The 2019-2020 Legislative session convened on Beacon Hill in January with over 6,000 bills filed for consideration. Legislative committees have been appointed, and hearings on bills started this month. Most of the bills are re-files from last session.

Since last year’s Chapter Annual Meeting, the Legislature passed the following laws before the close of the 2018 legislative session. The Chapter supported these bills:

1. **Tobacco.** Chapter 157 of the Acts of 2018 “An Act Modernizing Tobacco Control and Protecting the Health of Minors” will (i) raise the age of sale of tobacco products across the Commonwealth from 18 to 21; (ii) Regulate E-cigarettes and treat these products as tobacco products; (iii) Ban the sale of nicotine liquids and gels without child resistant packaging; and (iv) Ban the sale of all tobacco and nicotine delivery products in pharmacies and health care institutions.

2. **Red Flag or Extreme Risk Protective Order (ERPO).** Chapter 123 of the Acts of 2018 “An Act Temporarily Preventing Firearm Access for Dangerous or Suicidal Individuals” allows family or household members, recognizing a loved one is in crisis, to initiate a civil judicial process through an Extreme Risk Protective Order (ERPO) that allows a court to temporarily prohibit the purchase and possession of firearms and require the removal of any firearms currently possessed while the order is in effect; thus removing the means of inflicting injury or death to self or others by use of firearms.

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- **Conversion Therapy.** At the beginning of this year’s session the Legislature took up and passed a bill banning conversion therapy, which the Chapter supported. Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2019 “An Act Relative to Abusive Practices to Change Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Minors” prohibits conversion or reparative therapy. Such alleged “therapy” would seek to change a minor’s sexual orientation or gender identity. It has no validation in science, and poses significant risk to children and their families.

- **Lift the CAP.** The Legislature passed over the governor’s veto, Chapter 11 of the Acts of 2019 “An Act to Lift the Cap on Kids” which removes the Transitional Assistance cap that denies welfare benefits to children conceived while the family received benefits.

**Legislation monitored by Chapter:**
1. **Flavored Tobacco.** S.1279 & H. 1902 “An Act Regulating Flavored Tobacco Products” would ban the sale of flavored tobacco products, except in a smoking bar. The bills cover all tobacco products including e-cigarettes, vaping and chewing tobacco. Chapter supports. Public Health Committee. Participants in RFDASH (Residents and Fellows Day at the State House) will advocate for the bill on May 30.

2. **Cover All Kids.** S.677 & H. 162, “An Act to Ensure Equitable Health Coverage for Children” would establish a program of comprehensible health coverage for children and young adults under age 21, who are not otherwise eligible for Medicaid solely due to immigration status. Benefits would be same as MassHealth. Chapter supports. Health Care Financing Committee. Included in RFDASH advocacy day at State House, May 30.

3. **Mental Health Parity.** S.588 “An Act Relative to Mental Health Parity Implementation” requires all insurers providing mental health and substance abuse coverage file reports with the Commissioner of Insurance describing the process used to develop medical necessity criteria for mental health and substance abuse benefits, including analysis demonstrating that factors used to determine medical necessity criteria are the same as used for medical and surgical benefits. Requires Insurance commissioner enforce applicable federal laws regarding mental health parity to ensure insurers are in compliance. Applies to MassHealth as well. Chapter supports. Mental Health and Substance Abuse Committee. Included in RFDASH advocacy day at State House, May 30.

4. **Healthy Youth.** S.263 & H.410, “An Act Relative to Healthy Youth” would require school districts that choose to offer sexual health education to provide age-appropriate, medically accurate information, including information on both abstinence and contraception; relationship and communications skills to form healthy, respectful relationships; age appropriate information about gender identity and sexual orientation. The bill maintains existing state law that allows parents to remove their children from sex education programs. Chapter supports. Education Committee

5. **Lead Poisoning.** H.1234 & H. 2010 “An Act Modernizing Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention,” decreases the action level of lead from 25 micrograms per deciliter to 10; doubles tax credit for owners who de-lead their housing units; and increases penalties for housing discrimination. Chapter supports. Public Health Committee

6. **Nurse Practitioners - Independent Practice.** S.1330 & H. 1867 would grant nurse practitioners independent practice by eliminating the statutory provision requiring NPs to practice under the supervision of a physician for the purposes of ordering tests and therapeutics and prescribing medications. It would also remove the Board of Registration in Medicine from its current role in jointly regulating with the Board of Registration in Nursing the scope of practice of NPs. The scope of practice of NPs would be left solely with the Nursing Board. Moreover, the bill would expand their scope of practice by allowing NPs to interpret tests. Chapter opposes. Public Health Committee

7. **Epinephrine Supplies in Schools.** H.463 “An Act Relative to Emergency Stock Supply of Epinephrine in Schools,” requires each public school maintain a stock supply of non-patient specific epinephrine available to all students, including students with individualized health care plans prescribing epinephrine injections, to be administered in the event of an anaphylactic emergency. The stock epinephrine would be stored in an easily accessible unlocked location. The number and type of epinephrine auto-injectors required would be based on school population, and the individuals
authorized to administer epinephrine would meet certain training requirements for such administration, including the use of epinephrine dose calculation devices. The program would be administered by DPH and funded by assessment on health insurers. Chapter supports. Education Committee.

8. Diet Pills and Muscle-building Supplements. H.1942 “An Act Protecting Children from Harmful Diet Pills and Muscle-building Supplements” would ban the sale of over counter diet pills or diet supplements for weight loss to anyone under 18 years of age. Over counter diet pills and diet supplements for weight loss or muscle building “includes, but not limited to, thermogens, which are substances that produce heat in the body and promote calorie burning, lipotropic, which are compounds that break down fat during body metabolism, hormones, including hormone modulators and hormone mimetics, appetite supplements, or ingredients deemed adulterated under 21 USCA sec. 342.” Chapter supports. Public Health Committee

9. Sugary Drinks. S.1291 & H. 1947 “An Act to Protect Youth from the Health Risks of Sugary Drinks,” prohibits marketing of sugary drinks in schools. The bill also requires labeling on certain sugary drink advertisements. Anyone who advertises sugary drinks must include a Warning: Drinking beverages with added sugar(s) contributes to obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay.” Not required on drink containers...limited to advertisements. A limitation on sugary beverages in children’s meals at chain restaurants would be imposed. Chain restaurants can only sell kid’s meal if the default beverage is: water, sparkling water or flavored water with no added natural or artificial sweeteners; nonfat or 1% milk or non-dairy alternative containing no more than 130 calories per container; or 100% juice, with no added sweeteners, in a serving size of no more than 8 oz. Chapter supports. Public Health Committee.

- S.1709 & H. 2529 “Act to Promote Healthy Alternatives to Sugary Drinks” Imposes an excise tax on sugary drinks. Revenue Committee.


11. Safe Alternative to Toxic Chemicals. S. 519 “An Act for a Competitive Economy through Safer Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals,” would establish a process to identify safe household chemicals and encourage their use by banning sale of unsafe chemicals. Chapter supports. Environment, Natural resources and Agriculture Committee.

12. Detergent Poisoning. H.3485 “An Act to Protect Children from Detergent Poisoning,” would regulate liquid detergent packets to make them less attractive to children; require warning labels; and ban sale of liquid detergent packets unless it meets requirements of Mass law as required under this bill. Chapter supports. Public Health Committee

13. Female Genital Mutilation. S.834 & H.1466. “An Act Relative to Female Genital Mutilation,” would prohibit female genital mutilation of a child under 18 and provides civil and criminal penalties. Bills grant victims a cause of action against a perpetrator regardless of where the mutilation occurs. DPH is required to develop an educational and outreach program to communities that commonly practice female genital mutilation. Chapter Supports. Judiciary Committee

14. Child Death Review. H.3499 S. S.1261. “An Act to Promote Public Safety and Certainty Related to Child Deaths” would require the chief medical examiner to review and approve the autopsy findings of a medical examiner, and any change thereto, of a child under the age of two. Chapter supports. Public Health Committee
15. **Safe Communities Act.** S 1401 & H.3573. “An Act to protect the civil rights and safety of all Massachusetts residents,” would prevent local police departments from enforcing immigration enforcement.

- The bill would prohibit a law enforcement agency from inquiring about a person’s immigration status unless info is required by law or is an element in a crime for which the person is being investigated.
- No police officer can arrest or detain a person solely for immigration enforcement program; exception is if probable cause that the person has committed a crime
- Police can’t continue to detain a person solely for immigration purpose once the person is released from local custody.

Chapter is monitoring the legislation. Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee.

16. **Food Allergy.** S. 255 “An Act to Establish Food Allergy Plans,” would establish food allergy management and prevention plans for schools statewide. Committee on Education. Chapter is monitoring.