

NJAFP Board Report Government Affairs Committee December 2009

With the election of Chris Christie there is a lot of change anticipated in Trenton. All the Commissioners and high-level Department staff and Governor's office staff will change. As previously shared, the transition teams have been announced and the Health Care Transition team had its first meeting (not open to the public) this week. NJAFP, while we did not get a seat on the Health Care Transition Subcommittee, has secured a place at the table as far as receiving "priority" status through a recommendation from Christie's Transition Team Chair, Senator Kyrillos, to the Health Care Transition Subcommittee. The Subcommittee has already reached out to NJAFP to request information and I anticipate we will have an interview/meeting scheduled in the coming weeks.

The Legislature has changed a bit with some new members, but the big changes are in the Legislative Leadership. Senator Steve Sweeney will now be the Senate President (replacing Senator Codey) and Assemblywoman Sheila Oliver will now be the Assembly Speaker (replacing retired Speaker Joe Roberts) in January.

With these leadership changes comes some mixing up of the legislative committee assignments. The most important of which was recently announced is the appointment of Senator Loretta Weinberg as Senate Health Committee Chair (replacing Senator Joe Vitale). NJAFP is positioned well either way, but Senator Weinberg has been very vocal in recent years of her support of family medicine and workforce development for family medicine/primary care. NJAFP has already spoken with her chief of staff to plan a meeting in the next month to go over our wish list of issues that will fall under the jurisdiction of the Health Committee – particularly workforce development.

Legislative and Regulatory Updates

Patient Centered Medical Home Pilot Projects

Legislation: We continue to actively promote Senator Buono's PCMH bill, which proposes a Medicaid demonstration project for both FFS Medicaid and managed care Medicaid. This bill has a few more legislative steps to go, but Senator Buono is confident she will get it through in the next 2 weeks.

Department Action: NJAFP continues to work with NJ Medicaid and the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services on medical home pilot concepts. The Departments are beginning to coordinate their efforts and at NJAFP's urging are also including NJ Department of Banking and Insurance in their discussions.

Department CMS Waiver: While it is not a medical home pilot, NJAFP has been involved with a CMS Waiver being sought by NJ Medicaid to do a coordination of care model of care demonstration project for its FFS and General Assistance clients. Nobody

is calling it a medical home project (and that is good), but it does get to some of the care coordination issues and gets this population assigned to encouraged to select a primary care “home.” There is potential for care coordination payment to physicians under this draft model.

Health Information Technology

NJAFP arranged for Cari Miller to present information on the Horizon project to the Health Information Technology Commission which is under the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services. The HIT Commission came out with a Statewide HIT Plan that incorporated information NJAFP provided to the Department with respect to stats and environmental scans on the HIT adoption rates for family physicians in New Jersey. Dr. Kennedy Ganti is the chair of this HIT Commission.

Scope of Practice Bills

Chiropractors: We have been successful getting several amendments to this bill in the spring and have continued to work with the sponsor over the summer are two key areas. We have just learned from Senator Sweeney (sponsor) that he has agreed to remove the section that would have permitted chiropractors to perform preparticipation sports exams. We were also able to get them to change the broader term “tissue” in their “practice of chiropractic” definition to “soft tissue.” We are waiting on one more change in the definition of “practice of chiropractic” that will clarify that when they are diagnosing, treating or otherwise that it will be achieved through “chiropractic manipulation and adjustment.” The current language is vague on how they can “treat.” It is certain this bill will be moving in the Senate Commerce Committee on December 14th and then managed two subsequent floor votes before the session ended. Senator Sweeney is the new Senate President as of January and there is not doubt this bill will be a priority in the next two weeks. This bill is much better with the amendments we have achieved over the last year and recent months.

Nurses: As you are aware the New Jersey State Nurses Association endorsed Corzine and he publicly agreed to sign legislation (not yet proposed) that would remove the requirement for joint protocols for advanced practice nurses and advance the independent practice of advanced practice nurses. Now that Christie was elected he may not be as friendly to the nurses and we potentially received an early holiday present (or at least a reprieve) on this particular scope issue.

Managed Care

NJAFP (Ray, Claudine and Dr. Ortiz) met with all the key officials at NJDOBI this month for our semi-annual meeting. We discussed the two regulations that were pending, including Health ID Cards and the Provider Network Regulations. The Health ID card regulations were since adopted and will require the cards to identify the primary care provider and identify whether the plan is self-funded (ERISA). We are in the process of

scheduling a Commissioner-level meeting to discuss the pending Provider Network regulations; however the election transition has us a bit on hold.

NJAFP Priorities Breakdown

1. Workforce: Actively moving on our proposal with Senator Weinberg
2. Quality: HIT Commission work and medical home legislative and executive branch projects.
3. Universal Access: NJAFP continues to contribute to Vitale's working group.
4. Managed Care Hassles: NJDOBI regulations and ongoing NJDOBI meetings
5. Scope of Practice: As always, defensive, but killing or fixing bad bills!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Claudine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Claudine M. Leone, Esq.