



NCRGEA *Government Relations* Update

Legislative Update #20-05

May 1, 2020

On Thursday, legislators remained in negotiations well into the night to iron out a final, comprehensive COVID-19 recovery package. Currently, the state House and Senate have worked out many provisions, yet some hurdles remain.

The House leadership has advocated for a partial expansion of Medicaid services, while the Senate continues to stonewall any potential measures in this direction. Then there is the matter of money. The House's plan, as expected, appropriates more while Senate leaders have said that they want to conserve funds in order to be prepared for any future unintended or increased pandemic needs.

As of Friday afternoon, both chambers have adjourned and are scheduled to reconvene Saturday morning, May 2.

Want to listen? Go to <https://www.ncleg.gov> and click on the speaker icon on the legislative calendar.

We're working hard to make sure legislators remain mindful of retiree issues. As the elderly are the most susceptible to COVID, innovative COVID healthcare policy is critical. While rural broadband remains a political hot potato, efforts to offer and

expand access to telemedicine are making progress at the legislature.

The Act provides authorization for pharmacists to provide immunizations and vaccinations once a COVID-preventing inoculation is available. In addition, State Health Plan members will have increased access to virtual health care including physical and mental health care, physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. Patients and plan members no longer need to have pre-approval to schedule such appointments.

During the pandemic, we have reached out on the state and federal levels to make sure retiree benefits are protected. We worked with our state's congressional delegation to ensure retirees received stimulus money.

We would like to share our sympathy and thoughts for the family of the late Sen. Tony Rand who passed away early this morning from complications with cancer.

Stay tuned!

Richard Rogers
NCRGEA Executive Director