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THE BATTLEFIELDS ARE SET

Candidate filing closed on Tuesday. Now all the legislator-candidates know the political lay of the land. We'll see if it makes anyone change their tune. We are in that weird period when it seems like both chambers are a bit desultory. We are lucky to have five physicians in the arena vying for seats in the General Assembly. We also have several candidates who we believe will be good friends to medicine. Be on the lookout for more information this summer on our plans to help these patient- and physician-friendly folks.

Both chambers are still hearing bills that have little chance at passing with a mere six weeks left of session. They're also sprinkling some debate on the first few bills to have crossed chambers. The Senate now has the budget. Once they really get going on it, we can expect to lose a solid week as they negotiate their way through lackluster revenue projections. There seems to be little backing for the budget as it stands among Senators. This lack of interest will likely result in increased compromise in hopes of creating support.

AI REFORM OMNIBUS BILL MAKES DEBUT

First thing Monday evening, the Senate took up [SB 1012](#) for floor debate. This bill is an attempt to put some parameters around artificial intelligence (AI). The bill creates Missouri's first attempt at creating a comprehensive legal framework for artificial intelligence. Proponents of the bill focus on defining AI as non-sentient, assigning human liability for AI-caused harm, regulating AI use in political advertising, and criminalizing sexually explicit deepfakes. They also added an amendment that would prevent AI from diagnosing and prescribing. They liked that amendment and expressed caution over creating a new avenue for trial attorneys to file frivolous lawsuits pertaining to AI use. They ultimately pulled the plug on the bill when several Senators considered the impact of a recent federal executive order and how state legislation may or may not fit within its guardrails.

NURSE BILL MOVES

On Tuesday, the Senate Professional Registration Committee voted to pass the dreaded APRN scope expansion bill, [SB 979](#). This bill seeks to grant independent practice to APRNs with no guardrails or protection for patients. We are hopeful it will stay parked in committee. However, we are laying traps and letting our guardians know there is a real threat on the prowl. The committee also heard [HB 1980](#). This important

bill would extend peer review protections to paramedics. It is important for all our healthcare buds to have access to peer review and to learn from each other about how to best care for patients without fear of litigious trial attorneys looking to make a buck.

RAISING THE BAR ON ILLICIT DRUGS

This week, the House gave initial approval to [HB 1881](#). This bill adds xylazine to the list of Schedule III drugs. This is a veterinary medicine that people are starting to abuse. It's good to see the legislature's proactive stance to curtail access.

The Senate worked into the wee hours of Wednesday morning debating the merits of [HB 2641](#) to regulate hemp. This bill rewrites Missouri's cannabis statutes by updating definitions and tightening privacy protections for medical marijuana patients. The real reason for the bill, however, is to bring all hemp-derived intoxicating cannabinoids (including delta-8, delta-10, THCA, and similar compounds) under the same regulatory framework as marijuana. Since the Senate made a few changes to the bill, it had to go back to the House for either their approval or for further consideration. The House took the bill up first thing this morning, giving final their final stamp of approval and sending it to the Governor for his signature.

D.O.c.-A-Day Thank You!

A big thanks goes out to Kevin Hubbard, DO, who visited the Capitol city this week to visit with his Representative and Senator about healthcare bills. Dr. Hubbard became a Key Contact when he and his Senator exchanged cell numbers. Dr. Hubbard will serve as an "on-call" physician constituent for his Senator when he needs more information on healthcare legislation.

If you are a Key Contact for your state Representative and/or Senator, let Executive Director Brian Bowles know. If you would like to be, contact Brian and see how to get started.