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April 12, 2021

Legislative Week in Review: Session Week 6

House and Senate Budget Bills Head to Conference

This week in the legislature saw the House and the Senate approve their proposed versions of the state budget. The House's proposed budget is \$97.1 billion and the Senate's proposed budget is \$94.6 billion. The differences between these two budgets will be worked out over the next couple of weeks during budget conference meetings. The House's proposed budget holds mental health funding harmless, while the Senate's proposed budget reduces more than \$60 million recurring funds from the base budget of community mental health and substance abuse services.

House Session

Senate Session

House Appropriations



"Regardless of party I think we all agree there is certainly a need to try to improve and try to really provide more resources to go into substance abuse and mental health initiatives. Certainly, a bill like this moves us into that direction. As well as the financial aspect of it this committee and the house in general in our budget we have dedicated a total of 1.3 billion dollars in resources to substance abuse and mental health issues which is an increase of over 170 million dollars from the previous year. So certainly, this is something important to me and to you and the Florida House." - Rep. Avila

Children's Mental Health

Rep. LaMarca and Hunschofsky's **school safety bill, HB 7035**, has passed its final committee and is headed to the House floor for debate. This bill strengthens mental health coordination by allowing school districts to enter into contracts with **managing entities** for behavioral health services. During the Education & Employment committee, the bill was amended to clarify that students who are entered in to a school-based intervention program for non-criminal offenses may not be entered into the Juvenile Justice database. The bill was also amended to require the composition of threat assessment teams reflect the demographic makeup of students at the school and require the team to provide parental notification for certain threats consistent with the best practices of the Office of Safe Schools' Model Behavioral Threat Policies and Best Practices for K-12 Schools.

SB 582, Parental Rights by Senator Rodrigues, establishes a "Parents' Bill of Rights" which gives parents the explicit right to provide the mental health care that they see best fit. The state, nor any other governmental entity may not infringe on that right. A health care professional must get a parent's permission before providing services or medicine to the child.

Mental health in the legislature



*"One of the most important things I think in this bill is the mental health aspect, that we are bringing our **managing entities** in more in the process in order to make sure that the mental health concerns are addressed not only during in the school year but also in the calendar year and making sure it's done in a meaningful way."* - Rep. Hunschofsky

House HHS

Senate Rules

Senate HHS Appropriations

House Healthcare Appropriations

House Education and Employment

HB 1447, Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse by Rep. Hunschofsky creates a 19 member panel to examine the current methods of Florida's mental health and substance abuse system. The commission will submit an initial report by September 1, 2022 and a final report by September 1, 2023 on how to best provide and oversee mental health and substance abuse services in Florida. This bill was amended to

Sen. Rodriguez presenting SB 700, telehealth

House HHS

Senate HHS Appropriations

HB 899, Managed Care Plan

Performance by Rep. Bartleman, requires MMA plans to collect and report the "Adult Core Set" behavioral health measures beginning in 2024. Those measures will then be stratified by age, race, ethnicity, primary language, sex, and disability status. This bill has passed its final committee of reference and will now be heard on the House floor for debate.

expand the duties of the commission to include recommendations on how **managing entities** may promote service continuity. This bill will be heard in the Health & Human Services committee on Wednesday before it is heard on the House floor.

SB 700, Telehealth by Sen. Rodriguez, expands the definition of telehealth to allow for telephonic services, emails, fax, and other nonpublic telecommunications. The bill also allows telehealth providers to prescribe schedule III, IV, and V controlled substances. It also creates "remote-site pharmacies" which would be a new type of pharmacy establishment. These pharmacies will be supervised remotely by off-site pharmacists acting as the prescription department manager and will be located within community mental health centers.

Quasi-Public Oversight

Friday's Public Integrity & Elections committee featured Rep. Shoaf's **Quasi-public entities bill, HB 1083**. This bill had a strike-all amendment which revised the definition of a quasi-public entity to entities that are not overseen by a governmental entity. The strike-all also removed the requirement that OPPAGA generate a list of entities that are required to perform a cost-benefit analysis and replaced it with minimum criteria the entity must meet.



House PIE



Pandemic Prep

On Tuesday, the Senate heard Sen. Burgess' **Emergency Management bill, SB 2006**. This bill requires the Department of Health to create a state public health emergency management plan and within that

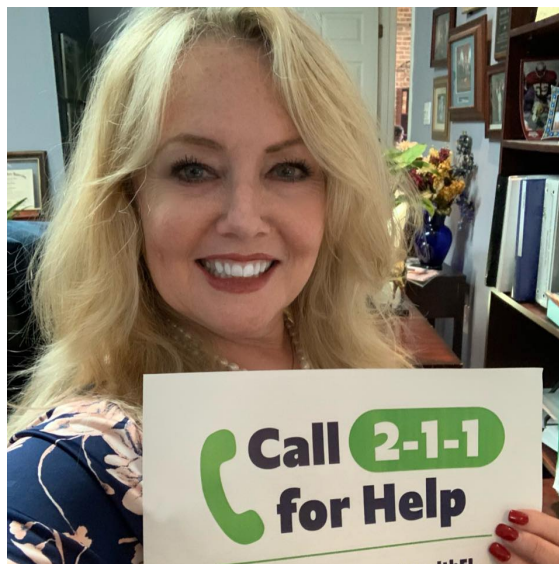
Senate Rules

plan, develop a strategy to maintain a stockpile of state-owned personal protective equipment. The bill was merged with another emergency management bill to restrict local government emergency powers, which restricts local governments from instituting emergency ordinances if the Governor or Legislature believes that rule unnecessarily restricts a constitutional right.

#MindYourMentalHealth

This month FAME is kicking off our #MindYourMentalHealth campaign. This campaign is designed to get the word out about 2-1-1 being the number to call if you need help. Click the button below to download the sign and post your selfies on social media!

[Download Here!](#)



FL Legislature approves major cuts in dollars for affordable housing, amid COVID-19 and housing crisis

The legislation titled SB 2512, which reduces the percentage for the pot of money that goes into affordable housing, is headed to Gov. Ron DeSantis' desk for his consideration. The governor in January had recommended \$423.3 million for such housing programs. But the legislation approved Thursday would be far lower than DeSantis' proposal.

Black women newly installed in state healthcare leadership positions emphasize

Notable Headlines

A rising number of children are being Baker Acted in Florida. That's a problem

While Florida uses the Baker Act at a higher rate than the other 24 states that gather such data, it also ranks last in mental-health funding and at the bottom for access to mental healthcare. Didn't we think decades of neglect and underfunding, coupled with an increase in depression and anxiety — which are made worse by the amount of time kids spend looking at screens and social media — would lead to more Baker Acts? If these new Baker Act numbers tell us anything, it's that we need more funding to flag mental illness and, as important, treat it.

Majority of Florida's long-term care staffers refused coronavirus vaccine

The low vaccination rate among staffers at long-term care facilities is common across the state. As of March 28, only 36 percent of Florida's nursing home staff members and 40 percent of assisted-

equity In February, Gov. Ron DeSantis appointed two Black women to lead major state health agencies. Shevaun Harris now leads the Department of Children and Families, and Simone Marstiller is the new secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration. Add Roberson, the Department of Health's deputy secretary for health, to the list, and Black women are at or near the top of three major state health agencies.

living staff members had received at least one dose of the vaccine, according to the state Agency for Health Care Administration. Meanwhile, the vaccination rate among long-term care residents is much higher — 68 percent of nursing home residents and 93 percent of assisted-living residents have received at least one dose, according to the agency.



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