

Healthcare Committee Summaries December 11 – December 14

The Florida Legislature gathered for its last committee week before the 2024 Legislative Session. The uptick in bills and decrease in presentations stands out, marking the legislators' preparation for a crucial healthcare-focused session, one of the most significant in recent times.

The previous week witnessed significant activity within four healthcare committees, engaging in a wide array of essential topics and pivotal bills. Of note was Senate President Passidomo's unveiling of the "Live Healthy" initiative, emerging as the highlight. Her team outlined a comprehensive strategy aimed at growing Florida's healthcare workforce and broadening the reach of quality healthcare services across the state.

Below, you'll find a list of all the healthcare committees that convened this week, along with the relevant committee discussions shaping the healthcare landscape in Florida. As always, please contact us with any questions you may have.

- Monday, December 11th – **House Health and Human Services Committee**
- Tuesday, December 12th – **Senate Health Policy Committee**
- Wednesday, December 13th – **House Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee**
- Thursday, December 14th – **House Healthcare Appropriations Subcommittee**

Monday, December 11th – House Health and Human Services Committee

The House Health and Human Services Committee met at 1:00 PM for presentations by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) on the Home and Community Based Services Waiver Pre-Enrollment List.

- [Committee Members](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Meeting Packet](#)

APD's Home and Community Based Services Waiver, AKA the iBudget Florida Waiver, provides services and support to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. To qualify, a person must:

- Residency in Florida
- Age of at least 3 years old
- A diagnosed developmental disability, including severe forms of Autism, Cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, Intellectual disability, Phelan-McDermid syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, or Spina bifida, that occurred before turning 18.

As of November 1, 2023, APD serves over 61,000 individuals with developmental disabilities, of which over 35,000 Floridians are enrolled in the iBudget Florida Waiver program.

Below, you'll find a table with the iBudget waiver enrollment prioritization. Individuals listed in the prioritization categories may also be receiving services through other sources such as:

- Medicaid State Plan for individuals under 21
- School Systems
- Hope Florida: A Pathway to Possibilities
- Intermediate Care Facilities
- Natural supports and families
- Other supplemental funding streams available through APD to meet immediate needs

Priority	Total (As of November 1, 2023)
Category 1: Crisis situations	N/A
Category 2: Child welfare system at the time of permanency or turning 18	N/A
Category 3: Intensive needs	210
Category 4: Caregiver is 70 years of age or older	83
Category 5: Transitioning from school	20
Category 6: Individuals 21 years of age or older who do not meet other prioritization criteria	12,809
Category 7: Individuals under 21 years of age who do not meet other prioritization criteria	8,464

Within 60 days of confirming eligibility, APD crafts a concise support plan outlining the specific services and assistance required by the individual. Additionally, APD annually dispatches a letter to disseminate resources, confirm the client's updated contact details, and offer individuals and families a chance to identify any life changes necessitating further support.

Tuesday, December 12th – Senate Health Policy Committee

The Senate Health Policy Committee met at 4:00 PM to discuss Senate President Passidomo's groundbreaking "Live Healthy" initiative, poised to become one of the most impactful healthcare legislation in recent memory. The 2 bills aim to revamp Florida's healthcare workforce, increase accessibility, and foster innovation. The Senate President, alongside Senator Colleen Burton and Senator Gayle Harrell, will be shepherding [SB 7016](#) and [SB 7018](#) through the legislature.

- [Committee Members](#)
- [Video](#) (SB 7016 at 0:55, SB 7018 at 31:56)
- [Meeting Packet](#)

SB 7016 Health Care

The bill is a comprehensive legislative package that touches upon a multitude of aspects within Florida's healthcare infrastructure. Encompassing substantial revisions and the introduction of new provisions, this bill has a far-reaching impact on various sectors, including the healthcare workforce, service accessibility, licensure protocols, regulatory frameworks, and educational initiatives.

Notably, it brings about significant changes to established programs like the Dental Student Loan Repayment and introduces innovative programs such as the Telehealth Minority Maternity Care Program. Moreover, it revises standards for professions like clinical psychologists and psychiatric nurses while laying the groundwork for new initiatives such as the Health Care Screening and Services Grant Program.

Beyond these adjustments, the bill mandates crucial requirements for emergency department diversion, demands detailed reports from the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), and addresses funding allocations for Medicaid provider reimbursement.

Overall, SB 7016 represents a comprehensive reconfiguration of Florida's healthcare landscape, aiming to enhance services, bolster workforce capabilities, and fortify healthcare access across the state.

SB 7018 Health Care Innovation

The bill outlines its mission to foster health care innovation within Florida by establishing a framework to support this endeavor. The legislation aims to encourage collaboration with entrepreneurs, businesses, and the state's healthcare system to address systemic challenges and elevate the quality of healthcare delivery in the state. The bill creates the Health Care Innovation Council, housed within the Department of Health (DOH), responsible for organizing public meetings and gathering insights from innovators to create recommendations. Emphasis will be placed on:

- Increasing efficiency in the delivery of health care
- Reducing strain on the health care workforce
- Increasing public access to health care
- Improving patient outcomes
- Reducing unnecessary emergency department visits
- Reducing costs for patients and the state without reducing the quality of patient care

Additionally, it introduces a revolving loan program to finance innovative healthcare technologies and models, prioritizing proposals with measurable impacts and cost reductions. The council will assess loan applications, with funding agreements ranging up to 10 years and offering up to 80 percent coverage for rural or underserved area initiatives accepting Medicaid patients.

The bill mandates public reporting of activities and necessitates evaluations by specific offices every five years. It also allocates substantial appropriations, including \$75 million annually from the General Revenue Fund for DOH's revolving loan program, emphasizing a commitment to nurturing healthcare innovation in the state.

Thursday, December 14th – House Healthcare Appropriations Subcommittee

The House Healthcare Appropriations Subcommittee met at 8:00 AM to receive presentations from the Florida Health Agency Secretaries regarding the Governor's recommended budget.

- [Committee Members](#)
- [Video](#) (DCF at 10:01, DOEA at 29:30, DOH at 36:45, APD at 1:01:25, AHCA at 1:15:42)
- [Meeting Packet](#)

Governor's Recommended Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

The Secretaries of the five Florida Healthcare Agencies briefed the committee on their departmental budget highlights based on the Governor's recommendations. Below are a few key highlights from the healthcare budget.

Cancer Research

Encompassing over \$232 million in funding dedicated to cancer research, this allocation notably incorporates a \$60 million increase of 200 percent for the Florida Cancer Innovation Fund. This significant boost aims to support pioneering cancer research arising from emerging concepts, trends, and promising methodologies, serving as a driving force for further exploration in this field. Additionally, the budget sustains the allocation of \$127.5 million for the Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program.

Behavioral Health

Provides over \$294.6 million in funding earmarked for bolstering behavioral health services. These added resources aim to enhance accessibility to mobile response services and facilitate better coordination between primary care and behavioral health providers. These initiatives collectively work towards crisis diversion strategies, effectively steering away from high-cost acute care scenarios.

Floridians with Unique Abilities

Includes over \$127.4 million in funding to extend essential services to more individuals with unique abilities through the Home and Community Based Services Waiver, alongside a newly established pilot project. Moreover, \$800,000 is designated to aid in planning the implementation of a new waiver intended to offer tailored services for adults with unique abilities transitioning into adulthood.