

On March 18, due to growing concerns from COVID-19, the Mississippi Legislature recessed in the middle of the legislative session for at least two weeks. This was an unprecedented move within the Mississippi Legislature. Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann and Speaker of the House Philip Gunn drafted a resolution that would give the two Chambers enough flexibility to return quickly or stay recessed longer if needed. Currently, the session has been extended by 30 days with a Sine Die date of June 9, 2020.

When the Legislature convened, they had just completed the floor action deadline and were beginning work toward the Appropriations and Finance deadline. In the legislative process, the stopping point occurred at a good time because general bills that passed off the respective chamber floors are now being transmitted to the other chamber for committee referral and vetting. When the legislature returns which could be as early as April 1, both the Senate and House will work to pass various state agency general and special fund bills. Once through the entire process, these appropriation bills will set each agency's budget for Fiscal Year 2021 which begins on July 1, 2020. The final quarter of 2020 is very important for revenue setting as a considerable portion of Mississippi's budget comes into the state coffers during this period. As a result, I would anticipate a revenue estimate shift downward for the final quarter of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021 which will mean there will be less money for the Legislature to divide amongst the various state agencies. Regardless of the break in the session, the elected officials and members of the legislature are continuing to work for Mississippians during this COVID-19 crisis. I encourage each of you to follow your Senator or Representative on social media for daily updates on the issue and how it impacts Mississippi.

The break in the legislative session has not stopped the legislative committee from working. The committee has remained active trying to navigate through various issues with COVID-19, provide up to date information for members, and remain a resource for all elected officials on healthcare issues in Mississippi. Please locate the COVID-19 section on the chapter website for up to date information that will aid each of you in your practice. We are working with state leaders, various healthcare associations, and other businesses to assist each of you.