

LEG REG REVIEW GPAHU Edition 2018, 2nd Issue *** January 8, 2018

LEG REG REVIEW is a periodic newsletter produced by PHILLIPS ASSOCIATES, a professional lobbying and consultant firm located near the State Capitol. It contains news on Pennsylvania legislation and regulations impacting the Insurance and Business Communities.

INSURANCE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES UPMC-HIGHMARK ACCESS

ON January 4, Governor Tom Wolf announced that UPMC and Highmark agreed to continue permitting some in-network access to the policyholders of both companies. The two have been operating under a Consent Agreement since 2017 that is to expire in June 2019. Provisions include in-network access to facilities providing one-of-a-kind specialty services. Specified were Western Psychiatric Institute, UPMC Center for Assistive Technology, UPMC Center of Excellence for Treatment of Cystic Fibrosis, certain transplant services only provided by UPMC, and selected UPMC joint ventures with community facilities, including oncology. Highmark enrollees will still have continued access to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

The new accord also guarantees access by Highmark enrollees to hospitals if the UPMC hospital is the only one in that community. This addresses UPMC's aggressive buying up of hospitals in northern, central and south central PA. Specifically mentioned are UPMC hospitals in Altoona, Bedford, Kane, Carlisle Regional, Lancaster Regional, Heart of Lancaster, Memorial Hospital of York, Hanover, certain UPMC Susquehanna hospitals, and UPMC Northwest Hospital based in Seneca, Cranberry Township, above Pittsburgh.

It does not include Harrisburg-based Pinnacle Health Systems which UPMC bought last year since there is hospital competition in the Harrisburg area from Geisinger Holy Spirit and Hershey Medical Center.

POLITICS

- 16-year congressman Bud Shuster (R-9) is retiring at the end of this session of Congress. Shuster chairs the powerful House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. There are several Republicans who have already announced their candidacy plans to succeed him. One additional possibility according to the [Altoona Mirror](#) is Senator John Eichelberger (R-Blair).
- On the state level, Rep. Will Tallman (R-Adams/Cumberland) is the latest member of the House to announce his retirement.
- Former House member Gordon Denlinger (R-Lancaster) announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination for Lt. Governor.

SPECIAL ELECTIONS UPDATE

There are two special elections scheduled in Pennsylvania for early 2018. Coming up first on **January 23** is the special election in Allegheny County's 35th district to fill out the remaining term of former Democratic Rep. Marc Gergeley who resigned after being found guilty of violating PA's gambling laws. Second is **March 13** for the 18th congressional district in southwestern PA to fill the remainder of former Republican U.S. Rep. Tim Murphy's term. Murphy resigned after a personal scandal. Last day to register to vote in this special election is February 12. Deadline for requesting an absentee ballot is March 6. Absentee ballots must be returned by March 9. Running are former federal prosecutor Democrat Conor Lamb versus Republican State Representative Rick Saccone who currently represents parts of Washington and Allegheny Counties.

Special election dates to fill former Rep. Scott Petri (R-Bucks) and Rep. Brandon Neuman (D-Washington)'s seats have not been announced.

NEW LEGISLATOR SWORN IN

Filling the term of her late husband Dan McNeill, Jeanne McNeill (D-Lehigh) was sworn in as Representative from the 133th district on January 2, 2018. She was appointed to serve on House Environmental Resources & Energy, Game & Fisheries, Labor & Industry, and Local Government Committees. The first bills she signed on to as a sponsor are House Bill 1520 (increasing minimum wage) and House Bill 722 (establishing an independent Redistricting Commission).

“ME TOO” CONTINUES TO ROCK POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT

In addition to news of national figures losing their ranking in the Nation’s elite (former Senator Franken - D-Minnesota, Republican Moore who lost his bid to succeed Senator Sessions in Red State Alabama, etc.) because of sexual abuse/harassment allegations, Pennsylvania has its own situations. “Me Too” is a national movement to encourage victims of sexual harassment to come forward and speak publically.

- Senator Daylin Leach (D-Montgomery) abandoned his quest for the U.S. Congress but is staying on as Senator despite calls from Governor Wolf, Rep. Brian Sims (D-Phila.) and other Democrats to resign.
- PA Fire Commissioner and former Senator Tim Solobay (D-Washington) resigned his position as Fire Commissioner December 31 after allegations re-surfaced due to Harrisburg Patriot-News investigative reporting.
- According to media, PA House Democrats authorized payments to staffers who were allegedly subjected to sexually abusive behavior by their bosses. Identified were Rep. Tom Caltigirone (D-Berks) and former Rep. Jewell Williams (D-Phila.) Williams is now serving as Philadelphia Sheriff.
- On December 29, PA Senate Chief of Security Justin Ferrante resigned after being accused of sexual harassment by two subordinates.
- According to national publication Claims Journal, Governor Tom Wolf called for changes in a state government self-insurance program to prohibit payouts responding to claims of abusive behavior.

NOTE: This statement is not found on the Governor’s official website.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION NEWS

The PA General Assembly reconvened January 2 for a largely ceremonial session. Some business was conducted including the unanimous re-election of Senator Joe Scarnati (R-Jefferson) to lead the Senate and the swearing in of Jeanne McNeill as the newest State representative. In addition, there were several committee changes, prompted by Rep. Scott Petri and Brandon Neuman’s resignations. These include: Rep. Jeff Pyle (R-Armstrong) to replace Petri as Majority Chair of the House Gaming Committee; replacement of Rep. Pyle’s position on the House Appropriations Committee with Rep. Lee James (R-Venango); Rep. Ed Neilson (D-Phila.) added to the House Labor & Industry Committee, and Rep. Bryan Barbin (D-Cambria) added to the House Judiciary Committee.

There was no shift in the makeup of the House Insurance Committee. Listing may be found at <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/CteeInfo/index.cfm?Code=22&CteeBody=H> . Similarly, the makeup of the Senate Banking & Insurance Committee remains the same.

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/CteeInfo/index.cfm?Code=37&CteeBody=S>

REGULATORY NOTE

PA Long-Term Council has set these meeting dates for 2018: February 15; April 12; June 14; August 23; October 25; and December 6.