

KMA SECURES WINS FOR PATIENTS AND PROVIDERS DURING SUCCESSFUL 2019 SESSION



The 2019 Kentucky General Assembly will likely be remembered as one of the most successful 30-day sessions for the Kentucky Medical Association (KMA) in recent years. Short sessions always result in quick sprints to the finish, but it was the swift action taken by so many engaged physician members that led to KMA's success.

Prior Authorization

Senate Bill 54, KMA's top legislative priority in 2019, will take effect on Jan. 1, 2020.

The law will address a number of prior authorization issues, including enhancing access to prior authorization information, establishing one-year approvals for chronic disease medications, enhancing the review process, standardizing review times, increasing access to electronic prior authorizations and requiring insurers to post prior authorization procedures on their website and maintain a complete list of services for which prior authorization is required. It will also remove several roadblocks for patients trying to access medications and treatment and allow providers to make decisions regarding care instead of insurance companies.

KMA President Bruce Scott, M.D., traveled to Frankfort several times during the session to provide expert testimony on the bill, which was well-received by lawmakers. Upon its passage, Dr. Scott also published an op-ed that appeared in papers across the state.

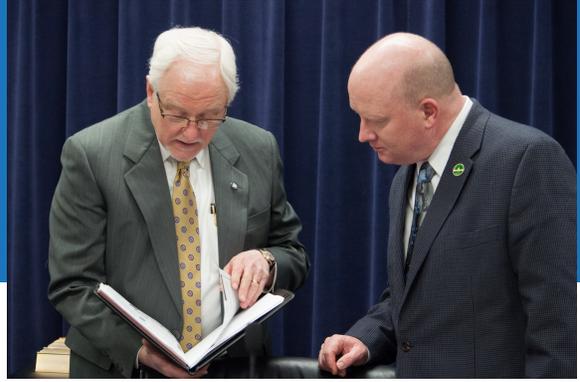
"Our state representatives did the right thing, putting patients first and passing legislation that brings much-needed improvements to a prior-authorization process that's outdated, inefficient, and can harm patients," he said.

Tobacco-Free Schools

An exciting finish to the session was made possible by the last-minute passage of another top KMA priority, House Bill 11, which will enact a statewide tobacco-free schools law. The bill was sponsored by Rep. Kim Moser and enjoyed backing by a large number of organizations, including the Smoke-Free Tomorrow Coalition, of which KMA is a steering committee member.

House Bill 11 will prohibit use of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, by students, school personnel, and visitors in schools, school vehicles, properties, and activities by the 2020-2021 school year. The bill is estimated to protect 275,000 children and teens from cigarette smoke and vapor from e-cigarettes.





Screening and Genetic Testing

Another win for Kentucky physicians and patients came with the passage of Senate Bill 30, sponsored by Sen. Ralph Alvarado. The bill will require health benefit plans to cover any genetic tests for cancer risk that are recommended by certain providers if the recommendation is consistent with specific genetic testing guidelines published by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network or any other criteria or guidelines published by national medical societies that are determined to be relevant and reliable by the Kentucky Department of Insurance. It will also amend current state law by lowering the age eligible for colorectal cancer examination and testing coverage from 50 to 45. The law will take effect on Jan. 1, 2020.

Medical Licensure Compact

Senate Bill 22, also sponsored by Sen. Ralph Alvarado, passed favorably from both chambers and was signed by the Governor on March 25. Due to KMA advocacy, the final language does not contain the unfriendly amendments KMA opposed that were attached at one point by the Kentucky Coalition of Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Midwives (KCNPNM). The amendments were intended to expand APRN scope of practice by phasing out a requirement for advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) to have a collaborative agreement (CAPA-CS) with a physician in order to prescribe controlled substances. The final and amendment-free bill language will allow Kentucky to enter the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC) and provide an expedited, multistate licensure procedure for physicians who qualify.

Successfully Defeated This Session

The KMA advocacy team also worked tirelessly to oppose several pieces of legislation that would have posed threats to Kentucky patients and the practice of medicine.

Scope of Practice

Senate Bill 132 would have expanded the prescriptive authority of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs). KMA members were instrumental in contacting their legislators to express concerns about the bill.

Medical Cannabis

Legislation pertaining to the legalization of medical cannabis was successfully defeated during this session. However, KMA expects this item to be revisited in 2020 and will continue advocating for further research prior to the enactment of any cannabis legislation.

Advocacy in Action

With the books officially closed on the 2019 session, KMA has once again taken the opportunity to thank its members who helped secure so many wins for Kentucky patients and physicians. The "Advocacy in Action" initiative highlights the work of members who testified in front of legislative committees, spoke publicly regarding priority issues or generally went "above and beyond" to assist with KMA advocacy efforts. The complete listing of 2019 Advocacy in Action recognition is available on the KMA website at www.kyma.org/advocacy-in-action/ and will also be featured on social media.

Physicians' Day at the Capitol

More than 90 physicians from across the state traveled to Frankfort on Feb. 21 for KMA's 2019 Physicians' Day at the Capitol (PDAC). The most well-attended PDAC in recent years, a majority of attendees donned their white coats, helping KMA stand out among a number of other groups who were also in Frankfort that day. The KMA advocacy team received much positive feedback from members of the General Assembly on the impact of meeting face-to-face with physicians.

KMA would like to thank its membership for contributing to yet another successful legislative session. Many members signed up for KMA's new Legislative Texting Service, which allowed them to stay up-to-date and engaged with happenings in Frankfort, and countless more sent messages of support through the General Assembly's Legislative Message Line or through direct contact with their senators and representatives. These efforts certainly advanced the priorities of physicians and patients across the Commonwealth and allowed for the Association to continue moving the practice of medicine in Kentucky forward.