

Another Missouri Legislative Session has come to an end! Missouri MS activists were once again busy and engaged in the legislative process. In 2017, Missouri MS activists testified in committees, sent emails via our MS Action Alert system, made phone calls, attended rallies in Jefferson City and shared our advocacy objectives with health care professionals and people living with MS within their respective communities. You will find a summary of the session below.

Missouri State Legislature 2017 Overview, Courtesy of AT Government Strategies and The National MS Society:

The 2017 Legislative Session ended May 12. Of the 1,966 bills and resolutions filed, 76 passed. This is a very low number historically; more than 140 were approved in 2016 and 2015. Republicans led both the Legislative and Executive branches, but session was marked with infighting among the majority that often stalled the process.

At the start of this year, the Legislature moved forward quickly on many of the majority party's priorities, such as labor issues, tort and ethics reform, and minimum wage issues. During the final two weeks, the Senate managed to pass the budget, several House bills, and a number of conference committee reports.

Healthcare:

Medicaid Block Grant: In response to the new federal administration, bills were filed directing the Department of Social Services to apply for a global waiver requesting maximum flexibility in administering Medicaid. Specifically, SB 28, sponsored by Senator Sater, proposed a change in the Medicaid funding structure to that of a block grant, which would result in major cuts to the program. The National MS Society opposed SB 28. SB 28 was debated in the Senate, but was not voted on or passed.

The Mo RX program: An important change to the state's Medicaid Pharmacy program passed the legislature and took effect July 1. SB 139 reauthorizes the Mo RX program, but limits eligibility to only individuals who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. The Mo RX program, which was set to expire, pays 50% of out-of-pocket costs for drugs covered by Medicare Part D for income-eligible

seniors. This could have a significant impact on drug costs for seniors living with MS, not currently on Medicaid.

The Budget- HCB 3

One of the most controversial pieces of the budget was changing the eligibility for Medicaid nursing and home and community based services (HCBS). The Governor initially recommended a change in eligibility, which would have removed 15-20,000 individuals from services. The Legislature was able to maintain current eligibility by administering a one time “funds sweep” of existing, but unused, dedicated state funds. However, Governor Greitens has since vetoed HCB 3, which means HCBS cuts and caregiver provider rates are still facing drastic cuts. The Legislature returns in September for veto session, when it will determine whether or not to attempt an override of the Governor’s veto.

Thank you for your continued support of the National MS Society advocacy issues in Missouri! Please don’t hesitate to contact me with any questions.

All my best,

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