

# CONNECTICUT FAMILY PHYSICIAN

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## 2018 Legislative Summary Includes Budget Issues and Many Healthcare Proposals

The Connecticut General Assembly recently concluded its business and for the second year in a row, it passed a bipartisan budget. Once again, the Governor was not part of the discussion or any of the negotiations that eventually decided the package on which legislators voted. For the first time in approximately 8 years, revenue surpassed what was estimated by the Office of Fiscal Analysis and the Governor’s budget office, leaving the General Assembly with more money than they anticipated. Because it is an election year, members did not want to make cuts, nor did they

want to tax, so they used the excess revenue and part of the rainy-day fund to pass a budget that increased spending by \$197 million.

The budget restored aide for towns and reversed healthcare cuts for the elderly (Medicare Savings Program), poor and disabled (HUSKY A), and deferred transportation costs for those using the bus service. Although Connecticut is expected to have more than a \$2 billion deficit in 2020, the General Assembly has deferred dealing with the financial crisis until next year.

All items that would have

raised revenue (casino gambling, tolls, legalization of marijuana) were left for another day. 2020 will be a long session and leaders will have to make very difficult choices in terms of the State’s finances. With potentially new leadership in each branch of government, 2020 is shaping up to be a wild ride.

Although not as many bills passed the General Assembly this year, healthcare is a realm that never ceases to be eventful. Pharmaceuticals and pricing took center stage with the Comptroller Kevin Lembo sponsoring a bill to curtail

*(Continued on page 2)*

## October 17-18, 2018 Another Outstanding Scientific Symposium Planned; High Profile Speakers Scheduled

A top flight educational program with twenty lectures, a research format, booth exhibits, and an outstanding luncheon speaker will be featured during the 2018 Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians Scientific Symposium on Wednesday and Thursday, October 17-18 at the Aquaturf Club in Plantsville.

Some of the highlights of the speaking program will be: lectures on concussions, opioids, deconstructing polypharmacy, application of cognitive behavior therapy, and a return presentation by Dr. Frank Domino entitled The Ten Best Things I Learned in the Past Year.

Other outstanding lectures will include: How to Reduce Your Risk—Management of Incidental Findings; Low FEV<sub>1</sub> and FEC, Now What?; and OMT—Acupressure and Trigger Point Injections.

An outstanding panel of speakers has been recruited including: Dr. Karen Santucci, who is returning to the speaking podium following very high ratings in her previous presentations; Dr. Jane Grant-Kels, a dermatologist at the University of Connecticut; Dr. Roy Zagieboylo, an Academy member who has spoken often at the Symposium and always receives very high ratings; and

Dr. Alan Douglass, a Residency Director at Middlesex Hospital.

On Wednesday at lunch, the Academy will hold its Annual Business Meeting, which will include the election of officers, important presentations on Academy activities at the AAFP level, and the presentation of the 2018 CAFP Award of Excellence.

More information about subjects and speakers will be included in the next issue of Connecticut Family Physician. A complete Symposium Program will also be mailed to all members in early September.

## 2018 Legislative Summary

*(continued from page 1)*

*“Pharmaceuticals and pricing took center stage with the Comptroller Kevin Limbo sponsoring a bill to curtail prescription drug costs at the manufacturer and PBM level.”*

### Of Note...

- Dominic Casablanca, M.D., a Past President of the CAFP, has been selected to serve as a Liaison to the Reference Committee on Advocacy of the 2018 Congress of Delegates.
- Drew Edwards, M.D. has been named Chair of the Reference Committee on Health of the Public at the 2018 AAFP Congress of Delegates. Dr. Edwards is a Past President of the CAFP.
- Two UCONN medical students won the Award of Excellence from the Academy: Theresa Meotti and Jordan Albano.

prescription drug costs at the manufacturer and PBM level. A bill on biologic/biosimilar drugs also passed the General Assembly. This bill safeguards patients who are prescribed biologics or biosimilars and how they are ultimately dispensed and delivered to the patient. Another bill prohibits certain medications from being dispensed using auto refill programs. DSS will be making recommendations via the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee to determine which drugs would be excluded due to concerns regarding adherence with life threatening conditions.

A bill on telehealth also passed. This bill allows physicians to prescribe Schedule II, III, IV, and IV drugs via telehealth after an in-person visit. If a physician prescribes a Schedule II or III medication they must submit it electronically to the pharmacy; no paper scripts would be allowed.

Another bill that passed requires the public health and consumer protection commissioners to review pharmacists’ and prescribing practitioners’ compliance with the electronic Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PMP). By current law, prescribers or their designees must consult the PMP before issuing certain prescriptions to controlled substances. Outpatient clinics,

urgent care centers, and free-standing emergency departments were also further regulated. For patient benefit, they must clearly identify themselves by posting signs identifying whether the facility is an urgent care or primary care center or free-standing emergency department. In addition, governing changes were made to the Office of Health Strategy with the purpose of increasing reporting requirements to certain governmental agencies.

Several bills that failed to pass were medical assistants and their ability to administer vaccines and nebulizer treatments, truth in advertising by Medical Doctors and Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine, as well as a bill that established a working group to enhance physician recruitment in the State.

Legislators now move into full campaign mode. With over twenty sitting legislators either retiring or seeking higher office, the face of the legislature next year will look very different. We urge you to get involved with your local House and Senate races, meet the candidates, and establish relationships with them. 2020 will be a big education year with so many new faces and the medical community does not want to be left behind!

## Be Proud of Who You Are

CAFP and its members contribute to Connecticut’s economy in a big way:

- \$1.2 billion in direct or indirect output
- 7140 jobs
- \$737 million in direct/indirect wages and benefits
- 91% of family physicians in Connecticut participate in Medicare
- 83% accept new Medicare patients
- 69% accept new Medicaid patients

### CAFP Mission Statement

The mission of CAFP is to promote excellence in health care and to improve the health of people of Connecticut through the advancement of the art and science of Family Medicine, the specialty of Family Medicine and the professional growth of Family Physicians.

## 2018 Scientific Symposium

October 17-18, 2018

Aqua Turf Club | Plantsville, CT



Quality medical education leads to improved patient care. Two days of outstanding lectures and workshops will be presented during the 2018 CAFP Scientific Symposium.

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Members of the Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians:

I am so honored to have received the Dr. David and Arthur Schuman Award of Excellence and write to you to express my sincerest gratitude for your generosity to me. I feel lucky to have worked closely with many of you throughout my four years of training at the UConn School of Medicine and look forward to a career alongside so many exceptional colleagues. Thank you for your support and mentorship – I am so very grateful.

Sincerely,  
Meredith Milligan

*Editor's Note: Meredith will be going to Concord Hospital in New Hampshire for her Family Medicine Residency. The Schuman Award is the highest recognition the Academy gives to a medical student.*

Mark,

Thanks again for giving me the opportunity to represent the CAFP at the 2018 Family Medicine Advocacy Summit in Washington, D.C.

Going to FMAS for the first time was a great experience! The opportunity to interact with lawmakers and discuss healthcare policy was very valuable. I enjoyed being able to be an advocate for my patients and discuss healthcare topics that affect them and family medicine physicians as a whole. This year, the topics we discussed were related to legislation involving the opioid crisis, maternal mortality, rural graduate medical education, and medical care for patients with High Deductible Health Plans (HDHP). It was encouraging to see that topics that affect family medicine are taken seriously on Capitol Hill and that our voice can help shape healthcare policy. I look forward to attending FMAS in the future!

Thanks,  
Sachin Parekh, M.D.

### New CAFP Members Welcome!:

Rumi Iqbal, M.D.  
Stamford, CT

Linda Larochel, M.D.  
Stamford, CT



Members of the CAFP Board met with Rep. Joe Courtney during the Family Medicine Advocacy Summit in Washington, D.C.

Pictured L-R: Domenic Casablanca, M.D.; Mariana Salas Vega, M.D.; Rep. Joe Courtney; Sachin Parekh, M.D.; and Stacy Taylor, M.D.

Nelson Walker, M.D., left, is congratulated by Sandra Hughes, M.D. at a reception honoring Dr. Walker's retirement after 38 years of practice. He is a past president of the Academy and former editor of Connecticut Family Physician.



# We are ready. Are you?

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