



# This Week in Lansing

MHSA • Muchmore Harrington Smalley & Associates, LLC

Highlights of the Latest Major Legislative, Administrative and Regulatory Activity in the State Capitol

Volume XXIX – Issue 30

July 28, 2017

**FUNDING FOR OPIOID CRISIS FIGHT INCREASES BY \$6M** – As the battle against opioid abuse, addiction and treatment continues throughout the state, 16 organizations in Michigan received over \$6 million in funding to continue their work with children and seniors affected by the crisis. The *Michigan Health Endowment Fund* awarded \$6.4 million to the health groups, with the monies granting each region of the state totals between \$150,000 and \$500,000.

The *Fund* was able to renew funding for five existing programs as well as create funding for 11 of the 63 proposals it received. One major project set to receive an award is the implementation and integration of behavioral health by posting clinicians in 10 *Kalamazoo* area schools with high poverty rates, with the grant totaling \$498,204. *Health Fund Senior Program Officer Becky Cienki* noted that though the *Fund's* focus was on children and seniors, some of the more ambitious projects and programs chosen take an “intergenerational approach”, covering young adult and middle age citizens as well.

Commenting on the *Fund's* decision-making process, *Ms. Cienki* stated the *Board of Directors* looked for “programs with goals of integrated care and new models of growing the behavioral health workforce.” Another program chosen was the integration of behavioral health and primary care services in the *Upper Peninsula (UP)* via the *Upper Great Lakes Family Health Center*, as the *UP* has a very low number of addiction clinics and addiction-trained physicians; this grant totals \$438,562.

**FLINT PROGRESS CONTINUES** – *City of Flint* and *Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)* officials announced on Wednesday that for the second consecutive six-month testing period, the city’s water lead levels tested “well below” the federal action level, almost two years after the *Flint Water Crisis*. Officials also noted, however, the recommendation to continue using water filters remains, as pipe replacement is ongoing throughout the city.

Along with the improved water quality announcement, city and state officials also noted the agreement has been made to close five of the nine state-run points of distribution (*PODs*) by September of this year, where bottled water, filters, testing kits and replacement cartridges have been distributed to *Flint* residents since January 2016.

According to *Captain Chris Kelenske, Deputy State Director* for the *Michigan State Policy Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division*, approximately \$1.9 million per month has been spent on operating the nine *PODs* as there is currently one for each city ward. *Mr. Kelenske* also noted that if the amount of bottled water consumed lessens with the closing of five *PODs*, the state could see savings (currently 80 percent of the aforementioned operating costs are spent on bottled water).

**Mr. Kelenske** stated that anywhere from 47 to 173 people visit the *PODs*, something that might not necessarily be affected by the location change. The four remaining *PODs* will be open “indefinitely”, according to **Flint Mayor Karen Weaver**, which she noted as “great news for the people of Flint.”

The major announcements came after the forwarding of policy recommendations on improving water quality to **Governor Rick Snyder** last week Friday by the **Flint Water Interagency Coordinating Committee**. Members of the *Committee* reviewed the recommendations, which include proposals for water supply project review process updates, and overall pipe replacement policy reformation. Each of the five categories of recommendations was unanimously approved, in addition to those addressing transparency, accounting, and cost recovery issues.

**ISSUES REMAINING: TO BE ADDRESSED AFTER RECESS?** – With multiple major legislative items completed already this year, including teacher reform and two job creation packages, a few issues still remain for legislators to discuss following summer break. According to leaders of both chambers, the issues of municipal retiree health care, mental health, prevailing wage, and corrections reform top the list, among others.

**Senate Majority Leader Arlan Meekhof** (R-West Olive) and **House Speaker Tom Leonard** (R-DeWitt Twp) noted that though each issue may not get completely resolved, some forward movement is hopeful, especially ahead of next year’s elections and *Lame Duck* session. Other topics listed as frontrunners for the fall’s agenda by legislators and Lansing pundits include: water systems and piping throughout the state along with more action for *Flint*; infrastructure and roads; no-fault insurance; and the failing schools law.

With the aforementioned issues still to be addressed, it was recently reported that the *Legislature* has enacted 108 *Public Acts* (with an additional 11 awaiting signature) so far this year, overcoming the 110 average since 1999.

## **ELECTIONS**

- **Representative Stephanie Chang** (D-Detroit) filed to run for the *1<sup>st</sup> Senate District* late last week, with the seat currently held by term-limited **Senator Coleman Young II** (D-Detroit)
- **Democratic** gubernatorial candidate **Shri Thanedar** deposited \$3.3 million into his campaign account on Tuesday, placing him among the top three most active candidates for the party (candidates **Gretchen Whitmer** and **Abdul El-Sayed** raised \$1.5 million and \$1 million respectively)
- **Attorney General Bill Schuette** has raised roughly \$905,241 since the beginning of the year for his run as a **Republican** gubernatorial candidate, while **Lieutenant Governor Brian Calley** has raised \$478,227 for the same race
- **Kate Logan**, **Democratic** candidate from **Oxford**, announced the formation of her campaign committee for the *12<sup>th</sup> District Senate* seat, currently held by term-limited **Senator James Marleau** (R-Bloomfield Hills)
- **Republican Michael Shallal** announced on Tuesday his campaign for the *10<sup>th</sup> Senate District*, currently held by term-limited **Senator Tory Rocca** (R-Sterling Heights)
- **Wayne County Commission Chair Gary Woronchak** announced he will form a committee later this year to run for the *3<sup>rd</sup> Senate District*, currently held by term-limited **Senator Morris Hood III** (D-Detroit)

## ODDS & ENDS

- **Governor Rick Snyder** signed *Senate Bills 242-244* into law on Wednesday, with the “*Good Jobs for Michigan*” package calling for the allowance of tax incentives for companies via captured state income tax withholdings of their employees
- **Attorney General Bill Schuette** announced he has filed charges against 11 former caregivers associated with the *Grand Rapids Home for Veterans* following an investigation of the home prompted by an audit that found the home understaffed and non-compliant with patient care regulations
- For the second consecutive year, each of the state’s 15 public universities held tuition increases under 3.8 percent
- According to the *U.S. Department of Justice*, the *Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC)* has not complied with requests for multiple documents relating to a gender discrimination lawsuit (alleging the state has repeatedly denied transfers of female officers at the *Women’s Huron Valley Correctional Facility*)
- Former *U.S. Representative Peter Hoekstra* has been nominated by **President Donald Trump** for the position of *U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands*
- According to *Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Director Keith Creagh*, **Bill O’Neill** (current chief of *DNR Forest Resources Division*) will now take the position of *DNR Deputy Director*
- According to the *Michigan Court of Appeals*, the township hosting a county-wide sewer project and paying for the treatment of the plant cannot sue other townships for their bond payments (only the county itself can sue)
- In June of this year, Michigan’s unemployment rate dropped to 3.8 percent, moving the state to the 20<sup>th</sup> spot on the nation’s list for lowest unemployment (tying with *Tennessee*)
- Late last week **Governor Rick Snyder** asked **President Donald Trump** for an emergency declaration for the counties of *Bay, Isabella, Gladwin* and *Midland* following flooding in June; **Mr. Snyder** also opened the state’s *Disaster and Emergency Contingency Fund* for the counties (each can apply for grants up to \$100,000)
- **Auditor General Doug Ringler** released an audit on Tuesday regarding the oversight of Michigan’s statewide directory services, including 11 findings of material conditions (the worst rating that can be issued)
- The *House Republican Campaign Committee* has raised \$377,541 in the most recent campaign finance reporting period while the *Michigan Democratic* fund has raised \$207,000; *Senate Republicans* raised \$277,355 and *Senate Democrats* raised \$154,182 in the same period
- *Voters Not Politicians*, the group organizing the redistricting proposal, announced it has raised more than \$120,000 in contributions
- The *Coalition to Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol*, the group attempting to put the legalization of recreational marijuana usage on the 2018 ballot, has raised \$149,968 in the most recent reporting period
- The *Michigan Strategic Fund* approved *Transformational Brownfield Plan* guidelines on Tuesday, allowing for state sales and income taxes to be used by businesses to redevelop brownfield sites
- The *Office of Auditor General* confirmed on Tuesday it will begin a preliminary review of the *Pure Michigan* tourism ad campaign to determine its effectiveness
- **Governor Rick Snyder** praised the approval by the *Detroit City Council* of multiple agreements that will provide protections for the communities in *Southwest Detroit* that will be impacted by the *Gordie Howe International Bridge* construction and planning
- Based on a *WalletHub* study released on Tuesday, *Ann Arbor* has been named the nation’s most educated city based on educational attainment rank as well as the city’s quality of education

- **U.S. District Court Judge Judith Levy** announced on Wednesday the consolidation of 10 class action lawsuits related to the **Flint Water Crisis**, all currently awaiting a decision in court
- **U.S. District Court Judge Nancy Edmunds** ruled on Wednesday that a child residing in the unlicensed foster home of a relative qualifies that home as a “foster home”
- A \$600,000, five-year contract was approved by the **Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)** on Wednesday with **On-Site Insight** to provide needs assessments for housing developments throughout Michigan
- A rally was held on Wednesday at the **Capitol** by the **Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness, Habitat for Humanity** and the **Community Economic Development Association of Michigan**, with the groups calling for the preservation of federal **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** funding for **Fiscal Year 2018** (as currently proposed, \$222 million in cuts for Michigan would be made)
- **Court of Claims Judge Cynthia Stephens** ruled on Thursday that a preliminary injunction against the appropriation of \$2.5 million in state funds to private schools for state mandate reimbursement will remain in place
- **Governor Rick Snyder** signed **House Bills 4177** and **4178** into law on Thursday, calling for the removal of party vignettes from ballots
- According to the **Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB)**, the seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate for June of this year rose in each of the state’s 17 labor markets, with a median increase of 0.4 percent
- **U.S. Department of Interior** officials announced the denial of the **Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians’** request for land in Lansing and near **Romulus** to be put in a land trust for the building of casinos
- **Governor Rick Snyder** signed **House Bill 4160** into law, calling for the allowance of people to solicit contributions on public streets (under certain conditions) for a civic or charitable organization

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## MHSA • Muchmore Harrington Smalley & Associates, LLC

Patrick Harrington [pharrington@mhsa.com](mailto:pharrington@mhsa.com) | Jon Smalley [jsmalley@mhsa.com](mailto:jsmalley@mhsa.com) | Sandra Jones - [sjones@mhsa.com](mailto:sjones@mhsa.com)  
Adrian Cazal [acazal@mhsa.com](mailto:acazal@mhsa.com) | Bret Marr [bmarr@mhsa.com](mailto:bmarr@mhsa.com) | Evelyn Zois Sweeney [esweeney@mhsa.com](mailto:esweeney@mhsa.com)

124 West Allegan St., Suite. 1900 | Lansing, MI 48933 | Phone: 517-484-8800 | Fax: 517-484-4442 | Email: [rsmith@mhsa.com](mailto:rsmith@mhsa.com)

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