



The influential voice of Nebraska's hospitals

# 2019 Legislative Session

## NHA Advocacy Update

March 20, 2019

NHA Advocacy Team

# NHA's Priorities 2019

- Medicaid Expansion
- Budget
- Behavioral Health
- Telehealth
- Opioid Crisis
- Economic and Workforce Development
- Heritage Health
- NEW
  - Workforce Violence
  - Human Trafficking
  - Workers' Compensation

# Medicaid Expansion

- 94,000 people
- 90% of the costs will be funded by the federal government. The remainder of the funds will come from the State of Nebraska.
- The governor included in his proposed budget general funds to pay for expansion anticipating the cost for FY2019 at \$18.4 million and for FY2020 at \$44.7 million.

# Medicaid Expansion

- The DHHS is on schedule for submitting the State Plan Amendment (SPA) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) by April 1, as required by the initiative.
- Part of the SPA is the inclusion of an Alternative Benefit Plan (ABP), which is required by federal law and outlines the services and delivery methods available to the expansion group.
- DHHS is taking comments from the public regarding the SPA through March 29.

# Budget

- Economic Forecast Board met on February 28
  - FY2018-19 decrease of \$80 million
  - FY2019-20 decrease of \$20 million
  - FY2020-21 decrease of \$10 million
- Next Forecast Board meeting April 25

# Budget

- The Appropriations Committee is recommending a 2% increase in Medicaid provider rates in each of the next two years.
  - Not included in the governor's budget proposal.
- Advanced before Revenue Forecast projections.
  - No specific cuts have been determined

# 2019 Legislative Session

## Support

- 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 healthcare provider while they were being trafficked.
- Senator Linehan introduced LB518, which establishes the Office of Support for Trafficking Survivors within DHHS.

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## Support

- 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.



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## Support

- 2,500 Nebraskans will die this year from smoking.
- Senator Cavanaugh introduced 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.

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## Support

- 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 healthcare 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 healthcare settings were caused by interactions with patients while other incidents were caused by visitors, coworkers, or other people.

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## Support

- Senator Lowe introduced LB484, which increases the penalty for assault on security officer working at a hospital.
- Senator Kolterman introduced LB216, which prohibits releasing a person in law enforcement custody to avoid medical costs

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## Oppose

- 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 mil.

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## Oppose

- Motorcycle riders who die or suffer TBIs in low-speed crashes may have been able to walk away if they had been wearing helmets.
- Senator Ben Hansen introduced LB378, which repeals the requirement that motorcycle riders wear helmets.

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## Oppose

- 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.

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## Oppose

- Nebraska's hospitals provided over \$131 million in charity care and uncompensated costs related to government healthcare 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.
- Senator Groene introduced LB529, which would remove the property tax exemption for not-for profit hospitals in Nebraska.

# REMINDERS

Weekly Legislative Update from the NHA Advocacy Team every Friday during session at 2 p.m. (Central)

- Call in #: **(877)594-8353**
- Passcode: **31044763#**



# Advocacy

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Legislators make decisions based on their core beliefs, on their knowledge of an issue, on input from experts, on personal counsel, and on feedback from their constituents.
- Communicate with your lawmakers. Lawmakers and their staff want to hear from you because you are a constituent. You are an expert that represents an organization that is vital to the well-being of thousands of people in their district.

# Advocacy

- Personal visits and meetings
- Phone calls
- Letters and emails
- VOTE

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