

LOUISIANA 2019 LEGISLATIVE POLICY PRIORITIES



CHRISTUS Health is an integrated, not-for-profit international Catholic health system that includes nearly 350 services and facilities, including more than 50 hospitals in seven states and locations in Latin America. The communities we serve have the highest rates of uninsured populations in the country. Reimbursement for health care continues to be unpredictable and highly challenging. In the face of these adversities, CHRISTUS remains committed to its mission of delivering high-quality, accessible care to all regardless of the ability to pay. CHRISTUS consistently allocates significant resources to improving the health of its patients with a focused consideration for those who are poor and underserved.

2019 Legislative Overview

Louisiana's 2019 Legislative Session commenced on April 8th with the filing deadline ending April 16th. Contrary to past legislative sessions, this year it began with no budget revenue estimates nor a budget bill filed. **However, in a show of bipartisanship, the five months of gridlock was broken, allowing the Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) to recently recognize a revenue forecast of \$9.724 billion in general fund revenue for the upcoming state fiscal year (SFY).**

While Governor Edwards presented the administration's "aspirational" SFY 2019-2020 budget prior to the start of session, he has yet to file an official executive budget. In contrast, House Bill 105 was filed by Cameron Henry, the Republican Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. HB 105 is estimated to be about \$12 million short of Governor Edward's budget goal which will set the stage for partisan debates over various budgeted items, most likely to include health care.

SUPPORT ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE FUNDING



Ensuring the appropriate level of funding for hospitals and health care providers continues to be a top priority for CHRISTUS Health Louisiana. As a first line of defense, hospitals remain vital to the health care infrastructure of our state and the citizens that rely on our services. As the Louisiana Legislature convenes its 2019 Regular Session and begins to review the state's budget proposals, it is imperative that the Louisiana Department of Health's (LDH) Medicaid program budget includes full funding. Any budget cuts to Medicaid would not only jeopardize the health and welfare of our communities through access reduction, but will continue to impact our workforce that treat Medicaid beneficiaries. **As it stands, studies by LDH from the SFY data period 2015-2017 show that Medicaid payments to hospitals for inpatient treatment are on average 57% of the actual cost a hospital incurs to provide the service.**

House Bill 584 by Rep. Horton (R-Haughton) proposes to repeal the .45% state sales and use tax that was passed last session to stabilize Louisiana's budget.

- **CHRISTUS WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR AND TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO ADDRESS ANY REVENUE-LIMITING MEASURES THAT MAY IMPACT THE AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH CARE FUNDS.**

SUPPORT FINANCING AS A STRONG SAFETY NET



CHRISTUS Health continues its service as the safety net provider in the 13-parishes making up Central Louisiana. **CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital, in partnership with Rapides Regional Medical Center, has overcome region-specific adversity to achieve unparalleled patient care success.** The collaboration serves the region through an innovative community-based approach that utilizes a primary care-focused delivery model.

In addition to its unique and effective model of care, the Central Louisiana partnership relies on a set level of state funding to care for the large uninsured and underinsured population that were previously seen at Huey P. Long, the state's area safety net hospital. After its closure, the two remaining hospitals took on the state's charity care responsibilities in exchange for an agreed upon annual stipend. **The funding for this collaboration continues to be a struggle from year to year as legislators and the administration vacillate on the dedicated amount of specified funding levels to support Central Louisiana health care.** Collected data indicates significant annual increases in patient activity at the partner facilities. **In one year, the partnership treated over 202,000 low income and uninsured patients through its outpatient and clinic settings alone and filled over 60,000 prescriptions.**

SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT OFFERS SOLID FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS

HCR 5
HB 424
HB 434



CHRISTUS Health's mission requires that we provide quality, comprehensive care to all that we serve. Therefore, **we support proposed legislation that allows for increased or flexible reimbursement and measures that create opportunities for providers to enhance payment of claims.**

HCR 5 by Rep. Barras (R-New Iberia) provides for the yearly Hospital Stabilization Formula which maintains the state's provider assessment allowing for rate increases this upcoming year of about 3.2% in inpatient and outpatient services.

- **CHRISTUS MAINTAINS ITS SUPPORT OF HCR 5 AND ITS PROVISION OF A STABLE MECHANISM TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR HOSPITALS.**

HB 424 by Rep. Stagni (R-Kenner) aims to increase transparency for managed care organization (MCO) claims denials to allow for a clear understanding of why the claim is being denied. **Currently, MCOs have an average inpatient claims denial rate of between 20-25% as compared to commercial insurers' denial rate of 4-5%. Legal mandates and tightened processes timeframes will aid in decreasing MCO denials leading to a higher rate of reimbursable claims and payment.**

HB 434 by Rep. Magee (R-Houma) focuses on up front MCO transparency practices by requiring MCOs and LDH to give public notice of, and allow a public comment period for, any MCO contract amendments, policies, or procedures, that may have a direct or indirect effect on a Medicaid enrollee or health care provider.

- **CHRISTUS SUPPORTS HB 424 AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE MCO CLAIMS PAYMENTS THAT HAVE HISTORICALLY BEEN DENIED OR DIFFICULT TO APPEAL. WE ALSO SUPPORT HB 434 AND ITS PROPOSAL TO IMPLEMENT SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS TO HELP EDUCATE AND PROTECT BENEFICIARIES FROM UNKNOWN POLICY AND PROCEDURE CHANGES THAT MAY AFFECT COVERAGE OR REIMBURSEMENT OF CERTAIN SERVICES.**

PROMOTE LEGISLATION THAT SUPPORTS WORKFORCE INITIATIVES

SB 54
SB 59



SB 54 by Sen. Mills (R-New Iberia) revises the current member structure of the Louisiana Health Works Commission and mandates studies and recommendations on ways to address the growing health care workforce shortages.

- **CHRISTUS HEALTH LOUISIANA SUPPORTS INITIATIVES THAT FOCUS ON STRATEGIES TO DIRECTLY ADDRESS CURRENT WORKFORCE SHORTAGE ISSUES.**

SB 59 by Sen. Long (R-Winnfield) allows primary care physician assistants licensed in Louisiana to be added to the list of persons eligible to receive income tax credits when specific requirements are met.

- **CHRISTUS SUPPORTS LEGISLATION THAT GIVES PROVIDERS TOOLS THAT CAN HELP ASSIST WITH THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF HEALTH CARE WORKERS AT A TIME WHEN WORKFORCE SHORTAGES ARE HIGH THROUGHOUT THE STATE.**

SUPPORT POLICIES THAT PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELFARE

HB 38
HB 45
SB 119
SB 160



HB 38 by Rep. Hoffmann (R-West Monroe) proposes to raise the minimum age from 18 to 21 for the sale, purchase, or possession of tobacco or similar products, including cigarettes, alternative nicotine products, or vapor products.

HB 45 by Rep. Talbot (R-River Ridge) also focuses on mitigating tobacco use by increasing fines associated with the sale or purchase of these products to or by individuals under the age of 18.

- **CHRISTUS IS IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION THAT PROMOTES A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE AND IMPLEMENTS PREVENTATIVE MEASURES THAT HELP THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING OF LOUISIANA'S CITIZENS.**

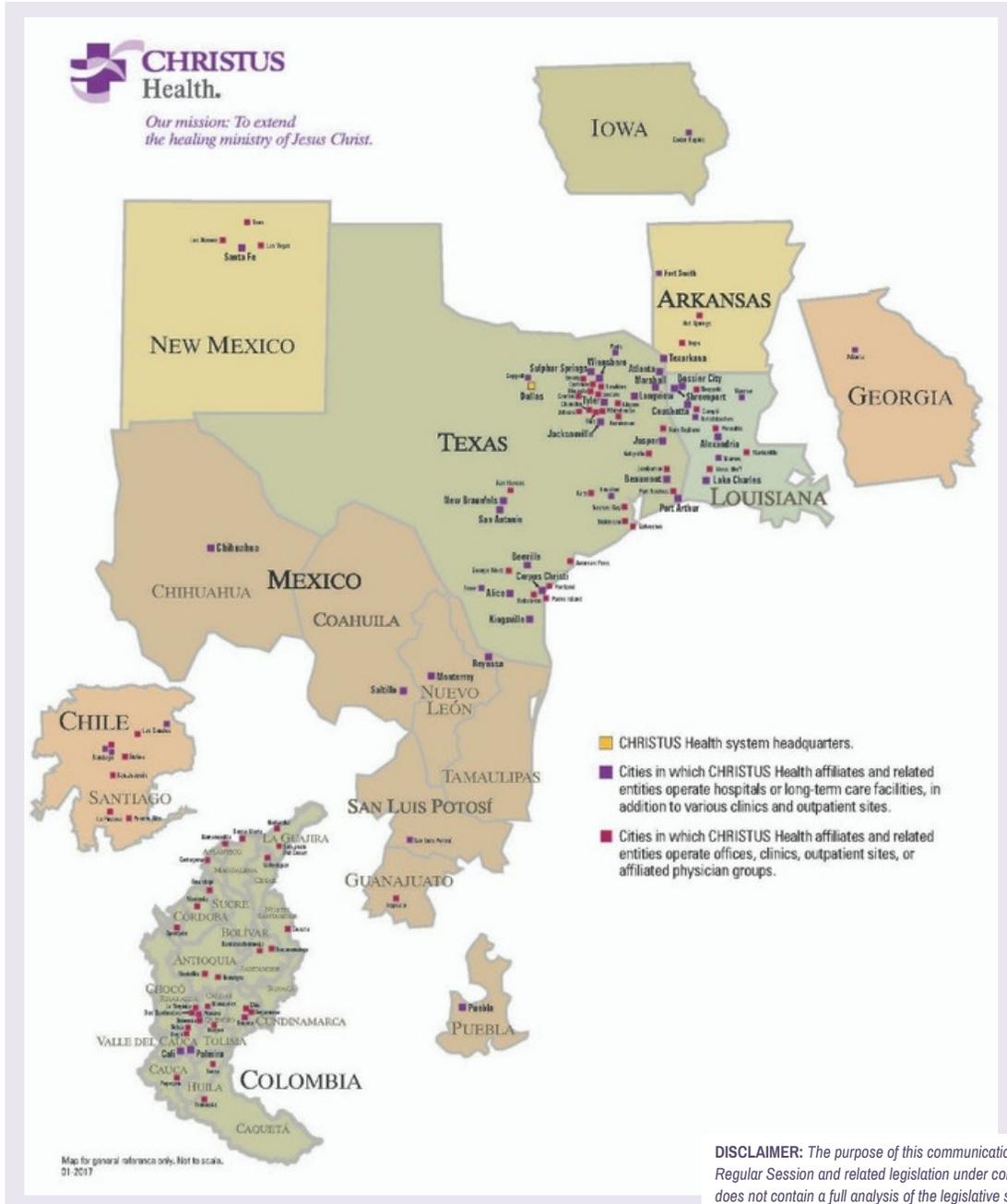
SB 119 by Sen. Colomb (D-Baton Rouge) creates the "Palliative Care Interdisciplinary Advisory Council" to raise awareness around palliative care issues and offers specific definitions and potential processes to provide more structure and focus across the state.

- **CHRISTUS HEALTH SUPPORTS MEASURES THAT IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES WHO HAVE LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESSES.**

Louisiana has recently experienced a sharp increase in the number of opioid-related deaths and opioid prescriptions being written. Studies show that Louisiana providers wrote 89.5 prescriptions for every 100 persons in 2017 which ranks our state among the top five in the country compared to the national average of 58.7 prescriptions. It is imperative that our state employ policies and regulations that will help reduce this harmful and sometimes deadly path.

SB 160 by Sen. Boudreaux (D-Lafayette) provides for programs and professional training to combat Louisiana's opioid crisis.

- **CHRISTUS SUPPORTS EFFORTS THAT PROVIDE AND SUPPORT BEST PRACTICE TREATMENT PROTOCOLS AND ENHANCED TRAINING FOR FRONT-LINE PROFESSIONALS THAT TREAT OPIOID ADDICTION AND PREVENTION.**



DISCLAIMER: The purpose of this communication is to provide information on the 2019 Louisiana Regular Session and related legislation under consideration as of April 16, 2019. This document does not contain a full analysis of the legislative session nor does it contain all of the bills or amendments that have been proposed. It is meant to serve as a general overview and summary of some of the active legislation and current issues from this session. Because of the generality of this communication, the information provided herein may not be applicable to all situations. It is not intended nor should it be used as a substitute for legal advice or opinion which can be rendered only when related to specific fact situations. If you require advice or further information, please speak to your contact in Legal.

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