



Week Three Legislative Update

2026 Florida Legislative Session (January 26–30)

As the Florida Legislature entered the third week of the 2026 Regular Session, health care policy discussions continued to intensify, with several physician-relevant bills moving from introductory review toward more substantive committee debate. The pace of committee activity increased modestly, reflecting leadership’s intent to begin sorting priority measures from those likely to stall as session deadlines approach.

From a broader policy perspective, week three reinforced a familiar theme: legislators remain focused on access, workforce flexibility, and regulatory reform, while organized medicine continues to raise concerns about patient safety, scope of practice expansion, and erosion of physician-led care models.

Health Care Workforce and Scope of Practice

Several measures impacting health care workforce regulation remained active during Week Three, particularly those addressing scope of practice and supervision requirements. Proposals affecting non-physician independent practice continue to advance under the banner of access to care, especially in rural and underserved areas. While sponsors emphasize workforce shortages, physician groups have consistently cautioned committees that access solutions should not come at the expense of care quality, diagnostic accuracy, or patient safety.

Committee discussions this week reflected growing awareness of these concerns. Members increasingly questioned whether existing data supports expanded autonomy or whether alternative solutions—such as incentivizing physician recruitment and retention—might better address access gaps without fundamentally altering care delivery standards.

Professional Regulation and Licensure

Bills addressing licensure portability and professional discipline also remained under consideration. Lawmakers expressed interest in reducing administrative barriers for licensed professionals relocating to Florida, particularly physicians and specialists entering high-need practice areas. While streamlining licensure remains a legislative priority, regulatory committees

signaled continued support for maintaining robust oversight through the Department of Health and professional boards.

Importantly, no significant movement occurred this week on proposals that would materially weaken physician disciplinary authority or peer review structures—an encouraging sign for medical organizations monitoring long-term regulatory integrity.

Emerging Issues in Treatment Innovation and Patient Disclosure

Measures touching on emerging therapies and novel treatment modalities continue to draw attention, particularly where state policy intersects with federal regulatory frameworks. Legislative discussions this week underscored ongoing tension between state-level efforts to expand treatment availability and the federal government’s role in regulating safety and efficacy.

Physician advocates emphasized the importance of clear patient disclosures, evidence-based standards, and alignment with federal law to minimize legal exposure and protect patient trust. These themes are expected to resurface as related bills advance further into the committee process.

Budget Signals and Health Policy Outlook

Although major health care appropriations have yet to be finalized, early budget conversations suggest continued legislative interest in targeted investments rather than broad structural reform. Workforce programs, graduate medical education, and public health initiatives remain areas to watch as the House and Senate budget proposals begin to take shape in the coming weeks.

Looking Ahead

As the Legislature moves into Week Four, several physician-relevant bills are expected to receive additional committee hearings, where amendments and substitute language may significantly alter their impact. FOMA will continue monitoring proposals affecting physician scope, licensure, patient safety, and regulatory authority, with particular attention to measures that could shift long-standing standards of physician-led care.

Committee Activity – Week Three

Florida House – Key Health-Related Committee Meetings (This Week)

House Health & Human Services Committee

Met: Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2026

- This panel considers broad health policy, including bills affecting patient protections, treatment consent, scope of services, etc. ([Florida House of Representatives](#))
- HB 173 (Parental Rights in Health Care): Reported out of the Health & Human Services Committee this week after being added to its agenda. This bill would strengthen parental consent requirements for minor children’s medical treatments, expand Parents’ Bill of Rights in health care contexts, and revise minors’ ability to consent to certain services. It passed the committee and now moves to the Judiciary Committee. ([The Florida Senate](#))

Why it matters: HB 173 directly affects parental consent, confidentiality, and the scope of care that minors can receive without parental approval — including mental health and substance misuse services under current law. ([WLRN](#))

House Health Care Facilities & Systems Subcommittee

Met: Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026

- This subcommittee reviews bills on health facility regulation, provider scope, Medicaid, and other structural patient care issues. ([Florida House of Representatives](#))
- HB 693 (Health and Human Services Revisions): Was on the agenda in this subcommittee this week. This bill would enact an interstate EMS licensure compact, revise scope and delegation for nurses, EMTs, PAs, dentists, and update Medicaid/KidCare provisions among other service changes. It has not yet had a recorded vote this week, but was formally considered here. ([The Florida Senate](#))

House Health Professions & Programs Subcommittee

Met: Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026

- This panel focuses on the scope of practice and professional licensure issues for health professionals (e.g., physicians, nurses). ([Florida House of Representatives](#))
- HB 1443 (Parkinson’s Disease Registry): Received a Favorable with Committee Substitute on Jan. 29 — a procedural advancement that could impact reporting and provider liability around disease tracking. ([The Florida Senate](#))

Florida Senate — (This Week)

Senate Health Policy Committee

Met: Monday, Jan. 26 & Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2026

This committee is the key Senate body for health care policy, parental rights issues, and scope-of-practice bills.

Major actions this week include:

CS/SB 1756 (Medical Freedom / Vaccine Exemptions):

- Advanced out of Health Policy Committee by a 6-4 vote on *Jan. 26*. It would create a new non-medical (“conscience”) exemption from school immunization requirements in addition to existing religious exemptions and require that health providers share risk/benefit information with parents before vaccinations — expanding parental choice in childhood health decisions. ([The Florida Senate](#))
- The bill now moves to Appropriations Committee on Health & Human Services for further review. ([The Florida Senate](#))

Senate Health Policy (Other health bills)

SB 1010 / HB 743 – Gender-Affirming Care Liability:

- SB 1010 has passed an earlier Senate committee and is pending further Health Policy work, aiming to expand penalties against providers assisting in gender-affirming care for minors. HB 743 passed a House Criminal Justice Subcommittee earlier this week.
- While not voted in Health Policy this week, movement in related committees shows continuing activity in this policy area.

Key Health & Parental Rights Outcomes from Committee Activity

Committee	Bill	Topic	Action This Week
House Health & Human Services	HB 173	Parental consent & minor health care rights	Reported favorably to Judiciary Committee
House Health Care Facilities & Systems Subcommittee	HB 693	EMS compact & scope updates	Placed on agenda / considered
House Health Professions & Programs	HB 1443	Parkinson's disease registry & provider liability	Favorable w/ CS
Senate Health Policy	SB 1756	Vaccine exemptions & parental rights	Advanced to Appropriations
Senate Health Policy	SB 1010 / HB 743 (companion)	Gender-affirming care restrictions	Previously passed committee; pending further action

**1. Parental Rights in Health:

- HB 173 and SB 1756 both broaden parental consent or choice in health decisions — one in general care and school surveys/treatments under the Parents' Bill of Rights framework, the other in childhood vaccination decisions. ([The Florida Senate](#))

**2. Scope of Practice / Provider Duties:

- HB 693 would alter licensure compacts and clarify duty scopes for EMS, nurse practitioners, PAs, and other practitioners. ([The Florida Senate](#))

**3. Public Health Balance:

- SB 1756 frames exemptions and informational requirements around vaccines, balancing parental prerogatives with public health considerations. ([The Florida Senate](#))

**4. LGBTQ+ Health Provider Liability:

- Bills like SB 1010 / HB 743 would expand civil and criminal liability for providers involved with gender-affirming care for minors, which has implications for scope of practice and patient protection ethics.

Scope of Practice and Professional Licensure

Several bills propose changes to scope of practice and autonomous authority for non-physician health care professionals:

- **Big Beautiful Healthcare Frontier Act – [HB 693](#) / [HB 695](#) (Redondo)**
Filed as part of a Speaker-supported legislative package, these bills propose multiple scope-of-practice expansions across health care professions. ***(Passed the Health Care Facilities Subcommittee 12-4)***
- **Autonomous Practice by Physician Assistants – [SB 668](#) (Truenow)**
Authorizes physician assistants to practice independently.
- **Prescribing for Physician Assistants – [HB 683](#) / [SB 374](#) (Partington / Trumbull)**
Allows physician assistants to practice independently during a declared state of emergency.
- **Autonomous Practice by a CRNA – [HB 375](#) / [SB 462](#) (Giallombardo / Rodriguez)**
Permits certified registered nurse anesthetists to practice independently. ***PASSED HOUSE COMMITTEE on JANUARY 21, 2026; FOMA presented testimony against;***
- **Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Autonomous Practice – [HB 301](#) / [SB 138](#) (Shoaf / Truenow)**
Expands autonomous practice authority for psychiatric advanced practice registered nurses. ***PASSED HOUSE COMMITTEE on JANUARY 21, 2026; FOMA presented testimony against;***
- **Naturopathic Medicine – [HB 223](#) / [SB 688](#) / [SB 542](#) (Smith / Rodriguez / Garcia)**
Creates a licensure pathway for naturopathic practitioners.
- **Chiropractic Medicine – [HB 439](#) / [SB 1524](#) (Cobb / Simon)**
Authorizes chiropractic physicians to possess, prescribe, and administer specified substances, including vitamins, dietary supplements, and epinephrine.
- **Acupuncture – [HB 169](#) / [SB 672](#) (Alvarez / Calatayud)**
Updates statutory language governing acupuncture practice.
- **Use of Professional Nursing Titles – [HB 237](#) / [SB 36](#) (Salzman / Sharief)**
Authorizes use of doctoral nursing titles while requiring clarification of professional role when using the term “doctor.”
- **Mobile Opportunity by Interstate Licensure Endorsement Act [SB154/HB151](#) (Harrell/Conerly)** Expand ineligibility criteria for licensure by endorsement under the MOBILE Act to include nonaccredited dental program graduates. Revises the list of individuals ineligible for a health care license by endorsement under the MOBILE Act.
Adds a new provision making those who have not graduated from an accredited dental school or dental hygiene program ineligible for licensure by endorsement under chapter 466.
- **Patient-directed Medical Orders [SB 312/HB369](#) (Rodriguez/Plasencia)** Patient-directed Medical Orders: Revising definitions and defining the term “patient-directed

medical order”; authorizing the execution of a patient-directed medical order for a specified purpose; requiring that certain health care services be provided to the principal regardless of the decision to withhold or withdraw life-prolonging procedures; authorizing physicians, physician assistants, and advanced practice registered nurses to withhold or withdraw life-prolonging procedures under certain circumstances without penalty; requiring the Agency for Health Care Administration to create and update a database for the storage of patient-directed medical orders, etc.

- **Ambulatory Surgical Centers** [SB1156/](#)[HB1207](#) (Trumbull/Oliver) Establish new licensure and regulatory requirements for ambulatory surgical centers under a newly created chapter separate from hospital regulations, strengthening standards, reporting, and oversight.

Pharmacy Practice

Multiple bills address pharmacy practice and pharmacist authority:

- **Pharmacy** – [SB 1142](#) / [HB 1425](#) (Wright / Booth)
Expands consultant pharmacy provisions to include clinics.
- **Administration of Medications by Pharmacists** – [HB 407](#) / [SB 294](#) (Alvarez / Rodriguez)
Authorizes pharmacists to administer medications for medication-assisted treatment and opioid addiction.
- **Practice of the Profession of Pharmacy** – [HB 1021](#) / [SB 868](#) (Young / Sharief)
Allows pharmacists to administer medications in Level I and Level II trauma centers.

Wrongful Death and Medical Liability

- **Medical Negligence/Wrongful Death** – [HB 6003](#) / [SB 1700](#) (Trabulsy / Grall)
Removes the prohibition on recovery of noneconomic damages in certain medical negligence wrongful death cases involving adult children and parents.
- **Civil Liability for the Wrongful Death of an Unborn Child** – [HB 289](#) / [SB 164](#) (Greco / Grall)
Expands Florida’s Wrongful Death Act to allow parents of an unborn child to recover damages. *HB289 passed the house floor and is not in Senate Messages and has been referred to Senate Rules Committee. The Senate version is at its second committee stop.*

Vaccines, Parental Rights, and Medical Conscience

- **Parental Rights** – [HB 173](#) / [SB 166](#) (Kendall / Grall)
Requires parental consent in various health care situations, including contraceptive information and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. (*Passed Health & Human Services Committee 19-7*)



- **Vaccines – [HB 917](#) / [SB 1756](#) (Holcomb / Yarborough)**
Addresses vaccination discrimination, parental consent and disclosures, alternative vaccination schedules, pharmacist authority to dispense ivermectin, exemptions from immunization requirements, and related liability provisions.
- **Medical Conscience – [HB 551](#) / [SB 670](#) (Black / Yarborough)**
Authorizes health care providers to bring a civil cause of action based on medical conscience protections.
- **Advertisement of a Harmful Vaccine – [SB408](#) / [HB339](#) (Grall/Miller)** – defines advertisement for vaccine promotions and impose liability on manufacturers for harm caused by advertised vaccines. *SB408 passed its first committee stop on January 20 and moves to Health Policy committee.*
- **Prohibited Sex-reassignment Prescriptions and Procedures [SB1010](#) / [HB743](#) (Yarborough/Melo)** Prohibit health care practitioners from aiding or abetting in prohibited sex-reassignment prescriptions or procedures for minors and authorize the state to pursue civil actions and penalties. *SB1010 and HB743 both passed their first committee stops on January 20 and move to committee stop two of three total stops.*

Patient Access to Records

- **Patient Access to Records – [HB 1309](#) / [SB 1140](#) (Booth / Grall)**
Requires medical records to be furnished within 14 days of request.

Health Insurance and Managed Care

Several bills propose reforms to insurance practices, managed care, and patient protections:

- **Managed Care Plans – [HB 531](#) / [SB 568](#) (Barnaby, Basabe / Harrell)**
Revises Medicaid managed care contract requirements, including limits on prior authorization reviews.
- **Insurance Claims Payments to Health Care Providers – [HB 1015](#) / [SB 1130](#) (Cassel / Massullo)**
Prohibits certain insurance payment practices, including downloading requirements.
- **Insurance Claims Payments to Health Care Providers – [HB 1023](#) / [SB 1198](#) (Black / Massullo)**
Addresses claim disputes, fees, and related insurance reforms.
- **Health Insurer Accountability – [HB 1097](#) (Berfield)**
Requires insurer credentialing within 30 days and includes prompt payment and retroactive denial provisions.
- **Step Therapy – [SB 70](#) (Harrell)**
Requires AHCA approval of certain drug products for Medicaid recipients with serious mental illness without step-therapy prior authorization.

- **Continuity of Care in Health Insurance Contracts – [HB 577](#) / [SB 114](#) (Woodson / Jones)**
Requires 60 days' notice to policyholders before termination of provider contracts.
- **Medicaid Providers [SB40/HB163](#) (Shareif/Robinson)** Medicaid Providers; Requiring the Agency for Health Care Administration to include specified requirements in its contracts with Medicaid managed care plans; defining the term “outside of regular business hours”.

Other Legislation of Interest

- **Health Care Patient Protection – [SB 68](#) (Harrell (R-Stuart)) and [HB 355](#) by Rep. (Oliver (R-Punta Gorda))** require AHCA, in consultation with the Florida Emergency Medical Services for Children State Partnership Program, to adopt rules that establish minimum standards for pediatric patient care in hospital emergency departments (ED). The bills require all hospitals with EDs to develop and implement policies and procedures for pediatric patient care in the ED, and to designate a physician, physician assistant, nurse, or paramedic to serve as the pediatric emergency care coordinator in the ED. Finally, the bills require all hospital EDs to conduct the National Pediatric Readiness Assessment in accordance with timelines established by the National Pediatric Readiness Project. *This bill passed the House and is now in Senate Messages and referred to Fiscal Policy.*
- **Employment Eligibility – [HB 197](#) by Rep. Berny Jacques (R-Clearwater) [SB1542](#) Sen. Pizzo (D-Miami) and [SB 1278](#) Sen. Martin (R-Lee)** requires all private employers, rather than only those employing more than specified number of employees, use E-Verify system to verify new employee's employment. *HB197 has passed the House and is currently in Senate Messages. Neither Senate bills have had their first hearing.*
- **Florida Health Choices Program – [SB 440](#) (Leek (R-St. Augustine)) and [HB 141](#) (Yarkosky (R-Clermont)) and [SB1460](#) (Martin (R-Lee))** rename the "Florida Health Choices Program" as "Florida Employee Health Choices Program" and revise purposes and components of the program. The bills revise eligibility and participation requirements for vendors under the program, the types of health insurance products that are available for purchase through program, removes certain pricing transparency requirements, revise the structure of the insurance marketplace process under the program, remove the option for risk pooling under the program, and remove exemptions from certain requirements of Florida Insurance Code under the program.
- **Rural Communities – [SB 250](#) (Simon (R-Tallahassee)) and [HB723](#) (Abbott (R-Washington))** is a comprehensive package of legislative proposals to create opportunities for rural communities to expand education offerings, increase health care services, and modernize commerce. The bill invests in farm-to-market roads, requires the state land planning agency to give preference for technical assistance funding to local governments

located in a rural area of opportunity, revises the conditions required for a county to be considered a fiscally constrained county, creates the Office of Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce, requires the Office of Rural Prosperity to administer the Renaissance Grants Program to provide block grants to eligible communities, creates the Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant Program within the Office of Rural Prosperity, expands the existing FRAME program to include medical doctors or osteopathic doctors who are board certified or board eligible in emergency medicine, establishes the Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric Response and Education (SCORE) Grant Program, appropriates additional funding to enhance Medicaid payments to reimburse rural hospitals similar to Medicare reimbursement, and creates the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program within the Department of Transportation. *SB250 is now in House Messages and waiting on action by the Florida House.*

- **Sale and Purchase of Ivermectin – HB 29 (Holcomb (R-Springhill))** authorizes the sale and purchase of ivermectin suitable for human use as over-the-counter medication without prescription or consultation with a health care provider. *(Still no companion in the House).*
- **Protection from Surgical Smoke – SB162/HB93 (Davis/Woodson)** Requires hospitals & ambulatory surgical centers to adopt & implement policies requiring use of smoke evacuation systems during certain surgical procedures.
- **Temporary Certificates for Practice in Areas of Critical Need SB1480 (Burton)** Allow continued practice by certain health care practitioners under temporary certificates in areas of critical need even if those areas lose their designation, provided specific conditions are met.
- **Statewide Provider and Health Plan Claim Dispute Resolution SB1082/HB1449 (Grall/Busatta)** Specifies additional circumstances excluding disputed claims from the statewide provider and health plan claim dispute resolution program. Adds claims involving services initiated under s. 395.1041 or 42 U.S.C. s. 1395dd that have been submitted for resolution through the federal independent dispute resolution process to the list of exclusions. Excludes claims for services rendered by out-of-network providers that have been submitted for resolution through the federal independent dispute resolution process.

Looking Ahead

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