

FLACP

The Florida Chapter of the American College of Physicians

**Legislative Update
March 7, 2014**



The first week of the 2014 Legislative Session included the usual pomp and circumstance, but otherwise was dominated by actions in both the House and Senate on the respective Telemedicine bills.

On Monday, the House Select Committee on Healthcare Workforce Innovation passed its Telemedicine Committee Bill. While the bill did include a provision stating the Telemedicine's standard of care must be the same as in-person services, the bill omitted a much-needed requirement that out-of-state providers be licensed by the State of Florida. Such a requirement is not about "turf protection;" rather it is a patient safety initiative designed to ensure that all Florida patients receive the benefits of patient protection laws that we have passed on the past decade, such as pill mill legislation. I am pleased to report that both House sponsors have acknowledged this concern to me and have pledged to address it in upcoming drafts.

The Senate version was introduced and amended by the Senate Health Policy Committee on Wednesday. Again, the Senate bill did not include a requirement for Florida licensure, although Senator Eleanor Sobel did introduce and pass a late-filed amendment that at least required out of state physicians to comply with Florida laws and be subject to discipline by the Board of Medicine. We thank her for her sensitivity to this issue. We also thank Senator Bill Galvano for his amendment that restricts telemedicine to physicians.

Next week represents the first full week of the Session, and the health committees already are looking at bills to regulate non-physician-owned med-spas and continue debate on ARNP scope expansion and Telemedicine.