



## KEY ISSUES

## NHA 2019 ADVOCACY DAY

### ★ Medicaid Reimbursement Rates (Support)

Hospitals receive reimbursements from the government that are less than the costs incurred by the hospital for providing medical care to Medicaid patients.

Despite the fact that Medicaid does not pay hospitals enough to cover the cost incurred by the hospitals caring for patients, hospitals welcome Medicaid patients and provide the same quality care for all patients. 53% of Nebraska's Critical Access Hospitals are facing financial stress. Financial stress is defined as having an operating margin of less than 2%.

**Please ask your senator to SUPPORT increases in Medicaid reimbursement rates for all providers in the biennium budget.** Remind your senator that without increases in Medicaid reimbursement rates, hospitals have to make difficult financial decisions affecting services and impacting access to care.

### ★ Medicaid Expansion Implementation (Support LB631)

Last November 53% of Nebraska voters supported expanding Medicaid so that individuals making up to \$16,753 a year or a four-person household making \$34,638 now qualify for Medicaid. The state must now implement the expansion.

**Please ask your senator to SUPPORT Senator Morfeld's LB631.** LB631 creates the Medicaid Expansion Implementation Task Force and allows for a hospital representative to be on the task force. DHHS must submit a State Plan Amendment to CMS by April 1, 2019. 94,000 people are expected to join the 245,000 people currently on Medicaid. It is important the implementation process is done correctly.

### ★ Human Trafficking (Support LB518)

Human trafficking is an increasing public health concern many hospitals and health systems are combating every day. It is a crime occurring when a trafficker exploits an individual with force, fraud or coercion to make them perform commercial work or sex. 88% of human sex trafficking victims saw a health care provider while they were being trafficked.

**Please ask your senator to SUPPORT Senator Linehan's LB518,** which establishes the Office of Support for Trafficking Survivors within DHHS.

### ★ Tobacco Tax (Support LB710)

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the United States, yet more deaths are caused each year by tobacco use than by all deaths from (HIV), illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, suicides and murders combined.

Tobacco use poses a heavy burden on the U.S. economy and medical care system. Each year, cigarette smoking costs more than \$193 billion in medical care costs, while secondhand smoke costs an additional \$10 billion. Smoking-related illnesses cost Nebraska \$795 million per year, including more than \$162 million in Medicaid expenditures. 2,500 Nebraskans will die this year from smoking.

**Please ask your senator to SUPPORT Senator Cavanaugh's LB710 which increases the tax on tobacco products to \$1.50 per pack.** Increasing the tax on cigarettes, tobacco products and vaping in Nebraska would reduce smoking and improve the overall health of Nebraskans. LB710 also classifies electronic cigarettes as a tobacco product.

### ★ Workplace Violence (Support LB484 and LB216)

The best way to keep patients safe is to make sure that staff caring for them are also working in a safe environment. 74% of workplace assaults occur in a health care setting and 78% of emergency physicians have reported being targets of workplace violence in the last 12 months. Many more assaults or threats go unreported.

80% of serious violent incidents reported in health care settings were caused by interactions with patients while other incidents were caused by visitors, coworkers or other people.

**Please ask your senator to SUPPORT Senator Lowe's LB484,** which increases the penalty for assault on security officer working at a hospital; and Senator Kolterman's LB216, which prohibits releasing a person in law enforcement custody to avoid medical costs.

#### SUPPORT

- Medicaid Reimbursement Rates
- LB216
- LB484
- LB518
- LB631
- LB710

#### OPPOSE

- LB378
- LB529

## ☆ **Helmet Law Repeal (OPPOSE LB378)**

LB378 changes helmet provisions for autocycles, motorcycles, and mopeds

1 in 3 motorcycle riders in Nebraska who are treated at a hospital are there due to a head injury. Head injuries are the leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes. A motorcyclist without a helmet was 50% more likely to suffer from a traumatic brain injury (TBI) than a helmeted motorcyclist when involved in a crash. TBIs are more severe with unhelmeted motorcyclists than helmeted motorcyclists.

The total charges from 2008 to 2014 for all Nebraska riders hospitalized as a result of a motorcycle injury was over \$74 million.

Motorcycle riders who die or suffer TBIs in low-speed crashes may have been able to walk away if they had been wearing helmets.

**Please ask your senator to OPPOSE Senator Ben Hansen's LB378, which repeals the requirement that motorcycle riders wear helmets.**

## ☆ **Economic Development (OPPOSE LB529)**

Nebraska's hospitals are substantial contributors to the state's economy. They are economic engines for our regions, serving as the largest employer in many communities, significantly contributing to workforce development.

Nebraska hospitals also provide essential jobs throughout the state, employing over 44,000 Nebraskans and creating a demand for an additional 44,000 jobs, due to hospitals buying goods and services from other local businesses. Over 10% of Nebraska's entire workforce is employed by, or supported by, hospitals.

Every dollar spent by a hospital supports roughly \$2.30 of additional business activity. The goods and services hospitals purchase from other businesses create additional economic value for the community.

Nebraska's hospitals provided over \$131 million in charity care and uncompensated costs related to government health care programs of \$611 million in 2017. In total, the community benefits provided by Nebraska hospitals was nearly \$1 billion. Including bad debt, this number exceeded \$1.3 billion in 2017.

**Please ask your senator to OPPOSE Senator Groene's LB529, which would remove the property tax exemption for not-for-profit hospitals in Nebraska.**

The NHA thanks everyone participating in the development of responsible health care public policy. Your efforts are invaluable. Throughout the upcoming years, hospitals will need champions in the Legislature to deal with issues that impact the operation and success of hospitals. Hospitals will also need champions of advocacy to improve and protect health care delivery in Nebraska, and your continued participation will make the difference.

### For more information, contact:

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**NHA** Nebraska  
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The influential voice of Nebraska's hospitals