

FRA Legislative meeting summary for 04/04/2025

The Florida Renal Association's (FRA) Legislative Committee met for the third time in 2025 on Friday April 4th. Below is a summary of the meeting led by FRA Lobbyist Ron Watson.

The meeting opened with a brief thank you for another successful Kidney Day in Tallahassee, our 19th annual, which occurred at the Capital on Sunday, March 9th and Monday March 10th. Discussion about the details and any suggestions was delayed until the end of the meeting.

Mr. Watson then began with the traditional News/Notes section established by former long-time FRA lobbyist Bob Reynolds.

NEWS and NOTES:

- **AHCA webinar on home modalities occurred February 28th.** The FRA home modality webinar for the Florida Medicaid Managed Care Plans, as directed by budget proviso language, was completed on Friday February 28th. This year's presentation was delayed until after the new managed care contracts went into effect on Feb 1st, thereby giving us a larger attendance. The **FRA greatly appreciates board member Codie Pauley** who created and moderated the presentation yet again. Codie briefly spoke about his presentation and shared some of the many questions and communication between the plans afterwards.
- **FRA donates \$5,000 to More Transplants More Life.** FRA President Shannon Moore, FRA Board member Missy Timmons and lobbyist Ron Watson attended a celebration of life for Louis Betz held at a downtown lobbying firm. Louis, who recently passed, was a long-time lobbyist who received a double lung transplant. He used his unique experiences to fight for improved organ transplants by creating More Transplants, More Life. The FRA will continue to work closely together for our shared goals.
- **Special Election Results.** Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Jimmy Patronis won Congressional district 1, in the Pensacola area. Recently elected Sen. Randy Fine (R-Palm Bay), who was in the House for 8 years, also won his Congressional election. Both have already been sworn in Washington; however they were both out spent and underperformed compared to recent elections.. Rep. Debbie Mayfield who was the Senator prior to Fine and won election to the House in November also won her primary to return to the Senate. The general election is in June.
- **No additional updates on two proposed rules.** One rule deals with organ transplant facility regulation and the other rule is the main Medicaid dialysis regulation which creates the Florida Medicaid Dialysis Services Coverage Policy.
- **New AHCA Secretary. Shevaun Harris** was recently appointed AHCA Secretary after the previous Secretary Jason Weida was appointed the Chief of Staff to Governor DeSantis. She was most recently Secretary of Children and Families (DCF) however, she spent nearly 20 years prior working at AHCA in many roles. Welcome back Sec. Harris!

Wednesday April 2nd was the half-way mark for the 2025 session and the last week for many Senate committees to meet, including the Senate Health Policy committee. This unfortunately means "bills are dying" if they haven't been heard in committee yet. However, the only bill the legislature is required to pass every year is a balanced budget. Both the Senate and House have presented their competing **budget proposals**, which are less than the existing budget of almost \$119 billion. However, the House

has suggested cutting the sales tax rate from 6% to 5.25% for a \$5 billion recurring reduction to the budget, which has created a \$4.4 billion difference in the legislative spending plans. However, Governor DeSantis is focused on property taxes and has several of his own costly competing proposals that he is strongly supporting. The great news for the FRA is that we have included the abovementioned proviso language on home modalities in both proposed budgets for the 25-26 fiscal year. This puts us in a good position to pass this language again!

The tension between House Speaker Perez and Gov. DeSantis continues to boil over into the public with the Governor DeSantis attacking some of his own parties' legislative members directly. The House has focused several inquiries into spending practices of AHCA and the Hope scholarship program created by Casey DeSantis.

Some of the big issues moving this session include a priority of Senate President Albritton on what he calls a "Rural Renaissance" which directs over \$200 million in funding issues for small communities, which includes some focus on health care services. There is also a major focus on Autism and other disability issues moving in both chambers. Constitutional Amendment gathering requirements, Property Insurance, hemp regulations, weather modifications, PIP auto insurance, wrongful death and Gulf of America changes are some of the other headline issues moving forward.

Unfortunately, this session has not focused on very many healthcare issues, minus rural renaissance. The FRA strongly supported Social Workers Licensure Compact bill ([HB 27](#)) which has made it to the House floor, but the SB was never heard by the Senate, so final passage is doubtful. The transplants bills have not been heard in either chamber nor have the food is medicine bill. Some other healthcare issues:

- Nursing staffing level bills have not been heard
- Restrictive Covenants or Anti compete clause bill passed one Senate committee
- Patient Records bill (14 days) is moving in both chambers and may pass
- Mandatory electronic prescribing moving in both chambers and may pass
- DOH bill now includes "vaccination status" in patient bill of rights and may pass
- Removing fluoride from all water systems is moving in both chambers and may pass
- Scope of practice bills are moving in the House but not the Senate (ANPRs, PA, Chiro, etc)
- Out of Network Provider notice bills are moving in both chambers and may pass

Kidney Day Summary / Review. Mr. Watson thanked all the FRA members who helped plan, organize and execute the 19th annual Florida Kidney Day at the Capitol. It was again a tremendous success and is a crucial aspect to FRA's legislative efforts. He encouraged any and all feed-back, whether good, bad or indifferent, as we want to constantly improve and expand.

Unfortunately, the NKFF walk on Sunday March 9th at 2 pm had to be rescheduled for a second year in a row, due to dangerous weather conditions. It will now occur in Tallahassee on Saturday, May 3rd, which is the day after the legislative session ends. Please join us!

On Sunday evening, the FRA hosted a dinner reception at the exclusive private Governors Club downtown. They are normally closed on Sunday evening, so we were able to have the entire facility to ourselves. We had several special guests including Rep. Webster Barnaby (R-DeLand), who received an award and Rep. Alison Tant (D-Tallahassee) both of whom spoke. We also had Sherriff AJ Smith, who needs a kidney transplant speak as did a John Grosskopf, a University President who was recently

diagnosed and is beginning his journey. We also surprised our very own Bob Loeper with a lifetime achievement award for his years of dedicated service with a special appearance by Bob Reynolds (Bobby the Lobby), who is my mentor and former longtime FRAA lobbyist.

On Monday March 10th, we set up early in the morning on the 3rd floor of the Capitol with tables for KEEP screenings (minus the urinalysis test) and other sponsors educational information and swag. We conducted screenings throughout the morning as well as attending 18 separate legislator visits. Bob Loeper lead one group and Ron Watson lead the other. The majority were focused on meeting with legislators who sit on the different healthcare committees. We discussed our legislative issues and had individualized packages for each legislator we visited. We also had lunch at the cafeteria throughout the midday. We wrapped up by 3:00 and had FRA members go their separate ways.

Finally, House Resolution 8005 by Rep. Barnaby was published which is a resolution declaring March 2025 as Kidney Disease Awareness Month, March 10th as Florida Kidney Day and March 13 as World Kidney Day!