

## **MAINE AFP – Report to AAFP State Legislative Conference:**

The Maine AFP chapter does not have a lobbyist, so we rely on our relationship with the State Medical Society – the Maine Medical Association (MMA) – for those services when needed. The MMA holds weekly Legislative Committee Conference Calls during the regular legislative session. Our Board of Directors has had regular representation on these calls. The legal staff at the MMA reviews the bills and issues coming up for discussion and these are discussed on each weekly call. If there are bills that have a particular impact on Family Medicine the MAFP Board submits testimony for presentation at any hearings.

Issues/legislation of note FY 2018: (note that Maine has a 2-year Legislative Session – 2018 is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the 128<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislature – consequently it was a “slower” year for legislation)

1. Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) – The MAFP Board was asked by the local Physicians for Social Responsibility to endorse their “*Back from the Brink*” Policy paper. (“Back from the Brink” statement is a tool to educate public about the consequences of nuclear weapons and through legislature prevent nuclear war by changing and implementing appropriate policies.) Our Board signed a statement to support the initiative to prevent nuclear war. We have a board member who is actively engaged with PSR and has met with some of our national legislators about this issue.

2. Maine LD 1864 – “*Act to Establish Universal Home Care for seniors and persons with disabilities*”. The Maine Medical Association asked for our feedback on this issue. This is a very controversial issue. There are definitely positive aspects —improving care to our elderly and disabled, however, this would likely negatively impact Maine’s ability to retain physicians (the state that already struggles with recruiting and retaining new physicians), as many household incomes would fall above the \$128,000 income threshold for the additional 3.8% income tax imposed to pay for this. Our board agreed to not support this bill. Eventually LD 1864 died in committee. However, through Maine’s Citizen’s Initiated Referendum system, this issue has been placed on Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>’s ballot. Stay tuned!

3. Title X “gag rule” – Our Board joined in signing a statement from a coalition of a number of Maine Medical Associations, groups, and individuals opposing the proposed gag rule on Title X. There was a good amount of press coverage.

4. Medicaid Expansion – Not yet in Maine!

Background:

- Gov. Paul LePage has vetoed Medicaid expansion in Maine 5 times
- proponents of expansion took the issue to voters. A ballot initiative to expand Medicaid passed in the Nov 2017 election, requiring Maine to expand Medicaid by July 2, 2018
- Expansion has been held up for months because of Republican Gov. Paul LePage’s opposition over funding issues - the voter-approved ballot measure didn’t say how Maine would pay for its share of expansion
- A judge charged with addressing looming constitutional issues affecting Medicaid expansion has scheduled hearings for Sept. 27-28 in Portland
- Maine’s top court recently upheld a lower court order requiring the LePage administration to file paperwork needed to start rolling out Medicaid expansion

Current status: The state has submitted what’s known as a state plan amendment, but the governor has urged federal regulators to reject it.