



# Legislative e-Update

April 13, 2017

## 149th Session Begins

When the legislature reconvenes after Easter break, there will be 25 legislative days left until the first year of the 149th Session closes at midnight on June 30. The session, the first under Governor Carney's administration, started slowly due to an uncertainty in the balance of power. The Senate chamber was split 10 -10 while a special election to fill former-Senator, now Lieutenant Governor, Bethany Hall-Long's seat played out in February. It culminated with a Democratic win and the swearing in of Delaware's newest Senator, Senator Stephanie Hansen. Sen. Hansen sits on a number of committees, including the Senate Health committee.

MSD continues to support, oppose, and track dozens of bills for the benefits of its members, but we would like to highlight just a few:

- **DIMER/DIDER Funding (Budget)** - After its removal by Joint Finance Committee members last session, Governor Markell's last budget included its return and Governor Carney has thus far suggested that the funding restoration be maintained. However, the budget process will continue until midnight on June 30th and until the legislation is signed, the budget could change at any moment. The Society continues to actively lobby for the reinstatement of the program, remains diligent, and suggests that member physicians do as well during the coming months.
- **Marijuana Legalization & Medical Marijuana Expansion (HB 110 & SB 24)** - The Society opposes two bills addressing marijuana this year. The first is an expansive bill pertaining to the legalization of marijuana. The second is the expansion of the qualifying conditions for medical marijuana to include anxiety. After much deliberation, the Society has decided to oppose both of these bills, staying consistent in our call for evidence-based policy. At this point, the evidence available does not support that patient safety will be maintained or promoted if either of these bills pass.
- **Organ Donation (HB 21 & SB 17)** - Two bills were filed pertaining to organ donation procedures this year, both of which the Society supports. The first is a national bill, its genesis not stemming from a Delaware incident, that will serve as a comfort to families with members who suffer disabilities that a disability alone may not disqualify a donee from receiving an organ, but retains the needed discretion for the Delaware physicians who work in this area. The second removes an outdated penalty for donations from HIV donors, so long as they go to HIV positive recipients.

- **Opiate Abuse** - While new regulations came into effect on April 1st that are designed to limit the prescription of opiates, legislation in the area continues to proliferate. The Attorney General is advancing a package of bills designed to help patients through the insurance process, remove barriers therein for immediate addiction treatment, and allow his office to assist patients who have been denied coverage. Legislation has also been designed to use PMP data to identify outliers in prescribing practices across professions for possible intervention. There will likely continue to be opiate-related legislation as the session advances.

MSD actively monitors all health related legislation and maintains an active and visible presence in Legislative Hall on your behalf. [Click here for a more complete list of health care legislation activities.](#)

If you have questions, please contact Mark B. Thompson, External Affairs Officer at 302-444-6958, [Mark.Thompson@medsocdel.org](mailto:Mark.Thompson@medsocdel.org) or Drew Wilson, Attorney at 302-888-6878, [awilson@morrisjames.com](mailto:awilson@morrisjames.com).

*The Medical Society of Delaware Legislative e-update is a benefit to our members, providing information on legislative activity of interest in the 149th General Assembly in Dover.*

