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IN THIS ISSUE

- [Week eight of legislative session overview](#)
 - [First funnel deadline cuts down number of bills in Legislature](#)
 - [Hospital visitation bill introduced](#)
 - [Tort Reform](#)
 - [Public hospital trustee elections](#)
 - [Telehealth](#)
 - [COVID-19 keeps the vaccination discussion alive](#)
 - [Days awaiting placement bill continues to be negotiated](#)
 - [How to stay in the know](#)
-

Week eight of legislative session overview

As week eight of session winds down, we have finally made it to the first funnel. Several new bills were filed this week keeping IHA busy. At the top of the list for legislators were bills about vaccines, days awaiting placement and hospital visitation during a public health emergency. A new elections bill filed this week contains provisions for hospital trustee elections.

With the first funnel down, we still have bills on the move for EMS, telehealth, tort reform, days awaiting placement, elections, workforce and we have stopped a bill about certificate of need. IHA will continue to work on these issues and will provide updates through the Legislative Bulletin.

Visit IHA's [Legislation NOW](#) page for a full list of bills that survived and failed and additional details about bills IHA is tracking.



First funnel deadline cuts down number of bills in Legislature

As reported in last week's Legislative Bulletin, this year's first funnel date was Friday, March 5. Funnel weeks are self-imposed deadlines set by the Legislature to usher bills through the legislative process to keep the session on track. Bills that do not pass the committee in the chamber in which they originated will no longer be considered viable this session. Exceptions to the funnel deadlines include bills in the Appropriations and Ways and Means committees. To pass through the second funnel Friday, April 2, bills will need to pass through the committee in the opposite chamber it was introduced.

[Click here](#) for a video rundown from IHA's lobbyists of the first funnel of the legislative session.

Hospital visitation bill introduced

This week a bill on hospital visitation policies during public health emergencies (PHE) was introduced in the Senate. [Senate File 507](#) would:

- Require hospitals to allow patients the ability to have at least two visitors who are related to the patient during at least four days in any seven-day period for no less than five hours daily during a public health emergency.
- Require that the hospital's supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) for visitors is sufficient to provide PPE for up to 21 visitors per patient during the patient's inpatient stay and during which time the hospital is at full capacity.

- Require and designate a coordinator to evaluate and maintain the stockpile.
- Requires the Department of Inspections and Appeals to ensure compliance with these policies by completing an inspection once every two years.

This bill did not survive past the first funnel deadline. IHA will continue to monitor this bill and will provide updates if the issue emerges again.

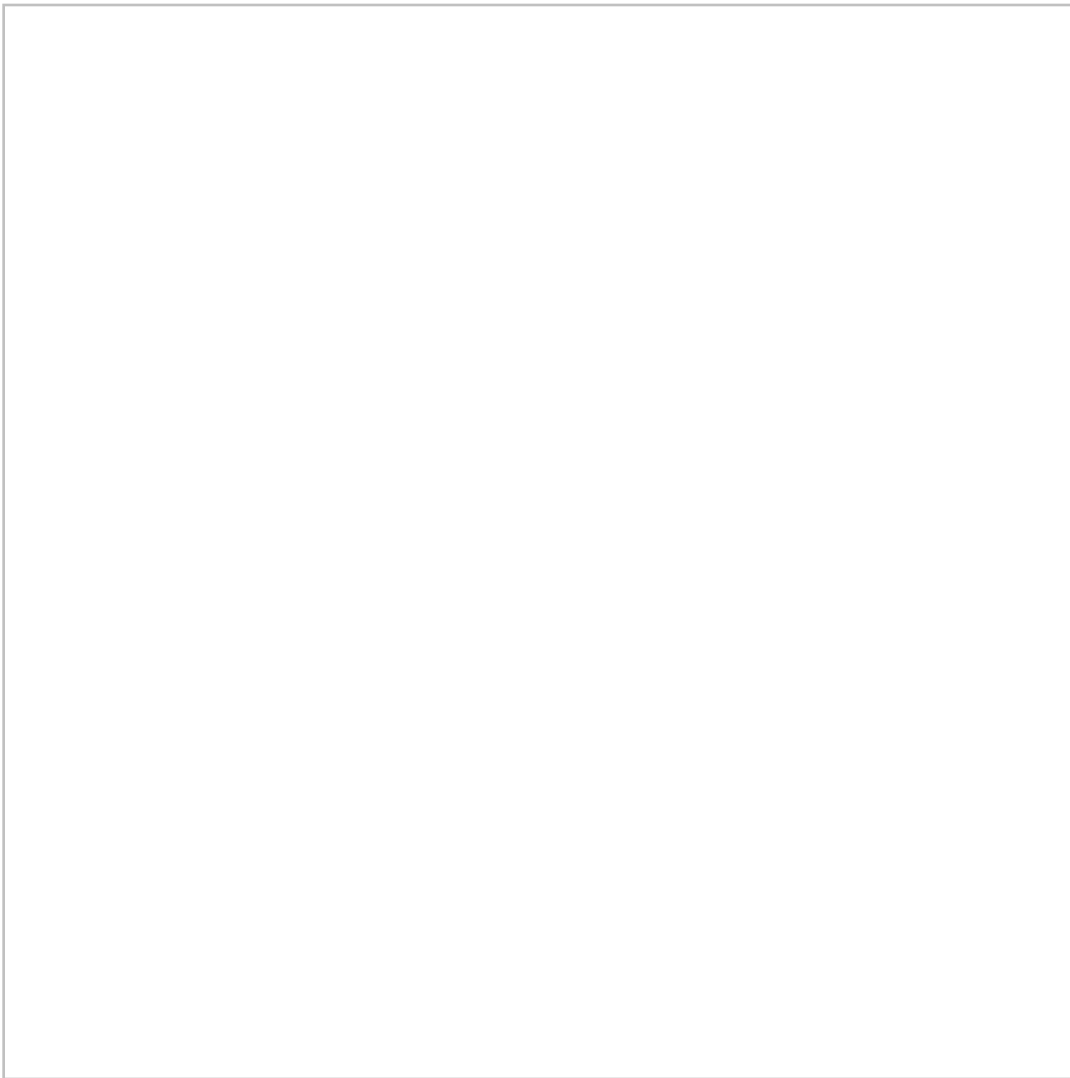
Tort reform is eligible for debate

IHA is pleased to report that tort reform legislation is funnel proof in both chambers. [House File 592](#) is eligible for debate in the House, and [Senate Study Bill 1225](#) is eligible for debate in the Senate. Both bills create a hard cap for noneconomic damages at \$1 million. Please continue to advocate for this legislation, and watch for future action alerts.

Public hospital trustee elections bill moves quickly

During the 2019 legislative session, a bill contained language that moved up the deadline for public hospital trustee candidates to turn in their candidacy papers to the spring. During the 2020 legislative session, IHA successfully advocated a temporary fix to return the deadline to early fall. This legislative session, Sen. Roby Smith (R-Davenport) introduced legislation that included a permanent fix.

[Senate Study Bill 1237](#) moved the deadline for trustee candidates to turn in their candidacy paperwork to be at least 69 days before the date of the election. This was another quick-moving bill, being introduced Monday, approved by a subcommittee Wednesday and voted out of a committee Thursday. This funnel-proof bill is now eligible for debate on the Senate floor. IHA would like to thank Sen. Smith for his work on this issue.



Telehealth bills are funnel-proof and eligible for debate

Telehealth has been a popular topic of discussion in the House during the week of first funnel. [House File 706](#) is a bill that provides for telehealth payment parity for physical health services. This bill is identical to the bill that passed out of the House last legislative session and requires a patient to receive the service inside a health care facility for the provider to receive reimbursement at the same rate as if the service was provided in person. It excludes audio-only services. HF 706 moved very fast, having been introduced Monday and passed through a subcommittee and committee this week. This legislation is now funnel-proof and eligible for floor debate in the House.

[House File 731](#) would require health insurance carriers to cover health care professionals from out of state as providers serving patients through telehealth. The out-of-state provider must be licensed in Iowa, able to deliver health care services through telehealth per Iowa Code and able to satisfy the same criteria the carrier uses to qualify in-state professionals who hold the same license. This week, HF 731 was passed out of a committee, making it funnel-proof and eligible for floor debate.

COVID-19 keeps the vaccination discussion alive

Although vaccines have been a topic of debate for years at the Capitol, this year appears to be a little different. Bills in the House and the Senate are getting some traction and will move past the first funnel. [House File 632](#) was filed by Rep. Jeff Shipley and requires information to be provided,

recorded and reported to health care providers and patients about vaccinations and the adverse reactions they may have as a result. This bill passed out of subcommittee and full committee this week and is now eligible for floor debate.

The other bill, [Senate File 193](#), prohibits an employer from requiring vaccinations and from discriminating against employees on that basis. This bill also contained provisions for hospitals and schools, but the bill was amended to remove those provisions. The amended version of the bill narrows the discrimination prohibitions to only apply to COVID-19 vaccinations and removes most other mandates in the bill. This bill passed out of subcommittee and the full committee with these amendments. IHA still believes the bill is problematic for employers and employees, specifically in health care, and is registered against the bill. We will keep you posted on these bills as we move toward the second funnel.

Days-awaiting-placement bill continues to be negotiated

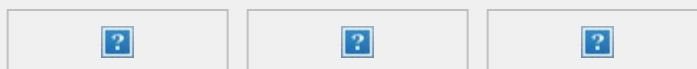
The days-awaiting-placement bill, [Senate File 462](#) (formerly SSB 1193), continues to be negotiated. Last week, it passed out of the full committee and is now eligible for debate. This bill would require a study by the Department of Human Services to determine the feasibility of providing Medicaid reimbursement to hospitals for administrative days. "Administrative days" under the bill refers to an inpatient stay during which a Medicaid-eligible patient no longer meets medical-necessity criteria for acute hospital care and is awaiting placement in a nursing facility or other subacute or post-acute care facility. Work continues to be done behind the scenes to secure reimbursement rates in lieu of a study. IHA will continue to keep members informed of the process.

How to stay in the know

Throughout the legislative session, the Iowa Hospital Association has developed several ways to keep you informed. Stay tuned throughout the session for weekly editions of the Legislative Bulletin, biweekly Capitol Update, IHA's Facebook page, Twitter account and LinkedIn account (web addresses linked below). IHA also will mobilize hospital advocates through action alerts when legislators need to hear about hospital issues. **Advocates can sign up for email or text message IHA action alerts at <https://www.ihaonline.org/advocacy/iha-hospital-action-network/>.**

Links to bookmark:

- [IHA's bill tracker](#)
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100 EAST GRAND, SUITE 100, DES MOINES, IA 50309-1835 | P 515.288.1955 F 515.283.9366 |
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