

WVHA

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

January 6, 2023

Legislature to Begin Next Week

The West Virginia Legislature is set to begin next week Wednesday, January 11 - March 11. The WVHA legislative team will keep you up-to-date on the action through various communications including our: *WVHA Legislative Updates*; and any *Call to Action and Alerts*. To help stay informed, please visit the Legislature's [website](#), including lawmaker and committee membership information and [streaming video and audio](#).

With the help of grassroots support from hospitals around the State, legislators have identified PEIA payments to hospitals as a legislative priority moving into the 2023 session. We are working collaboratively with leaders to help address payment increases to hospitals that account for the cost of providing care to PEIA beneficiaries. Jim Kaufman WVHA President and CEO yesterday appeared on Hoppy Kercheval's radio program *Talkline* to discuss the impact payments are having on hospitals. To read more and to listen to the interview, visit [here](#).

Other priorities identified by legislators include: [Tax Reform](#), [DHHR reorganization](#), and [Child Welfare](#), to name just a few topics. We will learn more about these and other issues including how the Legislature will address budgetary matters as the State inches closer to \$1 billion in surplus tax revenue within the first six months of the current fiscal year. Lawmakers will begin work next week on the budget for the next fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023. The Governor will present his version of the budget along with priorities during his State of the State Address on Wednesday, January 11th.

Legislative Leadership and Committees

New Senate and House legislative committee assignments for the upcoming 2023 Regular Session have not been officially released as of this publication but here's what we've learned so far:

On the House side:

- Amy Summers, R-Taylor will become the new Chair of the House Health Committee with Heather Tully, R-Nicholas, serving as Vice-Chair;

- Outgoing House Heath Chair Matthew Rohrbach, R-Cabell, will move to a newly created Deputy Speaker role;
- Eric Householder, R-Berkeley will be House Majority Leader and David Kelly, R-Tyler, Dean Jeffries, R-Kanawha, and Laura Kimble, R-Harrison will serve as assistant majority leaders.
- Vernon Criss, R-Wood, will be the new House Finance Committee Chair and Vice Chair will be John Hardy, R-Berkeley;
- Replacing Brandon Steele, R-Raleigh, as chairman of the House Government Organization Committee is Chris Phillips, R-Barbour, Pat McGeehan, R-Hancock, serving as Vice Chair, replacing Geoff Foster, R-Putnam;
- Speaker Pro Tempore Gary Howell, R-Mineral, will transition to chairman of the newly-elevated House Economic Development Committee. Del. Wayne Clark, R-Jefferson, will be Howell's vice chairman;
- Marty Gearhart, R-Raleigh, will become the new House Majority Whip, with Delegates Erikka Storch, R-Ohio, and Chris Pritt, R-Kanawha, serving as deputy whips;
- Paul Espinosa, R-Jefferson, will move from House Majority Whip to House Speaker Pro Tempore and will fill in as Speaker when House Speaker Roger Hanshaw is unavailable;

The Senate released the new Committee Chair and Vice Chair list available [here](#). Of note:

- Mike Maroney, R-Marshall will remain as Chair of the Senate Health Committee with Senate Majority Leader Tom Takubo, R-Kanawha, serving as Vice Chair
- Eric J. Tarr, R-Putnam will remain as Chair of the Senate Finance Committee with Rupie Phillips, R-Logan, serving as Vice Chair;
- Charles S. Trump IV, R-Morgan will remain as Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, with Ryan Weld, R-Brooke, serving as Vice Chair;
- Senator Jack Woodrum, R-Summers will be the new Chair of the Senate Government Organization Committee, with Jason Barrett, R-Berkeley, as Vice Chair;

January Interim Meetings

Legislative activity will kick off this Sunday with 3-day [legislative interim meetings](#). Final interim reports for several committees will be considered including the [Joint Health Committee](#) and the [Legislative Oversight Health Commission](#).

2023 WVHA Legislative Agenda/Resources/Hospital Advocacy Week

Along with seeking an increase in hospital payments from the **Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA)** in line with the cost of providing care; other WVHA top legislative priorities include:

- Providing targeted fiscal relief for physicians through the **Physician Payment Improvement Program**;
- Protecting the Certificate of Need (**CON**) program;
- Advocating for the protection of health care workers through **anti-doxing** legislation to make it a crime to disseminate personal identifying information with the intent to intimidate or threaten;
- Aligning state law enabling Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) to convert to Community Outpatient Medical Centers with new federal guidance allowing for establishment of **Rural Emergency Hospitals (REHs)**;
- Sustaining the state's current **childhood immunization laws**; and

- Streamlining the **Prior Authorization** process, among other issues.

Many of these and other issues are highlighted in our [2023 WVHA State Legislative Agenda](#) and more details are found on our password protected [Advocacy Page](#). The session will also feature many health care proposals introduced and advanced by legislators and other stakeholders that impact hospitals from a financial, clinical, and regulatory view. Please follow our communications for updates. Finally, please be on the lookout for further details regarding our upcoming [Hospital Advocacy Week 2023 activities](#) scheduled for February 6-10, 2023. For more information, please contact [Whitney Cherry](#).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [me](#), [Jim Kaufman](#) or [Brandon Hatfield](#). Thanks.

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