

2022 General Session Health Center Policy Priorities – January 2022

Below is summary of the current health center policy priorities for the 2022 General Legislative Session. This is a working list and items will be added as the session continues.

HIGH PRIORITY ITEMS

Street and mobile prescription dispensing: AUCH is working with Senator Evan Vickers to allow for MDs working in mobile and street settings to dispense certain pre-packaged medications to patients. For proposed language, please see the document “DRAFT 2022 Dispensing Bill” uploaded to AUCH Connect and emailed to the Committee.

It is likely that this language will be included as part of a larger pharmacy bill. This bill will be added to the bill tracker when it is made public.

Health Care Workforce Advisory Council: Numerous stakeholders, including AUCH, have been in contact with Representative Norm Thurston on a bill that would create a Health Care Workforce Advisory Council. The bill in its current draft form is bare-bones and it is expected that details of the Council would be fleshed out in the rulemaking process. For proposed language, please see the document “DRAFT 2022 Utah Health Workforce Act” uploaded to AUCH Connect and emailed to the Committee.

Health Care Workforce Financial Assistance Program and Behavioral Health Workforce Reinvestment Initiative Merger and Appropriation: The Utah Office of Primary Care and Rural Health (OPCRH) is currently working with stakeholders to merge these two similar loan repayment programs. Details such as differences in host site match requirements and the length of service commitment must be ironed out. Listening sessions to hear from stakeholders on these issues are listed in the document “2022 State Loan Repayment Listening Sessions,” which have been uploaded to AUCH Connect and circulated to the PA Committee via email. Please feel free to attend any of these sessions. At least one AUCH representative will also be in attendance to the listening sessions.

OPCRH along with stakeholder will seek an appropriation for these new, merged programs. Right now, the proposed appropriation for the merged program is \$1.7 million.

It is likely that Representative Ray Ward will sponsor the merger legislation as well as seek the appropriation.

LOWER PRIORITY ITEMS

Community Health Worker Certification: AUCH has been asked to support a bill, sponsored by Senator Luz Escamilla, that would create an optional certification process for community health workers (CHWs). Draft language has been uploaded to AUCH Connect and emailed to the PA Committee under “DRAFT 2022 CHW Certification Bill.”

Diabetes Prevention Program: AUCH has been asked to support [H.B. 80 Diabetes Prevention Program](#), sponsored by Representative Suzanne Harrison. This bill would allow for the state Medicaid program to reimburse a provider for certain diabetes prevention services. Some may remember that this bill ran last year but did not pass. This bill has been added to the bill tracker.

UNLIKELY ITEMS

Medicaid Coverage for Traditional Healing Services: At the end of 2020, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCs), Arizona's Medicaid Department, submitted its [1115 Waiver Renewal request](#) for the period of October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2026. Within this renewal request, AHCCCs requested the "[a]uthority to reimburse traditional healing services provided in, at, or as part of services offered by facilities and clinics operated by the Indian Health Service (IHS), a tribe or tribal organization, or an Urban Indian health program." The full request is located on pages 28-30 on the [Arizona 1115 Waiver Renewal Packet](#).

AUCH is currently working with tribal health centers and the Indian Health Advisory Board to pursue a similar waiver in Utah. Currently, the Indian Health Advisory Board and the Utah Tribes are going through the consultation process with Medicaid. It is possible that no legislation will need to be run to seek this waiver, but there is still a possibility that this will need a legislative effort. It is unlikely that a bill would be pursued this legislative session but remains a possibility depending on timing.