

NJSSA Executive Committee Meeting Lobbying Report  
*January 17, 2024*

**Statehouse Update**

The Lame Duck session ended on January 8<sup>th</sup>, with bills passed in both houses being sent to the Governor's desk for signature within ten days. Any bill not signed by the Governor will be subject to a Pocket Veto, and will need to start the legislative process over in the new session.

On January 9<sup>th</sup>, Governor Murphy presented his sixth State of the State Address, focusing on affordability, healthcare, labor, and innovation. He emphasized the need for medical debt forgiveness and encouraged the Legislature to take action to address this. He indicated this legislative proposal would help to stop residents of NJ from incurring debt in the first place, and the bill package would be named "The Louisa Carman Medical Debt Relief Act" honoring a Policy Analyst from the Governor's Office who worked on Health Care Affordability and Transparency and tragically died on New Year's Day.

**Reorganization of the NJ Legislature**

On the morning of January 9<sup>th</sup>, the members of the 221<sup>st</sup> Legislature were sworn into office, marking the beginning of the 2024-2025 legislative session. As previously mentioned, there will be several (37) new members, as many did not seek re-election because of retirement, or they lost the election to their seats. There are ten new members in the Senate (6 Dem, 4 Rep) and 27 new Assembly members (21 Dem, 6 Rep).

Both houses maintained Democratic leadership, with Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin made history as the longest-serving Speaker in the General Assembly, entering his fourth term, and Senate President Nick Scutari was re-elected to his second term leading the Senate.

**New Session – Bills of Interest**

**A944 – Munoz/Spearman** - Eliminates certain practice restrictions for advanced practice nurses. (Previously **S-1522/A-2286**)

This legislation would authorize APNs across all specialties – anesthesia, primary care, pediatrics, emergency medicine – to practice without physician supervision. Specifically, the bill would allow CRNAs to administer anesthesia without an anesthesiologist's involvement or supervision. The bill would also allow APNs to supervise other APNs and create a new licensure for CRNAs, called an APN-Anesthesia.

We were able to block further movement of this bill last session and will look out for the bill's Senate counterpart this session. We will again work with the Access to Care Coalition and issue calls to action when needed, along with additional PR campaign work.

**S1975 – Vitale** - Creates "Midwifery Licensing Act;" modifies regulation of midwifery.  
(Previously **S-4042/A-5674**)

This legislation would authorize Certified Midwives and Certified Nurse Midwives to prescribe without any physician involvement or collaboration. This would set a dangerous precedent and allow physician extenders with less training than APNs to prescribe and practice independently. Maternal health reform has been a key initiative for First Lady Tammy Murphy.

We were also able to block further movement of this bill in the last session. We will again also work with the Access to Care Coalition, and issue calls to action when needed, along with additional digital media efforts. This bill does not yet have an Assembly counterpart.

**A920/S354 – Reynolds Jackson** - Updates scope of practice of optometrists.  
(Previously **S-3841/A-5445**)

This legislation would expand the scope of practice for optometrists and permit them to perform laser surgery, injections into the eye, and remove skin cancer around the eye with a scalpel.

The physician community will continue to stand collectively in opposition to scope expansion in all specialties and continue to support the physician-led, team approach to healthcare.

**S2283 – Scutari** - "Psilocybin Behavioral Health Access and Services Act"; authorizes production and use of psilocybin to promote health and wellness; decriminalizes, and expunges past offenses involving, psilocybin production, possession, use, and distribution.  
(Previously **S-2934/A-4911**)

This legislation is part of an effort spearheaded by Senate President Scutari to set up a framework for the legalized use of psilocybin to treat mental health in the state. Under the bill, anyone over 21 would be allowed to use psilocybin and grow it at home, with no prescription, on the premise that it carries therapeutic benefits for trauma, PTSD, substance use disorder, and chronic illness.

### **Media Campaign – Update**

The NJ Doctors for Patient Safety media campaign was re-engaged for the lame duck session and ran from November 17<sup>th</sup> to January 10<sup>th</sup>. The campaign had almost **645,000 impressions** – this many people have seen our advertisements and messaging to oppose the APN scope expansion legislation and to contact their lawmakers in opposition as well. We had two different target audiences: voters who would send their concerns to lawmakers on a broader level, and physicians who would send their concerns to lawmakers from a clinical perspective. The click-through rate for the voter audience was 2.61% and the physician audience click-

through rate was **1.26%**, which surpassed the benchmark rate of 1%. The below ad dominated with 87% of all clicks, at a 2.50% click-through rate.



**Don't Put Patient Health  
& Safety At Risk**

**Don't jeopardize patient  
safety by removing  
doctor supervision from  
administering anesthesia**

**LEAVE IT TO  
THE EXPERTS!**

**Tell Trenton You Oppose S-1522/A2286  
To Expand Scope of Practice**

**NJ DOCTORS  
FOR PATIENT SAFETY**

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