through the House on Tuesday. This bill would update the process for emergency medical services (EMS) to be deemed an essential service. This new process would have three distinct differences from what the process currently involves:

- The ability for county or city EMS districts to levy additional tax funds in a future election if the funds levied in the initial vote are insufficient.
- The petition to begin the process for entire counties would be eliminated.
- The five-year sunset on the tax levy would be eliminated.

IHA thanks members of the House for approving this legislation and encourages members to reach out to their representatives to thank them, as well. IHA now will work with the Senate to keep the bill moving forward.

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## Legislature considers Medicaid managed care policy

The Legislature has been considering policy to address Medicaid managed care in Iowa. Three bills have been introduced and were considered this week, although only one has advanced through committee. Days Awaiting Placement, [Senate File 462](#), would require DHS to conduct a

study to determine Medicaid reimbursement for hospitalized patients who no longer meet medical necessity criteria but cannot identify an alternative level of care for placement.

This bill has advanced through committee and is now eligible for floor debate. Although this bill is advancing in study form, IHA continues to work to identify a reimbursement rate that can be used.

Besides Senate File 462, two other bills have been introduced regarding Medicaid oversight and reimbursement, but the future of these bills is less certain. See [Legislation Now](#) for additional information on all Medicaid bills moving through the legislative process.

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## Listen to IHA's Capitol Update

IHA knows the importance of updates coming from the Capitol and works to provide easy ways to access that information. IHA 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 video recording or audio-only version:

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

Questions can be directed to [Joah Hogan](#) at IHA.

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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. **Click [HERE](#) to sign up for email or text message IHA action alerts.**

Links to bookmark:

- [IHA's bill tracker](#)
- [Facebook page](#)
- [Twitter account](#)
- [LinkedIn account](#)
- [Legislator contact information](#)



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