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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE—MARCH 4, 2016

Week Eight Legislative Report
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With only one week left in the 2016 Legislative Session, considerable progress was made on a bevy of issues, not the least of which was the budget. Conferences have ended, and it appears very likely that the final budget deal will be on the legislators' desks by Tuesday, which will allow for an on-time "sine die" next Friday.

The House has effectively closed debate on its bills, as this week it sent to the Senate bills on Balance Billing, Direct Primary Care, PA and ARNP prescribing, the Department of Health package, Transparency in Health Care Pricing, and Telehealth. The House also gave final package to the long-delayed Needle-Exchange bill and a Medical Assistant Certification Bill. As important as what the House passed, however, was what it did not, as its bills did NOT include independent practice for physician extenders or elimination of Open Heart standards, both of which had been proposed at the beginning of the Session.

The Senate has begun its deliberations on these issues and is likely to make adjustments in the coming days, at which time that chamber will either agree with the House, amend the House bills, or reject House ideas entirely. This obviously will involve a significant amount of back-room dealings, but we look forward to being part of those discussions in the coming days.

Regardless of how the Session ends up, now is a time to thank everybody who has helped this Session. We have done some great work, but we look forward to even better results over the next week.

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