



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH DIRECTOR TO RESIGN

Department of Health Director Ted Wymyslo recently announced his decision to resign as agency head in order to return to private medical practice. Wymyslo was a family physician and educator in Montgomery County before joining the Kasich Administration in 2011.

"The strides Ohio is making in health care are because we're putting the needs of people first, and we're being good stewards of Ohioans' resources," said Governor Kasich in a news release. "We've done it with the help of sound thinkers with frontline experience like Dr. Wymyslo, and I'm sad to see him go but I respect his desire to return to his first passion, which is practicing medicine and working with patients," he added.

Kasich indicated he will announce new leadership for the Department by the end of February. It is anticipated that his next appointment will also have experience as a practicing physician.

BILL WOULD ESTABLISH PHARMACY AUDIT STANDARDS

Legislation to enact standard procedures for pharmacy audits is under consideration in the Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee. According to Senator Troy Balderson (R- Zanesville), the lack of uniform standards in relation to Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs), entities that audit pharmacies, in Ohio has led to unreasonable demands and abuses. These entities are often hired by third-party payers, such as health insurers, to ensure that claims and payments have been made correctly.

Balderson said the issue was brought to his attention by a pharmacy owner in his district. According to him, examples of these abuses include unreasonable notice for audits, exorbitant fines for prescriptions with minor clerical mistakes, and an undefined process for contesting audit findings.

Senate Bill 258 would establish the following guidelines on the pharmacy audit process:

- Requires that an auditing entity must provide the pharmacy at least 10 days' notice of its intent to audit
- Allows fees to be charged only if the errors are substantive and not merely typographical or clerical in nature
- Prohibits an audit from being performed during the first five business days of a calendar month unless the pharmacy that is the subject of the audit consents to the audit being performed during those days
- Specifies transactions more than two-years-old cannot be subject to audit
- Establishes a written appeals process that clearly defines timelines for appealing audit findings.

"This legislation would take important steps toward providing pharmacies with fair and common sense protections against the currently abusive pharmacy audit practices of the PBM industry," said Matthew DeLoreto of the National Community Pharmacists Association during proponent testimony.

The bill is scheduled for an additional hearing on February 18.

LEGISLATION TO WATCH

Infant Mortality: Sponsored by Senator Shannon Jones (R – Springboro), Senate Bill 277 would create the Commission on Infant Mortality. The commission would be charged with conducting a complete inventory of services provided or administered by the state that are available to address the infant mortality rate in the state. The bill was introduced on Feb.12.

Private Police: Sponsored by Representative Heather Bishoff (D – Blacklick), House Bill 429 would make records kept by private police departments subject to the Public Records Law. The bill was introduced on Feb.12.

Survivor Benefits: Sponsored by Representative Jim Butler (R – Oakwood), House Bill 442 would provide health insurance benefits for the surviving spouse and dependents of a police officer, correctional officer or firefighter killed in the line of duty. The bill was introduced on Feb.12.

Traffic Law Updates: Sponsored by Representatives Tony DeVitis (R – Uniontown) and Robert Hagan (D – Youngstown), House Bill 444 would require the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and deputy registrars to furnish every person who renews a driver's or commercial driver's license with a written summary of the changes in the motor vehicle traffic, equipment and crimes laws that were enacted since the person was last issued a driver's or commercial driver's license. The bill was introduced on Feb.12.

Tax Refunds: Sponsored by Senators Bob Peterson (R – Sabina) and Bill Beagle (R – Tipp City), Senate Bill 263 requires the tax commissioner to notify taxpayers of tax or fee overpayments. The bill authorizes the commissioner to either apply an overpayment to future tax liabilities or issue a refund. The bill passed the Senate on Feb.12.

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