

Legislative Report

Barry Christensen, Legislative Co-Chair

The Alaska legislature has once again finished its two-year legislative cycle in Juneau. The association recently sponsored a legislative fly-in to Juneau on March 26 & 27. Members John Wanek, Dirk White, Executive Director Nancy Davis and I met with nearly twenty Senators and Representatives (or their staffers). Our lobbyist, Caren Robinson, was instrumental in making appointments to see the elected officials during a very busy time in the legislation session. The fly-in delegation spent most of their time educating legislators on two pieces of legislation important to the profession in Alaska: **SB 196/HB316** and **SB286**.

SB 196/HB316 Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) passed both legislative bodies and is awaiting the Governor's signature. Whether or not the Governor signs the bill the legislation will become law. The new law will require the Board of Pharmacy to establish and maintain a controlled substance database. This secure database will reflect dispensing data transmitted by Alaska pharmacies and will only be accessed by Prescribers, Pharmacists, and State/Federal law enforcement agents (only by court order). AkPhA was instrumental in working with the bill's primary sponsor, Senator Lydia Green, to make changes to the original legislation that lessened the administrative burden on pharmacists. Senator Green also attached a letter of legislative intent that the future financial burden of the PDMP will not fall on providers (ie. Pharmacists).

SB 286 Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) Regulation was introduced by Senator Kim Elton and was heard and held in Senate Labor and Commerce on March 27. I and Regina Benjamin, Esquire National Community Pharmacists Association, testified in support of the bill. Also in attendance at the hearing were Dirk White, Nancy Davis and Scott Watts. The intent of this legislation is to regulate a currently unregulated industry by instituting standards for payments/audits, drug substitutions, and rebate transparency from the PBM to the covered entity. Senator Elton plans to work with AkPhA on the bill during the interim and plans on reintroducing the legislation prior to the next session.

AkPhA monitored nearly a dozen other pieces of legislation with the potential to effect the profession of pharmacy this past session. My sincere thanks is extended to our lobbyist Caren Robinson for the excellent job she does representing our association in Juneau.

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