



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE DANE EAGLE, MAJORITY LEADER

**IMPORTANT NOTE: All communications distributed in mass, including in electronic format, require review and approval *prior to* distribution. The articles included below have been preapproved. However, please remember that you still need approval from the Majority Office before distributing an article if you change it or if you include it with other unapproved material. Refer to chapter 4 of the Administrative Policy Manual for more information on the House mass communications policy.**

## **Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee Voted to Ban Fracking**

On Wednesday, the Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee met to hear a bill to ban fracking. Fracking is the act of pushing liquids underground at a rate high enough to “fracture” rocks and release oil and gas resources. The bill strengthens our position on this harmful practice by prohibiting it in Florida. The bill helps to preserve our natural resources, as our environment is vital to the economy and well-being of our state. Fracking poses serious potential environmental and safety concerns. By banning its use, we take positive steps towards protecting our environment.

Your Florida House is committed to passing safe, sensible, and sound environmental legislation. I look forward to updating you on this bill as it progresses.

## **Florida House Health & Human Services Committee Voted for Responsible Medical Marijuana Smoking**

This week, the Florida House Health & Human Services Committee passed a bill to allow smoking of medical marijuana only in the form of pre-rolled filtered marijuana cigarettes dispensed by Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers (MMTCs).

Additionally, the bill imposes packaging and labeling requirements for pre-rolled marijuana cigarettes and prohibits smoking as a route of administration for patients under 18 years of age. The bill requires the informed consent form provided to all patients to include the negative health risks associated with smoking marijuana.

Additionally, the bill requires physicians who certify smoking as a route of administration for qualified patients, other than for terminally ill patients, to document their clinical decision-making process to the Board of Medicine and Board of Osteopathic Medicine. Over time, this documentation will be used by the Boards to establish practice standards for physicians. I believe it is critical that we have strong clinical standards for this treatment, and this information will help us get there.

Finally, the bill establishes the Consortium for Medical Marijuana Clinical Outcomes Research at the University of Florida. The bill directs the consortium to create a research plan that includes research on clinical outcomes, side effects, certification and dosing standards along with routes of administration and efficacy of medical marijuana-- including the effects of smoking marijuana to treat debilitating medical conditions. I believe this research will be helpful in advancing the cause of providing the safest forms of medical marijuana for patients.

Your Florida House will continue to ensure that medical marijuana in all its usage is operated securely and safely in our communities.



## **Education Committee Received Update on Schools of Hope**

On Tuesday, the Education Committee received an update on the Schools of Hope program.

In the 2017 Session, the Schools of Hope program was created to provide students in areas of persistently low-performing schools with a high-quality education option. This option was designed to close the opportunity gap and increase student achievement. Information provided in the presentation by the Department of Education showed that the program is increasing student achievement and improving school grades at traditional public school receiving Schools of Hope funding. Of these schools graded as D's in the 2017 school year, 86% improved their school grades to a C or higher, and 33% of schools graded as F's improved their school grades to a C or higher.

I believe it is our duty as a Legislature to ensure all students, no matter their background, receive a world-class education and have the opportunity to reach their full academic potential. In my view, the information in the presentation reaffirmed that our commitment and strategy to help persistently low-performing schools is working.

## **Florida House Health Market Reform Subcommittee Passed Patient Safety Culture Surveys**

This week, the Health Market Reform Subcommittee passed HB 319, which will help increase access to quality health care for Floridians by providing patient safety culture surveys.

HB 319 requires all Florida hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers to complete patient safety culture surveys and requires the Agency for Health Care Administration to publish the data. These surveys ask employees about patient safety and quality of care in the facility, to help facilities identify and fix problems. When published, the survey data will also help Floridians make decisions about which facilities are best for their own care and that of their families.

Under this bill, each hospital in Florida will also provide patients with the most up-to-date information on its hospital-acquired infection rate, 15-day readmission rate, and the patient satisfaction rate. Florida hospitals will be compelled to provide you with the information you - and every Floridian - need to make better healthcare choices.

Your Florida House is dedicated to passing legislation that will empower patients and compel health care facilities to improve healthcare quality for all Floridians. I look forward to supporting this legislation as it moves through committees and on to the House floor.

## **PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee Continued to Discuss Career & Technical Education**

On Wednesday, the PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee received a presentation from Dr. James R. Stone III, the Director of the National Research Center for Career & Technical Education.



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE DANE EAGLE, MAJORITY LEADER

The presentation titled, “Charting a Course for Florida: Ensuring Students’ Preparation for the Future”, highlighted the ways we can continue to improve our career and technical education system and prepare our students for the workforce and higher education.

Dr. Stone noted that Florida’s education and workforce programs must be innovative in adapting to the ever-changing workforce. For instance, specific technical skills, industry credentials, and even social and employability skills are more important in the workplace than ever before. We can help the next generation to find rewarding, sustainable careers by planning for changes in our workforce instead of trying to adapt as they come. He also expressed the importance of starting our students on career pathways at an earlier age and the need to identify high-demand careers at a regional level to try to meet the workforce needs around Florida.

I was encouraged by the information provided by the presentation and believe our state can develop a comprehensive plan to achieve its goal of increasing the number of working adults with a meaningful, high-value credential beyond high school.

## **Florida House Health Quality Subcommittee Examined Telehealth Advancements**

This week, the House Health Quality Subcommittee examined telehealth advancements and applications. The subcommittee was presented with a telehealth demonstration, a briefing on Medicaid services provided via telehealth, and an expert panel discussion on telehealth.

The Subcommittee experienced a telehealth demonstration by Paula Guy, President and CEO of Salus Telehealth. She has 16 years of leadership experience in building telemedicine networks in the state of Georgia. The demonstration highlighted how telehealth is becoming a serious vehicle for delivering high quality medicine and better access to care.

The subcommittee was then presented with a briefing on Medicaid services provided via telehealth by Beth Kidder, Deputy Secretary for Medicaid in the Agency for Health Care Administration. She explained that telemedicine and teledentistry give Florida patients expanded access with after-hours care and remote monitoring and management for chronic conditions, and better access to specialists, while reducing transportation costs. The expansion of telehealth services in Florida’s Medicaid Program is an important advancement for the program that serves about 4 million of the most vulnerable Floridians.

The subcommittee also heard from a panel of telehealth industry experts and leading administrators on the benefits of telehealth. One leading telehealth administrator noted that they saw a 14% average reduction in potentially preventable emergency department visits. Another stated that they have been providing telehealth psychiatric services for 7 years and have conducted 200,000 successful visits. The information and industry research presented by the panel made a compelling case for the advancement of Telehealth in Florida.

The sum of all these testimonies is clear: telehealth is essential to advancing healthcare access in the state of Florida. I support efforts to make healthcare more accessible and convenient for Floridians, especially the most vulnerable.



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE DANE EAGLE, MAJORITY LEADER

## **Florida House Health Quality Subcommittee Reviewed Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Autonomy**

This week, the House Health Quality Subcommittee held a robust panel discussion on independent practice by advanced practice registered nurses (APRN). The subcommittee heard from a panel of APRNs and physicians industry experts.

In the panel discussion, one of the panel experts noted that in 2018 more than 87% of nurse practitioners were trained in primary care programs, while only 8% of physicians entered a primary care residency. Another stated that this problem could be solved by increasing the number of doctors or having one physician supervise many APRNs across the state via telehealth. Another cited a study finding that APRNs who practice independently in other states significantly increased access to care in rural communities. Another cited a 2018 analysis finding the APRN supply could increase an additional 11% with less restrictive practice regulations between 2013 and 2025. Your Florida House will begin taking steps to address the new role that APRNs should take within our state to prepare for our future healthcare workforce needs.

It is time for our state to rethink how we have traditionally viewed the healthcare services that APRNs provide. I believe our state can safely bring the healthcare services that APRNs can provide into modernity.

## **Public Integrity & Ethics Committee Discussed Ethics Reform and Electronic Filing Systems**

This week, the Public Integrity & Ethics Committee held a workshop on HB 1 dealing with Ethics Reform, and HB 7021, relating to electronic filing of financial disclosures.

The committee workshopped HB 1, a comprehensive ethics reform bill. Notable points of the bill include prohibiting public officers and employees from soliciting conflicting employment and contractual relationships, revising lobbyist registration requirements, and repealing provisions relating to state government lobbyists.

Additionally, the committee heard HB 7021, which provides for the creation of an electronic financial disclosure filing system. This new system provides a modern way of filing financial disclosure for elected officials and state and local employees by utilizing current and up to date technology. The electronic system will also allow for the public to easily search public disclosure forms that are filed to ensure full transparency and accountability.

These bills not only provide Floridians with more transparency and accountability, but they also create a higher moral and ethical standard to ensure that our state government's foundation and principles stay strong.