

2022 Legislative Summary

The 2022 legislative session was a busy session for healthcare, and the Mississippi Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics was a strong voice for pediatricians and patients. The legislative committee reviewed hundreds of bills and tracked numerous pieces of legislation throughout the more than 90-day session. Here are some highlights:

The Mississippi Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics follows numerous scopes of practice bills that would allow for the expansion of scope within various healthcare professions. Usually, there are anywhere between 5-10 bills each session from independent practice for nurse practitioners to chiropractors. After the House voted on the issue during the last session, all eyes on this issue were on the Mississippi Senate. After a much continuous discussion and debate on the issue, the Senate decided not to bring the topic up for discussion this year. The Pediatric Association worked alongside other specialty societies to advocate against this piece of legislation and will continue to work with other groups as this topic continues to be at the forefront of legislative debate. We would ask each member to reach out to their respective Senators and Representatives and offer to be a source of information on this topic moving forward.

Pediatricians have remained committed to advocating for reimbursement parity for telemedicine while also advocating for patient safety within the telemedicine arena. Covid-19 has broken down barriers and encouraged the expansion of telemedicine by necessity, it also has created a delivery model that expressly encourages patients to stay out of the doctor's office. Our chapter was proud to be part of the alliance to expand Mississippi's telemedicine coverage parity laws. We built upon last year's success in unifying medicine for the safe practice of telemedicine and were able to pass legislation that ensured coverage parity for patients while providing a safe healthcare delivery model for patients.

While much of the previous session was spent working on changes to the Medicaid Technical Amendments Bill, in 2022 we strongly advocated for the correction of coverage and payment freeze language that harmed many physicians. We have worked with the Division of Medicaid, legislators, and numerous Medicaid providers since last summer to help address this issue that impacted practices across the state.

The MS Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics was successful in working to defeat a bill that would regulate the processing of sexual assault kits and allow for forensic nurse practitioners not to participate in collaborative relationships.

We continue to advocate for the extension of Medicaid coverage for pregnant women through 12 months postpartum. While there remains work to be done on this issue, we are proud that this issue got the furthest it has ever gotten in the legislative process. It passed the Mississippi Senate and passed out of the Mississippi House of Representatives House Medicaid Committee.

If you have an interest in legislation that impacts physicians and patients, please sign up to be an Academy Advocate or express your interest to serve on our legislative committee. If you have any questions on the legislative process, please contact DeAnna Dillard at 601-605-6425, or email her at ddillard@aapms.org to get involved.