
State Fiscal Year 2019 (SFY2019) Budget

The House [budget bill](#) includes a 2% increase for home health agencies and Choices for Care providers. The bill also restores a cut to the SASH program proposed by the Administration.

Section 19 of the House-passed version of the [tax bill](#) extends the sunset on the home health provider tax for two more years. The tax will be in effect for state fiscal years 2020 and 2021 but will have to be reauthorized before it can be imposed for state fiscal year 2022. This issue has already been considered by the Senate as part of a stand-alone bill, [S.27](#). The House incorporated the Senate's bill into the tax bill.

Employer Mandates

The Senate has passed [S.23](#), a bill that increases the **minimum wage** to \$15.00 per hour by 2024. As passed by the Senate, the bill makes no provision for Medicaid increases to help health care providers fund higher wages. The schedule of increases is as follows:

January 1, 2020: \$11.50

January 1, 2021: \$12.25

January 1, 2022: \$13.10

January 1, 2023: \$14.05

January 1, 2024: \$15.00

A bill to create a **paid family leave program** is still under debate in House committees. The [bill](#) came out of the House Committee on General, Housing and Military Affairs as a .93% payroll tax that would be shared equally by employers and employees. House Ways and Means significantly amended the bill, reducing the total tax to .55% and allowing employers to determine what proportion of the tax to contribute, if any. A comparison of the two versions of the bill is available [here](#). As of this writing, the bill is under consideration in the House Appropriations Committee.

Health Care Reform

The Senate passed [S.14](#), a **5-year extension to the existing moratorium on new home health or hospice agency certificates of need**. The House has concurred with the Senate version of the bill, which now heads to the Governor's desk.

The Senate passed [S.7](#), a bill that directs the Green Mountain Care Board to develop a series of reports **evaluating the integration of mental health, substance abuse and home- and community-based social services into the all-payer model** and OneCare Accountable Care Organization and evaluating **maternal-child health** programs.

The Senate passed [S.42](#), a bill that **requires one member of the Green Mountain Care Board to be a health care professional**.

The Senate passed [S.53](#), a bill that directs the Green Mountain Care Board and the Department of Vermont Health Access to determine the **percentage of health care spending that is currently allocated to primary care in order to consider increases** to that percentage.

Workforce

The House passed [H.104](#), a miscellaneous Office of Professional Regulation (OPR) bill, *without* a provision to include Vermont in the **Nurse Licensure Compact**. Last year, the legislature directed OPR to study whether Vermont should join the compact. OPR released a report in March supporting the compact, but noting that it will have a financial impact because of lost licensing fees. Unlike last year, the Vermont Chapter of the American Nurse Association now supports the compact.

The House passed [H. 533](#), a miscellaneous workforce bill that includes a study to identify **barriers to the recruitment of nursing program faculty** and recommend solutions.

Other Bills

As passed by the Senate, [S.86](#) **increases the legal age for buying and using cigarettes**, electronic cigarettes and other tobacco products from 18 to 21 years of age. The bill is now under consideration by the House Human Services Committee.

As passed by the House, [H.524](#) addresses a variety of issues related to **health insurance regulation**, codifying provisions of the Affordable Care Act in Vermont law, regulating association health plans and studying health care market mergers.

As passed by the House, [H.528](#) creates a **Rural Health Care Taskforce** to develop a report on rural health care delivery and sustainability. Home health and hospice agencies are included on the Taskforce.

Reports

Subject of Study/Taskforce	Lead Agency(ies)	Due Date	Home Health and Hospice Seat
Rural Health Care Taskforce (H.528)	Agency of Human Services Green Mountain Care Board	December 31, 2019	Yes
Evaluation of social service integration with accountable care organizations (S.7)	Green Mountain Care Board	September 1, 2019	
Evaluation of DULCE pilot and Strong Families Vermont (S.7)	Director of Trauma Prevention and Resilience Development Director of Maternal Child Health	October 1, 2019	
Barriers to recruitment of nursing program faculty (H.533)	Office of Professional Regulation	December 15, 2019	
Primary care spending (S.53)	Green Mountain Care Board DVHA	January 15, 2020	
Financing and delivery of mental health, substance abuse and Medicaid home- and community-based services with the all-payer financial target services (S.7)	Agency of Human Services	November 1, 2020	