

Advocacy Report

Chairman: Robert Brahan

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The Advocacy Committee has been following the 2015 legislative session with the Mississippi State Medical Association at weekly conference calls on Friday afternoons during most weeks of this session. There were some wins and losses as one would expect. Important bills that have been before the legislature and have a potential effect on our practice are summarized below. Expansion of Medicaid and/or a state run insurance exchange are considered dead issues by most people, who are knowledgeable about Mississippi politics. But as Mississippi hospitals come under financial strain, as in several other states, the issue may resurface.

The Mississippi Hospital Association has begun a lengthy study to try and initiate a new managed care system to compete with the failing Mississippi Can system now in place. It is envisioned to be a *provider based* system run at least partly by doctors. The exact form is still being worked out now. You may read the “playbook” for yourself at MHANet.org, the website for the Mississippi Hospital Association. All the medical societies in Mississippi including the ACP have been invited to participate in the planning. I have visited with Tim Moore of MHA and have been on one conference call. Another call is set for May 13. As you can see from the playbook, this is very preliminary. This program will no doubt be some form of managed care and probably will have several plans. ACP would do well to monitor MHA’s progress in this enterprise. If there are questions or concerns, now is the time express them.

Legislative Summary

HB130	Philosophical Exemption for vaccines	Failed
HB389	Ban Texting while driving	Passed
HB957	Mental Health Task Force	Failed

This bill was high on the MSMA priority list. It passed the Senate but failed in the House primarily due to lobbying from employees of the Mississippi Board of Mental Health. (There are 8000)

HB442	Any willing Provider	Failed
HB952	Co-Pay Parity for Oral Cancer Drugs	Passed

Designed to help control costs for cancer drugs for state employees, it got sidetracked over use of out of state surgeons by the plan. Very confusing what this bill actually says now.

SB2847	Funding for Rural Physicians Scholarship	Passed
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\$300,000 for 10 new scholarships. No additional money for residence training.

HB1555	STEMI and Stroke System Funding	Passed
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\$250,000 additional money; now \$450,000 per year
\$250,000 for Stroke System of Care Plan

Scope of Practice

Multiple bills to extend scope of practice for NP's, social workers, councilors, podiatrists all failed.