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## SAUSAGE PRODUCTION SLOWING

It was a weird week in the legislature. There seemed to be a bit of a lack of movement on bills of any real substance. Thankfully, there was no advancement of bills that are bad for medicine. Unfortunately, that is also the case for the good stuff, too. The Senate was poised to take up an omnibus healthcare bill and tackle PBM reform this week, but both of those issues fizzled off the docket.

## TEMPORARY LICENSURE

An issue that grew into a scope expansion monster last year finally reached the Senate calendar this week. [Senate Bill 895](#) creates a pathway for individuals with at least three years of out-of-state work experience in an occupation that requires licensure in Missouri to obtain a one-time, two-year temporary license, provided they pass Missouri's required exams and meet citizenship and eligibility standards. The bill excludes professions covered by interstate compacts (most health professional licenses), federally regulated occupations, certain trades, and assistant physicians, and requires applicants to establish Missouri residency within 90 days. In its current form this bill does not impact patients or the practice of medicine. But licensure bills routinely attract scope-of-practice remoras, so we will be watching it closely.

## FOOD IS MEDICINE

The "Food is Medicine Act" ([HB 2355](#)), which has already passed the House, would direct MO HealthNet to pursue a federal Section 1115 waiver to cover nutrition-based interventions for patients with diet-related chronic disease. The bill authorizes "medically tailored" meals, groceries, produce prescriptions, and micronutrient therapy, all issued under a nutrition-services model led by registered dietitians or a designated clinical team. Physicians may want to be aware that the bill frames these services as being "prescribed," creating a new category of treatment delivered outside traditional medical practice. The broader Food is Medicine movement positions nutrition interventions as part of chronic-disease management, and this bill would place Missouri's Medicaid program within that national trend.

## TORT UPDATE

The House Judiciary Committee met on Wednesday to hear [HB 2667](#). This bill bars individuals who are injured while committing or attempting to commit a crime from recovering damages in negligence suits. It also narrows property-owner liability for “negligent security” claims by requiring proof of substantially similar prior incidents. It also mandates fault-apportionment that includes criminal actors and government entities. We’re certain to see amendments – comparative negligence, collateral source, damage reforms – as tort bills like this move through the legislative Rube Goldberg machine.

### RESTRICTING RECORDS

Thursday morning the House Health Committee heard [HB 2606](#). This bill deals with privacy protections for patients regarding medical records. The bill establishes that patients legally own their health records. It prohibits providers from disclosing, sharing, or using those records, including de-identified data without explicit, written informed consent (except in a medical emergency). It creates a private right of action with damages for unauthorized disclosure and bans the use of blanket or opt-out consents for research. While the legislation has good intentions, it misses the mark by adding a significant administration burden on physicians and could lead to delays in care if physicians must wait for additional consent from patients to access records. Also, the legislation omits any provisions applying to electronic medical record companies, giving them a free pass to avoid the punishment provisions of this bill. Finally, we are concerned that the bill could lead to a new onslaught of frivolous lawsuits.

### PRIOR AUTH HEARING DELAYED

It’s been another week of hustling for movement on prior authorization. We are continuing to be engaged in stakeholder meetings and negotiations with all the parties involved. For now, the House version is being held up in the Senate Insurance Committee. We’re hoping for a hearing next week. But as session wears on, we must deal with more extraneous crud (like personality conflicts and intra-party politics). The clock is starting to tick. It’s becoming clear that the solution will have to take the form of an amendment.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE NEARING: ARE YOU REGISTERED?

There is still time to [register for the Missouri Osteopathic Annual Conference](#) on April 24-25<sup>th</sup>! Join us at Old Kinderhook Lodge in Camdenton for an evening and day of CME, networking, and fun! We are expecting over thirty students to join us, each looking for networking and mentorship opportunities. Help support the future of the profession with your attendance!