

Arizona legislators get busy voting on a backlog of bills

 pages.azblue.com/Healthcare-bills-on-state-lawmakers-agenda---APR-2021.html

[Sign in – Secure Provider Portal](#) 



The Arizona Legislature convened in mid-January and introduced over 1,700 bills. Thanks to the pandemic, things look a little different—with legislators and lobbyists masked and socially distanced, and many voting or testifying via Zoom. However, the session has been relatively unaffected by COVID-19 thus far.

 [In This Issue](#)

AHRQ's Learning Collaborative on Management of Opioid Use & Misuse in Older Adults:
[Submit your Expression of Interest Form now!](#)

Despite legislators' concerns over a potential budget deficit, 2020 state revenues came in higher than expected and the Legislature began the year with a \$2 billion surplus. Lawmakers are in the process of negotiating a budget with many competing priorities for the excess funds.

Since the session was cut short last year because of the coronavirus, hundreds of bills stopped short of passing. Virtually all of these proposals have been resurrected this year, along with several new measures. Below are some health insurance-related issues on which we have been focusing.

HB 2454 (telehealth; healthcare providers; requirement) – Rep. Regina Cobb

Ready for House floor vote:

Gov. Doug Ducey pushed this bill to codify many aspects of his telehealth Executive Order. Providers, hospitals, insurers, and the Governor's Office worked cooperatively on this measure. Some of the main provisions:

- Requires insurers to cover healthcare services via telehealth, which includes audio/video or audio-only technology.
- Requires services provided via audio/video telehealth to be reimbursed at the same rate as an equivalent in-person visit.
- Requires payment parity for audio-only telehealth visits related to behavioral health and substance use disorder.
- Allows out-of-state healthcare providers to offer telehealth services to patients in Arizona under certain conditions.

SB 1270 (insurance; prescription drugs; step therapy) – Sen. Nancy Barto

Ready for Senate floor vote:

- Imposes clinical review criteria that insurers must utilize when establishing step therapy protocol for prescription drugs.
- Requires that exceptions to the step therapy process be granted under certain conditions and with proper clinical documentation.

HB 2119 (healthcare insurance; amendment) – Rep. Shawna Bolick

Signed by the governor:

Blue Cross® Blue Shield® of Arizona requested this bill to allow the company to pay out-of-network providers directly.

HB 2621 (prior authorization; uniform request form) – Rep. Amish Shah

Signed by the governor:

Providers and insurers worked together to pass this bill that requires the Arizona Department of Insurance and Financial Institutions, in cooperation with stakeholders, to create a two-page, uniform prior authorization document that must be used by physicians and accepted by insurers beginning January 2023.

SB 1377 (civil liability; public health pandemic) – Sen. Vince Leach

Signed by the governor:

Provides protections from litigation for businesses, educational providers, the healthcare industry, government agencies, cities and towns, and religious institutions that act in good faith to protect individuals during a state of emergency related to a public health pandemic.

This Legislative Update was finalized on April 8, 2021. Additional developments may have occurred since then.

Please do not rely on these summaries to convey the full meaning of complex legislation. If you have questions about any of the topics in this Legislative Update, call Chuck Bassett, Vice President of Government Relations & Public Policy, at 602-864-4350.